

Busy: Living Light - Luke 12:29-34

March 31, 2019 - Norwalk Christian Church

My mind is a very odd thing at times. It goes many places at any given moment. At this moment it's going to Duck Tape. Duck Tape, is there anything it can't do? Just this past week, and please no judgements, we had one of our brake lights replaced. Only the seal no longer works around our bright red brake light cover, so what is holding that cover in place? Duck Tape. Duck Tape has had it's random ups and downs in popularity. The colors and patterns it's available in, the things you can fix with it, and the things you can make with it. So when I think of a purse that does not wear out...I think of Duck Tape. Yet really that's not what the gospel is saying at all.

On Thursday I toured the Polk County Jail, with a special interest in viewing where some ICE detainees were being held. I also got to sit down and talk with an ICE detainee, Romi. Romi is a refugee that moved here when he was 8 years old from South Sudan. I learned a lot from my conversation with Romi and would love to share that at another time. But as I was shown his living quarters there, I saw this small rectangular box, a small foot locker. That box contained all of his possessions while he was there. And my mind jumped back to when he was 8 years old and made me wonder what his family was able to take with them as refugees fleeing their home country.

After I got home I saw an advertisement for the new Netflix show from Marie Kondo. She is motivating people to declutter their home, their life, their spaces. She encourages people to go through their belongings and with each item ask yourself, Does this bring me joy? Does this spark joy in my life? If it does, you keep it. If it doesn't, you let it go. The idea is to surround yourself with things that spark joy in your life. It's a simpler way to live happier.

The next day I was talking with someone whose sister's house burned down last year. Her house is now rebuilt and she was going with her that day to buy appliances and furnishings to put in the house. She was reminiscing of the day the fire happened. How blessed they were to not be in the house at the time of the fire, but how even finding small trinkets in the yard the days after the fire were now valued treasures.

It was reminiscent of when I worked at a church on Canal Street in New Orleans. People would occasionally take the time to share with me their stories from Katrina. What they took with them, what they left behind.

And as I began to think about this text, in the midst of a hurried and busy week, I realized where I sat, my position, amidst the stories I just shared. In this moment I have an over-abundance. I fall into the Marie Kondo section of needing to declutter. I need to ask myself what sparks joy in my life and let go of the rest. That doesn't simply apply to my clothes or home decor, but to my commitments and what I say yes to and what I need to say no to. Having a busy life does not signify having a happy or fulfilled life.

I'm extremely grateful for the country I live in and the fact I do not fear for my life or the life of my family. I do not lay awake at night and have to decide what I want to take with me. No natural disaster is heading this way that makes me have to ask what I need to pack into my vehicle. I'm not on my way to prison and have to ask what I want that fits inside this small box. My house, at least to my knowledge, is not burning down. I don't have to quickly decide what to run in and save.

You see it's not about finding something that won't wear out like Duck Tape. It's about discovering and recognizing what really matters in our lives. It's not the material objects. Our treasures are each other. Our treasures are our stories. Our treasures are our ability to unite together for the betterment of the whole. You are God's treasure. You are my treasure. We are each others treasure. And we should live out our lives knowing

that truth. Putting others ahead of items that fade, rust, or rot. Don't let the people of your life get lost amidst the chaos. We're much more valuable than that.