

DCF:

Have you heard of Marie Kondo? She’s a Japanese organizing consultant and many people have adopted her method of simplifying and decluttering their lives. The first thing you do - according to Marie - is to hold up an article you own and ask yourself “Does this bring me joy?” If it doesn’t, you get rid of it. Another way you could declutter your life is by asking the question “Am I going to need this in the next 6 months?” Or, you could simply ask the question “Why am I hanging on to this?”

There comes a time in a well-adjusted person’s life when they get rid of the things that are interfering with life. They want to cut the clutter so they can enjoy life. Oh, they may have been in the acquisition phase as they grew up, but there comes a time when you strip life down to what you truly treasure. You don’t want to mess with dusting the knickknacks, winterizing the camper or the cabin, maintaining the four wheeler, swapping out summer and winter clothes or owning a storage unit because you’ve got so much stuff. You get rid of tools you no longer need because you gave up woodworking or car repair. You cut the clutter because it’s interfering with life.

Today Jesus encourages us to “**CUT THE CLUTTER**” in our spiritual lives. He wants us to focus on the things that will last. Set your heart on Jesus and be ready for His second coming. It’s time to cut the clutter in our souls.

Part One: Set your heart on Jesus

What’s important in life? In our world today, you would get all sorts of different answers from all sorts of different people. Some say security. Some say pleasure. Some would say money, because money makes all these things possible. Jesus saw that focus in His hearers today. People were interested in money and security, trying to get the most out of this life. While doing so, they were ignoring the most important possession that God can give. The gift of faith. The gift of eternal life. After counseling the crowd, He dives deeper into this topic with His disciples.

Jesus’ mission is not to make us secure financially, but to make us secure eternally. His whole life was focused on giving us eternal life. His perfect life. His perfect death. His resurrection. All done to wash away the sins that separate us from God. He came to pay for our sins of lying, our sins of apathy, of greed and lust. He came to give us the gift of paradise, which is the greatest gift that anyone can be given. And yet, His hearers that day were more focused on money, possessions and pleasure than they were on Jesus. That’s what they had their hearts set on.

Things haven’t changed in 2,000 years, have they? People still want security in this life, and to the world, this means having money. Notice the ads and articles in the media. How often don’t you run across articles with headings like “7 ways to pay off your credit card.” “5 mistakes retirees make.” “How to enjoy life.” We read ads for financial companies, 401k’s, brokerages and such. They want us to value the things of this life, and promise that they’re the ones who will make your dream come true.

Today Jesus comes with this statement. ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** Do we value the things of this world more than we value Jesus and His gift? That temptation is always there, isn’t it? Oh, the physical gifts of our Lord are tremendous blessings. We enjoy His gift of cash, His gift of family, His gift of time off and His gift of beautiful weather. We plan and work on our houses and lawns. We take care of our cars and save for retirement. We enjoy life. All of these things are blessings from the Lord, but they do have a tendency to clutter our souls. Are these things keeping us from trusting the Lord for all things, including eternal life? Do we spend more time thinking about stuff rather than thinking about our salvation?

Jesus laid out a challenge to the disciples. He wanted them to declutter their hearts, so He tells them ***“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”*** Why? Because ***“your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.”*** You’ve got everything you need in Jesus. Set your heart on Him, because He has given you everything you really need - eternal life with Him forever.

What have you set your heart on? What do you treasure in life? What do you use your spare time for? What gives you more joy - a side hustle to earn more money or a deeper insight into God’s Word? What do you talk about with your friends? Small talk or God talk? You see, what we talk about, what we treasure, shows up in our lives. ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”***

Perhaps it’s time to reset our hearts on Jesus. Maybe our trust has slipped a bit, distracted by all the stuff we have in life. Here’s a thought - who gave us all the things we enjoy? Who makes sure we have eternal

security? Isn't it the Lord? He's the One who gave us life. He's the One who gave us the ability to buy that car, that house, that new lawnmower. He's the One who gives us the strength to garden, to fish, to go boating. He's the One who placed us in loving families and gave us great friends. If He has given us such wonderful gifts, do you think He can be trusted? As we cut through the clutter of life, the answer is yes. Focus on the Lord and listen to His comforting words.

As we begin to set our hearts more firmly on Jesus, we'll find ourselves more prepared for His second coming. And that's a good thing!

Part Two: Be prepared for Jesus' second coming

As we slog through life, distracted and upset by the disasters and setbacks that we encounter, we so often lose sight of this simple truth. ***"Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."*** What a relief to be reminded that this world is just a temporary stop in our existence. Heaven is our home, a place with no pain or tears or market collapse or layoffs. A place where people don't bully you or cheat you. A place where Jesus loves you and shows you the full extent of His love. Oh, how we yearn for His second coming! We don't know when the Last Day will come, but it will come. We want to be ready when the trumpet sounds and He arrives with all His angels.

Jesus uses a unique word picture to encourage us to be ready. It's a picture of a wedding night. ***"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him."*** Even if their master came back home late at night or early in the morning, the servants were awake and ready to open the door so he could come in. But notice the twist, the unusual thing that master would do. He would serve them! ***"I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them."*** Jesus Himself will show us the full extent of His love by giving us all good things, things we haven't earned, things we don't deserve. But He will, because of His love for us. That's what heaven's like, my friends.

In a small way, we can understand this expression of love. Jim grew up in Ohio with parents who loved him dearly. He grew up, graduated from college and got a great job in New Zealand. He hadn't seen his parents in years and now was coming home for Christmas. His mom and dad were so happy to see him, and wanted to show him their love. Mom cooked all his favorite meals and had coffee ready every morning. Dad took him fishing, like he used to when Jim was young. Jim's parents gave him the best that they had. Before Jim went back to New Zealand, his dad took him aside and gave him his most prized possession - a watch his dad received after he retired from the railroad. Jim knew how much that meant to his dad, and he was overwhelmed. In a very small way, that is similar to what Jesus is pleased to give us - heaven. Paradise. Forever with the Lord.

Be ready for that day, the day the Lord will show us the full extent of His love for you. Being ready for that day means being aware that it can come at any time, even later today. It means living your life as if Jesus will be here in a minute. It means looking forward to it, knowing it will be the best day of your life up to that point. It means staying in contact with Jesus by reading His Word and responding in prayer. Being ready means clearing out the clutter of life and focusing on Christ.

Being ready also means being prepared to serve Him here. God has prepared opportunities for service here on earth. That's one of the reasons you're still alive. Now, perhaps you're serving the Lord right now. Raising your children to know Jesus. Comforting a friend who's mom has just died. Talking with a friend that needs Jesus in his life. You know, just sharing your faith and love with someone else.

If you aren't doing any of these right now, are you ready when Jesus puts that opportunity in front of you? Are you prepared to give an answer to the hope that you have? So often we aren't. We wait until someone asks us about some Bible teaching, and then we go searching for an answer. Why wait? If our heart is firmly set on Jesus, we will want to be prepared to talk about Him when people ask. I encourage you to join one of our Sunday Bible classes this fall. I encourage you to pick up your Bible and start digging in to a topic that intrigues you, a question that's been rattling around in your brain for years. Dig in. Be prepared, not only for Jesus' second coming, but also for the opportunity to talk about Him with your friends.

What's important in your life? What brings you joy? We don't need Marie Kondo to show us how to do that in our spiritual lives. Jesus has been giving us good advice for thousands of years. It's time to ***"CUT THE CLUTTER."*** Set your heart on Jesus and be ready for His second coming.

AMEN