

Sent Week 1: What changes should you make when God changes you?

Mike's Minutes/Announcements:

We have been having conversations with pastor Bishop Thompson on Facebook live about racial reconciliation and now we are excited to host a unity service with his church, God's Grace Community Church, on Sunday Jan 17th as we work on bridging racial divides and making a dream become reality! You can join us in person or the live stream! There is limited seating for the live service, so make sure to register and save your seat.

Introduce the series:

During Christmas we unpacked the concept of "Immanuel," God with us.

Now we want to ask the question, how do we respond to God coming to us?

Another way to say it would be like this.

What changes should be evident in your life when God changes you?

One of the things that has been on my heart is a word for the year.

I have thought and prayed a bit over this "word" for the year. Many people do this. Most people come up with words like strong, fierce, or phrases like be brave, or world changer. I don't have an problem with words or phrases like this, but this year for me I feel the word "others." The phrase would be "help others."

I landed on this by thinking about Christ.

Jesus' with access to limitless knowledge, resources and power used his uses it all to mobilize others.

Who did he prepare as the leader of the church? Peter.

Luke 3:4-14

⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

⁷ He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" ¹¹ And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we,

what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”¹

- John the Baptist is the last of the Old Testament Prophets. He holds a very unique role in history. He is the one who is preparing people to see and receive Jesus. Can you imagine being so blind you could miss Christ completely?
- Have you ever stopped to ask; “If Jesus was to come today where would you find him?” Would He be a Democrat, Republican? Would he be black or white? Would he be middle class, rich or maybe even a homeless poor man? There is a good case that if Jesus came today He wouldn’t be of the conquest New Roman Empire at all. I tend to think he would be born more like a Native American or maybe even to a faithful Chinese Christian girl in the middle of nowhere. Most of America, just like Rome would only have heard rumors or wouldn’t hear about him at all until his mission was done.
- I watched a video the other day where they interviewed WNBA players. They were pointing out the very real income inequality between men’s and women’s basketball. I actually don’t have a problem at all with equal pay. We just have to remember the poor WNBA players are still among the wealthiest and most free women in the world and throughout history. The BBC did a huge project trying to figure out the global average income. When comparing the purchase power of the American dollar to other global currencies we find that the average person is paid the equivalent of “\$400.00 a month.” However, “2/3 of the world makes closer to \$2.00 a day.”²
- My friends, we are the crazy wealthy of the wealthy when looking at humanity throughout history. We need a monster dose of humility. If Jesus was to come today it’s not unrealistic to think that we would be the ones who miss it completely and only hear rumors of the controversial magician in India or China.
- John the Baptist has to come to prepare people to see Jesus. The one prime message we see over and over again in Scripture is God resists the proud and powerful (James 4:6). The way we begin to see Christ and experience true change is with humility.
- All your temporal earthly “advantages” can’t save you. Even your spiritual lineage alone can’t save you (Luke 3:4-9). In fact, trusting in these things might actually make real salvation even harder (Matthew 19:24). There is only humility before God.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Lk 3:3–14.

² Alexander, Ruth. “Where Are You on the Global Pay Scale?” BBC News. BBC, March 29, 2012. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-17512040>.

- This lead us to the very question the crowds listing to John the Baptist asked. And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” (Vs. 10).
 - “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise” (Vs. 11). Live crazy generous. This is way more than a rule like a 10% tithe, it’s a heart of mercy and charity. It’s not about a number or percent, it’s about a heart overwhelmed by the grace of God that can’t wait to pour it out on others.
 - Vs. 12-14 “Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ ¹³ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than you are authorized to do.’ ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation and be content with your wages.’” Don’t change your job, change your conduct in it. Bring the ways of Jesus to your current life.
 - Notice he tells tax collectors and soldiers to keep their jobs! These were two professions that were seen as detestable by Jewish people. The God of the universe lets them keep their job, just charges them to change their heart in it.
 - It isn’t Christ against culture, it’s Christ redeeming culture. Jesus didn’t do away with the tax collector, soldier or even the Roman cross – He redeemed them. He wants to redeem everything. As God redeems your heart you should be redeeming with the work of your hands.

Final Thoughts:

- We need to stop seeing God as random or out of control. What if He divinely placed you in a unique time in history to do God honoring work? You are not just being redeemed, you are to work as a redeemer.
- Commit to the *21 Days of Prayer* with us. Go before a living God and let Him work on your heart so He can do good work, no, a *great* work with your hands.