

Message: "The Big Clean Out" *Philippians 3:12-14*

Today is national "Clean out Your Refrigerator Day", while I am not sure why Nov. 15 got such an auspicious designation, I am sure that it is a good idea. We should periodically take time to sort out our refrigerators. This is also true of our spiritual life as well.

Have you ever searched your refrigerator only to discover that the whipped cream container in the fridge contains left over hot dish a month old. Or that the cheese is no longer yellow but a white and green.



Christian life requires that we periodically clean out the dross of living and move forward in our faith.

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Have you noticed the mayo is 5 years out of date and the salad dressing has only 2 tablespoons of dressing but has been there for 6 months. There are 4 quarter full bottles of ketchup and the cream you plan to use for coffee for your guests is now sour and gloppy. You are probably due for a "Clean out your Refrigerator day".



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12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.



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King Tut's tomb,
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*141 year old
fruit cake
owned by
Julie Ruttinger*



*"Battle Butties"
ration
sandwiches
designed to
last 2 years*

Preservation of food is one of the vexing problems of human history. Honey is a one of the most enduring foods. King Tut's tomb had honey that was still edible. Honey that was still edible after over 5000 years has was found in ancient graves in Georgia.

Julie Ruttinger's great-great-grandmother, Fidelia Ford, baked a fruit cake in 1878 that has become a family heirloom it is still edible. Sandwiches are among the most difficult items to store long term. Bread is difficult because it molds, becomes soggy or stale. Battle Butties are a sandwich which has a shelf life of 2 years.

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Eggs are one of the interesting things to store long term. Fresh farm eggs can be stored for up to 5 weeks unrefrigerated. Store bought eggs [USA] must be refrigerated because they are washed during processing [by law] which removes the natural protective seal on the shell. Farm fresh eggs can be stored for up to 2 years by a method called water glassing if they are immediately processed.

Frozen foods can be edible for 1000's of years. Mammoths that have been dug out of permafrost have been eaten by Artic inhabitants over the centuries.

Dried foods can also be edible over long periods. *Psalms 19:7-14*

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Psalm 19:7-14

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; 8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; 9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are *they* than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. 11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them *there is* great reward. 12 Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse me from secret *faults*. 13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

3000+ year old honey pots from King Tut's tomb, it was still edible.



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"Battle Butties" ration sandwiches designed to last 2 years



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Kaviaq or Kaviak – Originally a survival food was produced in Greenland by native Inuit people – has become now become an ethnic food. Most outsiders who have tasted it say it is definitely an acquired taste. It is made by stuffing a seal skin with up to 300 whole auks [type of small arctic duck], removing as much air as possible and sewing it closed, sealing it with seal tallow, then fermenting for 3 months before eating.

I have a friend whose wife was in food service and cleaned out the refrigerator religiously. She would remove anything that was out of date. He on the other hand would not throw anything out. He would eat leftovers even weeks later. It was amusing to listen to them tease one another about their various views on cleaning out the refrigerator. Of course, many dates given on food products do not indicate the time when they cease to be good, but it is a good practice to check. While this is usually harmless, unless you get food poisoning, in our spiritual lives the things we hold on to may harm us spiritually.

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It is like our Terry and our wedding cake. We stored part of it in the freezer to eat the next year on our anniversary, to relive the moment. It was forgotten about and discovered almost 2 years later. It definitely was not reliving the experience. While memories are something that needs to be saved when they are stored in ways that seclude them from reality they become stale and unstable. Paul in *Ephesians 3:14-21* reminds us that our relationship with Christ is an active and dynamic relationship not a "preserved" memory that grows stale with disuse.

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Ephesians 3:14-21

14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height — 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.**

Series: 4 Days That Encourage Us

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"Monitor Top" Refrigerator introduced in 1927 by G. E. It was the first commercially successful home refrigerator. It cost more than a car. The 2 refrigerants used were toxic. In the 1930 Freon-12 was introduced



Not long ago Terry and I found some butter in the church refrigerator with mold through out the wrapper. Clearly it had been there too long. It was clearly not our refrigerator, because butter does not last that long in our refrigerator.

We hold onto a lot of things that we should get rid of in our lives. Why? Sometimes we believe that we can make use of these things in the future; sometimes we feel that they are really not that bad. Sometimes its a memory like old wedding cake held from year to year. Sometimes it is a hope or a failsafe that we can't bear to give up. Sometimes it is a mistrust of God's direction or provision.

Romans 7:19-23

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Romans 7:19-23

19 For the good that I will *to do*, I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do*, that I practice.

20 Now if I do what I will not *to do*, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good.

22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

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Robert Boyd Munger, 1911-2001. Presbyterian Minister and University Professor, wrote the sermon "My Heart, Christ's Home" in 1954



In 1954, Pastor Robert Munger a Presbyterian minister preached a sermon that would make a profound impact on Evangelical Christian thinking. It was published by the recently established Inter Varsity Press. It captured the imagination of Christians, it is called "My Heart, Christ's Home". The narrator describes his salvation experience and his slow surrender of each portion of his life to Christ. He uses the metaphor of a home and each area of his life as a room in that home that Christ wishes to enter and establish His Lordship.

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In all cases it requires either a release of control of direction to Christ, removal of impediments to Christ's authority or inclusion of Christ in every aspect of his life. The sermon ends with the narrator signing over the deed to the property and agreeing to live as the servant of Christ in the home.

Of all the rooms the most difficult one to relinquish control of is a small closet on the upper stair landing.

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One day Christ meets him at the door of his home. Telling him there is an awful stench of something dead in the house. It is emanating from this upstairs closet. It is a small locked closet to which the narrator must relinquish the key if his relationship to Christ can continue.

This closet contains his most guarded secret shames. Those sins he wishes to hold on to. Finally the narrator releases the key and Christ cleans out the secret hiding place of the heart. It is only when this last room is surrendered that the narrator is finally willing to deed over complete control of his life to Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

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1 Corinthians 6:19-20

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is in you*, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

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Much of what clutters our refrigerator is stuff that we hold on to in hopes that it will one day be useful. Some items like condiments and pickles which generally flavor our foods and are the least susceptible to spoilage these are much like fads, opinions and preferences. Things such as the type of music we like, or the translation of the Bible we prefer, the style of worship we enjoy, etc. These change and are temporary.

Series: 4 Days That Encourage Us Some are like meat and need to be



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Some are like meat and need to be eaten shortly after they are purchased or cooked. Others are like vegetables that can last some time. Some like dairy and eggs can last weeks in the refrigerator. All will eventually spoil if they are not used. If we keep them beyond their shelf life they can make us sick. Paul says that we need to purge ourselves from time to time of the "old leaven" [1 Corinthians 5:7-8].

Therefore purge out the **old leaven**, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

1Co 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with **old leaven**, nor with the **leaven** of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

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I have been guilty of attempting to cook. I like to try out unusual recipes, my problem is that often I fail at these but to Terry's chagrin I try to keep these failures in the refrigerator. I don't want to eat them because they honestly don't taste good but I don't want to throw them out and admit failure to myself or Terry. Terry likes to keep fruit long past the point it is no longer good. I am not sure why, but when it turns fuzzy I throw it out. We both are bad about leaving cheese in the cold cut drawer until it turns white and blue green and out it goes. Often an old hot dish will show up weeks later in the back of the fridge in a mis-labeled food tub.



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One of the biggest struggles we have had over the use of the refrigerator is my fishing. I will put a tub of worms or leaches in the fridge overnight for a fishing trip, only to get a stern lecture from Terry about the purpose of the fridge.



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Things that we hold in the fridge of our lives: past failures; fruits that make us feel better because they are there though unused and spoiling; experiences that we wish to recreate but have spoiled because they can not be repeated; ideas that need to be jettisoned because they were helpful at an earlier stage of our spiritual growth but have grown in meaning out of all proportion to Scripture. Sometimes we introduce into our lives things [sins] that are completely incompatible with the purpose God called us to.

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Paul tells us that we need to clean out our spiritual fridge sometimes. We can't hold on to failures, sins, memories or habits even if we have refrigerated them. They still mold inside us.



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November 15