

**Sermon for
The 5th Sunday after Epiphany
Scout Sunday**

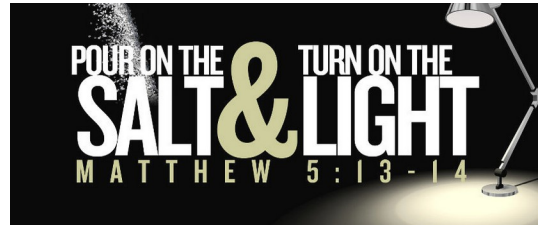
Date: February 9, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 58:3-9a

Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:13-20



Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Sermon Title: Christ in the Middle of Change

Hymns (Traditional):

- LSB 650 – Holy Spirit Ever Dwelling
- W&P 129 – Spirit of the Living God
- LSB 427 – In the Cross of Christ I Glory
- LSB 781 – We Give Thee but Thine Own (v.1,2)
- LSB 425 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

Songs (Contemporary):

- Here I am to Worship
- W&P – 155 We will Glorify
- W&P – 140 There is a Redeemer
- Come and Behold Him
- W&P – 67 I Love You Lord

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p. 184



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Text: 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Brothers and sisters, when I came to you, I did not speak about God's mystery lofty speech or wisdom. While I was with you I decided to deal with only one subject, Jesus Christ who was crucified. When I came to you I was weak. I was afraid and very nervous. I didn't speak my message with persuasive intellectual arguments. I spoke my message with a show of spiritual power so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on God's power.

However, we do use wisdom to speak to those who are mature. It is a wisdom that does not belong to this world or to the rulers of this world who are in power today and gone tomorrow. We speak about the mystery of God's wisdom. It is a wisdom that has been hidden, which God had planned for our glory before the world began. None of the rulers of this world has known it. If they had they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

As Scripture says, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things that God has prepared for those who love him."

God has revealed those things to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God. After all, who knows everything about a person except that person's own spirit? In the same way no one has known everything about God except God's Spirit. Now we did not receive the spirit that belongs to the world. Instead we received the Spirit who comes from God so that we could know the things which God has freely given us. We do not speak about these things using teachings that are based on intellectual arguments like people do. Instead we use the Spirit's teachings. We explain spiritual things to those who have the Spirit.

A person who is not spiritual does not accept the teachings of God's Spirit. He thinks they are nonsense. He can't understand them because a person must be spiritual to evaluate them. Spiritual people evaluate everything but are subject to no one's evaluation. "Who has known the mind of the Lord so that he can teach him?" However, we have the mind of Christ.

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Grace, peace, and mercy be yours in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

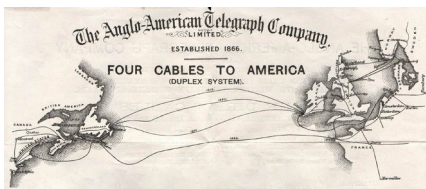
Change. That's what we're talking about today. In the early 1990's the "Teen Talking Barbie" doll hit store shelves. Although popular with the public she had managed to offend some folks. They went nuts when she stereotypically said girly things like: "Math is hard." and "I love shopping!"



Some became so upset they decided to change things. To bring about change they formed a fellowship which they called (*I'm not making this us*) the Barbie Liberation Organization.¹ The BLO acquired a few hundred talking Barbie dolls and a similar number of G.I. Joe dolls. (Which we all know are not dolls! They are action figures!) Then they transferred Barbie's voice box to G.I. Joe, and G.I. Joe's to Barbie.

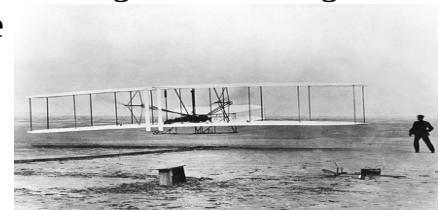
Having kept their receipts, they returned the altered dolls to the unknowing toy store. The store sold the "Teen Talking Barbie" to children. Those children, when they made Barbie talk, heard her shout things like, "Vengeance is *MINE!*" Those children who had the G.I. Joe doll heard him say sweetly sing-song things like, "Let's plan our dream wedding."

Change. The Scouts have seen some change over the years. Some good, some perhaps not so good. Some of you are in the Scouts. That has changed your life. You are not, and will not be, the same person. I appreciate how the Scout leadership here teaches good morality, honor, valor, honesty and integrity, and an adherence to, and respect for, the truths of Holy Scripture. They teach and support your faith and your church. Some of you have become Eagle Scouts this year. Putting that on your resume will take you places. It shows a level of dedication and maturity that people respect. I can tell you when I was hiring people things like that got my attention. It changes who you are and where you can go.



Change. Whether we want to or not all of us experience change. Have you ever had the chance to talk to someone over 100 years old. They can not only talk about men landing on the moon, they can also remember the first of flight of the Wright

Brothers at Kitty-Hawk. They can remember when the first trans-oceanic telegraph message had been sent, with a cellphone sitting on the table next to them. Those folks have seen some change!



1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbie_Liberation_Organization



Change. Every one of you has experienced change. Many of you remember when all phones had wires that attached them to the wall. Remember when cellphones were carried in large leather bags hung over your shoulder. The only thing you could do on them was make a phone call. How do cell phones look now, and what can you do on them?



Change. It's everywhere, all the time. Even Jesus, in the minds of men, has undergone change. (In the minds of men.) Although the Bible clearly says Jesus is "the same yesterday, today and forever,"² the Savior's image has often been altered. In the first centuries of the church, Jesus was considered the friend of the lowly, the poor, and the sinner. By the year 500, the Lord of Life had been adopted as the great supporter of both government and state. By the year 1000, Jesus was transformed into a conquering warrior. By 1500, Jesus had been altered into a Divinity so remote, so angry, and so furious with humanity's sin, that people feared Him with terror and dread.

What about today. Today Jesus is, well, Jesus has become for many folks not so much the Lord as He is a good guy, buddy Jesus, a teacher-philosopher whose religion is no more "true" than is any other faith. The Savior's claim to being "the Way, the Truth and the Life"³ and the only way to the Father is discounted as being too exclusive, and His powerful declaration, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live,"⁴ is pushed aside as being wishful thinking on the part of the people who wrote the story.



Because Jesus has "*changed*," many church bodies and congregations have changed. Across the country, crosses are now deemed offensive, and are being removed from signs and steeples. Instead of offering classes on what the Bible teaches and what a person needs to believe if they wish to enter Heaven, many congregations wishing to grow numerically have decided to offer classes in living a better life and social justice. You can find their sermons all over the Internet.

Change. Now, you may believe from what I've said so far that this message is going to speak against change. Everyone knows we Lutherans like our tradition. No doubt most of you have heard those all powerful words, "We've never done it

2 Hebrews 13:8
3 John 14:6
4 John 11:25

that way before.” You might think this sermon is going to be a message about the foibles of change! It’s not.



Change is nothing new to the Church. Change is nothing new to God. The Universe which surrounds you is there because God, with a word, wished it into being. That is change! When God saw Adam and Eve banished from the Garden of Eden, alone, lost, dying, and condemned, He promised change. He promised to send a Savior who would restore them, reunite them, redeem them.⁵ That was change. When the Lord heard the cries of the His people who were being held in Egyptian slavery He sent Moses, along with ten plagues, to free them. That was change. He then sent them directly to Mount Sinai to give them a whole new way of worship. That was change!



2,000 years ago God sent His Son. Even our calendar reflects the greatness of that change. Born true man because of His virgin mother,⁶ and true God because of His conception by the Holy Spirit,⁷ Jesus’ entire life was spent rewriting our destination of damnation and substituting God’s graciously given salvation. Then, at the end of His life Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God, was falsely arrested, unfairly accused, illegally condemned, and nailed to posts. All so that our eternity would change. Then, on the third day, Jesus changed even more. He rose from the dead. On that glorious morning of grace, God brought about a change which affects the life and eternity of all who believe on Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Because Christ is risen we no longer have to say a final farewell to a loved one who is dying in the faith. Because Christ is risen, we no longer have to wonder what has happened to those who, in faith, have breathed their last. Because Christ is risen, all who believe in Jesus know they have a living Friend to help them through every day they are given. Believers may not be free from all the pains and woes of this world, but because Christ is risen, these pains are brought into an endurable perspective.



No one knew that fact better than the Apostle Paul. Paul had been educated as, and became a member of, the Pharisees. As such he would have known the Old Testament backwards, forwards, and inside out. Paul became a fanatical persecutor of the newly established Christian faith. His life was dedicated to putting out

5 Genesis 3:15
6 Matthew 1:25
7 Matthew 1:18

the flame of anyone who believed in Jesus as their Savior. That was Paul's life purpose, until the Lord changed his life. ... and what a change!

On a mission to arrest and imprison the faithful followers of the Savior, Paul had a personal encounter with the crucified and risen Jesus. That visit changed Paul permanently. It changed his perspective. It changed his politics. It changed his work. It changed his witness, and it changed his eternity. Forgiven of the past, filled with hope for the future, Paul gave up his role as persecutor and became a public proclaimer of the wonderful glory and grace which comes from believing in the Savior's salvation. From that moment on, Paul told anyone, everyone, of how their lives could be changed. Changed through faith in the Redeemer.

Almost 2,000 years ago, using quill and parchment, Paul shared the story of salvation. This message, that I give you today, was composed on a computer and is delivered through a wireless microphone to you here, as well as over radio and Internet. The media and method of delivery has changed, the circumstance and situation in which you live will change, but the message of salvation remains unchanged. When Jesus Christ is your Savior your temporal and eternal life is wonderfully changed.



Every week, for years and years faithful pulpits have shared a changeless Christ with a changing world. Through wars, military skirmishes, and police actions; in good times and bad; in times of social unrest and upheaval; during days of financial deflation, inflation, recession, depression or surplus; on AM, FM and XM; on tapes, CDs, pod casts and video streaming we have shared Christ crucified and risen.



Change is what Jesus does. To repentant hearts Jesus promises complete and total forgiveness. If you are saying, "I doubt it," I want you to know that thought does not come from God. If you think you, or others, are beyond forgiveness you are listening to Satan. Jesus forgave Paul the murderer, David the adulterer, and Mary Magdalene the prostitute, He does the same for all who repent. Look around you. There is no person who is too good to not need that forgiveness which Jesus gives. There is no person who is too terrible to be beyond forgiveness. Jesus lived, died, and rose to give us peace, healing and salvation.

Holy Scripture in clear. It says:



Do you not know that wicked people will not inherit God's kingdom? Stop deceiving yourselves! People who commit sexual sins, who worship false gods, those who

commit adultery, homosexuals, or thieves, those who are greedy or drunk, who use abusive language, or who rob people will not inherit God's kingdom.

... and then listen to what Paul says to those to whom he is writing:

That's what some of you were! But you have been washed and made holy, and you have received God's approval in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.⁸

By the Holy Spirit's power, repent, believe and be saved. No matter what you have seen, no matter what you have done, no matter where you have been simply apologize to God, believe in Him, and be saved. That is what Peter told those who killed Jesus the Holy Christ of God.⁹ He said:



All of you must turn to God and change the way you think and act, and each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

This promise belongs to you and to your children and to everyone who is far away. It belongs to everyone who worships the Lord our God.

That is God's message of change to you. That is the great change our Lord gives to all who believe. Our unchanging God is the God of change. Changing you to be what He wants you to be. So that you can be that salt and light of change in the world. Changing our world into the waiting room of heaven rather than a holding cell outside the gates of Hell.

May Christ in your life change you to be, and see, the world through His eyes.

Amen.



8 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Acts 2:38-39