



“Come Meet Jesus...Who Calls Us to Change”

Third Sunday in Lent
Saturday and Sunday, March 23-24, 2019

All Services
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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8;
1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Well I decided as we're coming out of the winter season that I needed to lose a little bit of weight. And I have been trying lots of different things. I have been watching what I have been eating, although I refuse to give up all forms of bread, I just think that is cruel. I am not eating as many snacks as I have been eating or I usually like to eat, and I try to go to the gym. In some cases, I go to the gym every other day, sometimes a week or two in a row. And yet, every time I put my feet on that scale, it only goes either up three pounds or down three pounds and it just slopes. No matter what I do, no matter if I am doing really, really great watching everything, or if I am not and I eat a whole bowl of potato chips, it doesn't matter it's three pounds up three pounds down, it just does not matter. Nothing seems to work, and so I decided I needed to do a scientific investigation, so I turned to that place where you can find all sort of information and it's all true. I went on the internet. And there I saw an article by a doctor and in this article the doctor said that our natural state of being is for our body to resist change. Our body tries to maintain a sense of equilibrium known as *Homeostasis*. Homeostasis helps our bodies to maintain normal bodily functions, a normal temperature, metabolism, weight and all the other functions that are necessary for our survival. This article said, “Think of hemostasis as a **micromolecular neurophysiological thermostat.**” And that made me feel better.

It explains why our activity that we try to do to change our weight doesn't seem to work, because we're trying to change our metabolism, our heart rate, our muscle mass, and our body doesn't want to go there.

If you think about it, that means that our natural state is that of couch potato!

Change is hard. It's hard for institutions, it's hard for churches, it's hard for our own personal lives. Because it means a departure from the status quo or homeostasis. Of course, there are other reasons that we can be afraid of change. The fear of failure or something new, or we can be overwhelmed by the changes or the stress that they might cause. And sometimes there is a whole new set of problems that come with a change. We even have a common saying: “Better the devil you know than the devil you don't know.”

But by the grace and power of God we can break out of our natural state of homeostasis to worship and connect and to serve God so that we are not confined by what we are, but we can be more than what we are.

And if you really think about it, change is not really that unusual. And we experience change in all sorts of different levels. You might even say change is the one constant in life. We're going to see it today when it gets up to 60 degrees, the seasons and the weather change, our own grown, technology, prices, trends, styles, politics. The people that are in your life, they change over the years and over the seasons. Change is hard, but the alternative is even harder.

Former Archbishop of Canterbury has said that the church is only one generation from irrelevancy. The church can become stagnate, lose its passion and forget its purpose.

And so that we need to, and the church needs to reinvent itself every generation so that we can fulfill God's mission, to share the gospel and connect in ways that perhaps we could not even have imagined only a decade or a generation ago.

Business leader Max Dupree says; "We cannot become what we want to become by remaining what we are."

Change happens through and for people, and it's the Holy Spirit of God in its power and wisdom that can change us.

In our first reading from Isaiah the Israelites have lost their nation to the Babylonians. Their beloved temple was destroyed, Jerusalem was in ruins and most of the people had been carted off back to Babylon in exile. The people were confused and sad about this new reality in their lives. Many of the laments that we have in the Book of Psalms come from this period, the ones that talk about "my enemies are all around me." But Isaiah like a hotdog vender at a baseball station, "*Get your hot dogs here!*" cries out "*Ho, everyone who is thirsty, come to the waters!*" God wants to get out attention!

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Sometimes change can lead to new growth and new hope. In the gospel reading even though Jesus had been teaching and offering miracles, he wasn't seeing the kind of repentance that he proclaimed come to pass. The evolutionary Zealots were still crying out for war with Rome and indeed forty years after his resurrection they would have that war and destroy their country. The Scribes and Pharisees still wanted everyone to toe the line as they saw it. And the people wanted to see Jesus' miracles without the responsibility of changing their lives. And Jesus made it clear that those who refuse his call to change direction would have consequences.

It was a call to repentance. The word in Greek is **metanoia** it means conversion, to act and to think differently. Turning to God in obedience to him and to his will. Through holy baptism we are turned, we are changed people through the grace and power of Jesus Christ and the waters of holy baptism.

The master gardener works with us, tenderly caring for us, nurturing our growth, and maybe even spreading a little manure at our base. All so that you and I can bear fruit. Not repentance for repentance sake or change for change sake, to bear fruit Jesus calls the people to renewal. And the church and the people of God of every age need that inner renewal, it is the call to change so that we can renew our lives to worship God with our whole hearts. To connect in Christian community to expand our minds, to strengthen our hearts, to heal our souls. And a renewal of sharing God's love and service to our neighbor near, far, and wide witnessing to the faith that is within you, to bear fruit worthy of the God of love who loves you!

So be you, that lovely, wonderful friendly you! Maybe even that little bit of a couch potato you form authentic relationship with neighbor and God.

Turn to Jesus who forgives and strengthens and provides mercy and lovingkindness to each and every one of us. If we are faithful, our congregation will bear fruit worthy of the God of amazing grace. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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