

# Spring Cleaning – It's Not Just the Garage and Attic that Require Attention

Here in middle Tennessee Spring is begrudgingly breaking through and making its presence felt. As our garages and attics become more temperate and bearable places to work, most of us feel the need to do what has become an annual ritual, *spring cleaning*. We get rid of things that have been getting in our way for months, but not enough to make us deal with them. We made the decision that clearing out the junk could be left to a more convenient, comfortable time.

Cluttered garages and attics accumulate *junk* that does not HAVE to be dealt with immediately, but not so our lives. *Junk* we collect from the outside world and that which collects internally clutter our hearts, minds, and lives as Christians. Each presents a danger too often unseen or realized too late by Christians going through the motions of life, ignoring, or hoping the world in which they live and the decadence of the culture that engulfs us and our families, would just go away. But the Bible teaches it only gets worse!

The following three expressions found their original meanings in secular applications. Today we look at them thru the lens of Scripture to help *spring cleaning* our lives, the results of which become evident.

**Clearing the Slate.** Used in the colloquial sense *clearing the slate* means wiping things away or off the (black) board to give you a blank (clean) surface the write on or work from. [FYI, school white boards used to be called *blackboards* because they were fabricated from black slate.]

Biblically speaking, I suggest (and will support with the verses below) that we *clear the slate* in our minds by wiping

clean the past that produces so much junk and clutter. So many people I have disciplined or taught, regardless of their zip code, hold onto their pasts as if the negative things that haunt them were etched in the slate permanently rather than written with chalk that may be erased!

*"But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."  
Luke 9:62*

*"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; **but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind** and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14*

The Clearest Slate we can ever hope for:

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9*

### **OUR SLATE IS CLEARED!**

**Clearing the Way.** Again when used in the colloquial sense, this phrase means removing things that are in our way so that we can move forward. Perhaps there are objects or obstacles that are so big, they prevent our advancing. Or the road was strewn with branches or trees as in the aftermath of a big storm.

The same connotations may be used when we examine this phrase thru our biblical lens. The Bible has so much to say about our walks thru life with and without the Lord. Some of the prominent warnings about things that get in our way are not about *things* at all. They warn about *people* who get in our way.

*"Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of*

*the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!" Psalm 1:1*

*One who walks with wise people will be wise, But a companion of fools will suffer harm. Proverbs 13:20*

We must also remember there are times that God blocks our paths for our good or to redirect and keep us from continuing in or taking the wrong path.

This is the best example in the Bible of God intervening to stop someone for his own good who was on the wrong path yet determined he was going the right way. The Donkey that Spoke:

*"Then God's anger was kindled because Balaam was going along, and the angel of the LORD stood in the road to oppose him. Balaam was riding his donkey, and his two servants were with him. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the path and went into a field. So Balaam beat her to return her to the path. Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow passage between two vineyards, with walls on either side. And the donkey saw the angel of the LORD and pressed herself against the wall, crushing Balaam's foot against it. So he beat her once again. And the angel of the LORD moved on ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn to the right or left. When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he became furious and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times? "Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made a fool of me! If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now! "But the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not the donkey you have ridden all your life until today? Have I ever treated you this way before? "No," he replied. Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road*

*with a drawn sword in his hand. And Balaam bowed low and fell facedown.” Numbers 22: 22-31*

God will make a way when there is no way, so why trust in or follow anyone else?

*“Do not call to mind the former things or consider things of the past. “Behold, I am going to do something new, Now it will spring up; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:18-19*

The Cross of Jesus Cleared the Only Way to our Salvation.

*(Jesus said) “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6*

**Clearing the Deck.** The meaning of this phrase is less well-known to people. It has its origins in the maritime vernacular—specifically when preparing for battle. It meant that sailors were to fasten down or *clear the decks* of the ship of all superfluous or unnecessary things that could get in the way or hinder sailors preparing to fight or when engaged in battles.

When we consider this from our biblical lens, the idea of battles or warfare must remain. Too often Christians do not take seriously the realities of spiritual war. This is not what God intended nor why Jesus gave His life for ours. Jesus said we live in a sinful world and are constantly under attack by our enemies – people and demons – led by the fiercest of all – satan himself. If you are born-again in Christ, the attacks are relentless, sometimes overt, and obvious, other times subtle and hard to discern.

Consider these words of warning and instruction for preparation.

- Jesus told Peter, the bodacious disciple, these words

that must have rocked his world,

*"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you men like wheat;"* Luke 22:31

▪ The Apostle Peter warned his readers,

*"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* 1 Peter 5:8

▪ Jesus' warning to His disciples:

*"You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved."* Matthew 10:22

▪ *"though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."* 2Corinthians10:3-4

Clear the decks in your life to prepare for spiritual war and remember, *"the battle belongs to the Lord!"*

For Christ's sake,

*Walter*