

Coach House Church BEACONS

CLEAR OUT OR UPCYCLE

26TH JANUARY 2021

Once upon a time the cry of 'Any old iron.... Any old iron?' would reverberate around the streets, as rag and bone men did the rounds collected our old junk and taking it away to make a few pennies on. Even I remember the old nags pulling the cart along reminiscent of the sitcom Steptoe & Son on the BBC. Now we are all respectable and take our rubbish to the recycling centres, separating out the metal from the wood and the electrical from the garden waste.

Of late, there seems to have been a resurgence of the scrap metal merchants, but now it's a low loader transit van instead of a horse and cart.

This is all a good way of clearing away our unwanted junk from the home, the stuff that we don't use anymore, is worn out, or, sometimes we are just fed up with.... but there is another trend we see now as well ... that of upcycling. Taking the old and reinventing it into something useful.

Apparently, Upcycling, also known as creative reuse, is the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products perceived to be of greater quality, such as artistic value or environmental value – so there you go!

There is a programme on Telly where experts take what people are throwing out and then transform it into new pieces that are then sold on for profit. The money made usually goes to good causes. Sometimes what they make is recognisable as the thing it started life as, but sometimes it has a different purpose and doesn't resemble what it started out as at all!

Colossians 3:7 (NLT)

You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behaviour, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

So, here is a question for us to think about. Do we need to have a good clear out and throw everything away or should we be doing a bit of upcycling in our lives?

Now I'm not talking about physical rubbish that we might have, although making sure we aren't cluttered with rubbish is always a worthwhile exercise.

When the apostle Paul wrote the words to the church in Colossi, which was a City found in what is today Western Turkey, he was reminding the people that a belief in Jesus meant that they had to change a few characteristics. Paul calls it 'putting on a new nature' and allowing ourselves to be renewed. Paul was pretty emphatic that Being a Christian not only means that we have to be subjected to a clear out, but that there are some things which we need to upcycle!

It all centres on what we know as sin which creates in us certain characteristics which are not good for us in the long run – these characteristics are what Paul calls the old nature. It is how we used to act before we understood that Jesus came to challenge our way of life and calls us to rethink our attitudes.

We are urged to put on our new nature. The very wording of this should tell us that it an actual effort to do. We have to decide to do it, but we have the wonderful promise, that when we do, we will be renewed and become more like our creator.

So, what we have now is an old nature, that wants to behave in a certain way and a new nature that we have to put on, clothe ourselves with, which is somewhat unnatural to us, but creates something new. The Bible describes this as good and tells us that it shows the love of Jesus to the world around us.

Some people, me included, are not so good at getting rid of the junk in our lives. You have probably heard the expression, Tidy home, tidy mind!

"Tidy home, tidy mind " and the many variants is a very familiar saying. Its origins go back to around 1947, where it started out as "A cluttered up desk is a sign of a cluttered-up mind'. If I continue to hold on to the rubbish and leave it where it is, making no effort to change it, move it or chuck it out, it is going to one day become a problem for me. You see, sometimes we have to let some things go in order to make space for new things!

To put it another way, we are encouraged not to be hoarders of rubbish

Ephesians 4:20 (NLT)

But that isn't what you learned about Christ. Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

Throw off, get rid of, put behind – Paul gives virtually the same instruction to the church in Ephesus as he did to the church in Colossi. There is a little more detail here however, as to how we are helped in this struggle. It is Gods spirit within us that renews our thoughts and attitudes.

The reason we should let the Holy Spirit renew us and make us more like Jesus is twofold;

Firstly, It acts as a good witness today, as we act and respond to life's issues in the same way Jesus would have. It used to be the rage to wear bracelets that said WWJD – 'what would Jesus do' – a nice reminder, however, I used to always think, would Jesus have ever put himself in that position of having to ask it in the first place? The simple answer is no, because his nature was inclined towards righteousness. We should be governed by our new nature, not our old one!

Secondly, it is preparing us/changing us, for what is to come in Heaven. In heaven we will only have the new nature as, we cannot inhabit our bodies in heaven as they are corrupted by sin. They will be destroyed and replaced with new bodies – that are uncorrupted by sin.

Jesus gives us a sense of this when he clears the Temple in Jerusalem. You can find it in Luke chapter 19, Matthew 21 or Mark 11. Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem, which is the focal point for the worship of God, but instead of a house of prayer and worship to the Lord, he finds that the courts are being used more like a market with people buying and selling. Jesus is indignant and clears the temple so that it can be used for its intended purpose.

We have purpose in our lives that is intended to reflect God, so when we are giving over our lives to sin, we cannot expect to please God.

Some things in our lives, need upcycling – we have natural abilities and unique personalities that can be shaped to reflect God and used for good. We are not intended to be robots or clones – how boring would that be! But... We also have a lot of junk that we should be chucking out as it is worthless in heaven and is a burden to us today.

Clear out and upcycle – You will be glad you did, when you discover how much more room there is to receive blessing.



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