

## **Sermons - 2007**

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# Chapter 1. All Things New

## **New Years Day sermon - Randolph Christian Church, January 7, 2007**

*"Behold I make all things new.  
(Revelation 21:5)*

*Therefore if any man be in Christ,  
he is a new creature: old things are  
passed away; behold, all things are  
become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

### **Introduction:**

Turn in your Bibles please to *Revelation 21:5* and *2 Corinthians 5:17*. We will make use of both texts this morning, as we think about new things: another new year which we start today, and the new adventure that you and I as a church are setting out on today. New things.

When I think of New Years and new things (and certainly the new relationship between you and I qualifies), I always think of these verses. *"Behold I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

What does it mean that He makes all things new? what does it mean that old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new? May I suggest that when you hear the words "all things new" you might replace them with the word "change." For these verses teach us that Jesus changes us, first in our salvation, and continually throughout our lives. And these verses encourage us to embrace that change.

Consider a few ways in which "all things new" speaks of "change."

### **"All things new" is a reminder of the need for change.**

One must experience CHANGE in order to become a Christian in the first place! Without experiencing that change, we cannot please God, for the Bible says that in our natural state we are lost, and incapable of living for God.

*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: (Romans 3:10)*

*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (Romans 3:23)*

*There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:11)*

*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)*

Now, if you will just consider those verses together, you will see that CHANGE is required if we are going to please God. In our natural state, all of us are sinners (*Romans 3:10,23*), and as such cannot please God. In our natural state we do not have faith, we do not seek God (*Romans 3:11*). Faith is the only thing that will please God (*Hebrews 11:6*) and yet it is not natural for us to have faith. So, change is required. Somewhere along the line we must experience the change that moves us from unbelief to belief, from lost to saved, from dead in sins to alive in Christ! Without CHANGE there is no salvation. All things must become new.

May I use myself as an illustration? This is not something I like to do much, knowing that my goal is to preach Christ, and not myself. However, I believe on this first day of our relationship, it is appropriate for me to share some things about myself.

1. Let me say, first of all, I understand fully that I am a sinner. I have no illusions about this. I, like you, am a sinner struggling to serve God in a sin-stricken body and a sin-blighted world.

The Apostle Paul said once, *"I am the chief of sinners."* I doubt that he was. But he felt that way, and I have sometimes felt the same way. There comes a point in our lives where the veil is torn away, where the starry eyed notions of youth are replaced with the hard facts of adulthood. Though we start with the best of intentions, we find that we face a terrible adversary, more powerful than ourselves, and that in spite of our best efforts, we are but sinners, incapable of anything but failure apart from God's help.

You, too, have to come to that place or you cannot be saved. You must see yourself as lost or you cannot be found. If Christ is going to change you; if He is going to make you new, you must see that you need that change. Jesus told the rich young ruler, *You must be born again.*

2. And so, I am a sinner, and I know it. But yet, I also know without doubt that I am saved, because there came a day (here in this church, by the way), when I saw my need, and asked for the solution. I believed in Jesus Christ. I believed that He was who He said He was - the Son of God, my Savior. I believed that His sacrifice on the cross was for me, and in my place. And I decided to believe in nothing else, but His finished work. I let Him make me new. I let Him change me. And from that moment, I have been saved.

*"Behold I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)*

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

And by the way, notice that those verses say nothing about you changing yourself. God doesn't want you turning over a new leaf, or trying harder to live right for Him. There is no change you can implement that will fix this problem. The change has to come from Him. He changes us when we place our faith in Him. He makes you new; you can't make yourself new. This is where Christianity differs from all the other religions of the world. They teach the importance of us trying to reach up to God. Christianity teaches that God reached down to us. He does the changing if you just ask for it.

On this first Sunday in this New Year, may I ask you to examine yourself? Have you experienced the change that the Bible says you must experience? What are you trusting in to make you right with God? Was there a time in your life when you saw yourself as lost, and in need of a change in your life, and you asked the One who makes all things new to make you new?

We can go nowhere as Christians without taking this first step, and so I encourage you to act upon it if you have not done so.

## **"All things new" is a call to keep changing.**

"Making all things new" doesn't stop with salvation, though. Change is continual in the Christian life. God wants to work in your life daily. And, if you want to be obedient to His Word, you must let Him do that work.

The Apostle Paul said it like this, *"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."* (2 Corinthians 3:18) Do you get what that means? Paul pictures the Christian experience as our gazing into the glory of God, as if we were looking into a mirror. As we look into the mirror, we see ourselves continuously changing to look more and more like Christ! Change! If we are walking with Christ, we will be becoming more and more like Him.

Peter made it even clearer when he wrote, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) We need to be growing, changing, continuously.

Now think about this for a minute:

**Growth; change, is healthy. Therefore, if we're not changing, we're not healthy.**

1. This is true in the work-a-day world.

I read a story about a man who, after 25 years with one company, was still doing the same old job and drawing the same salary. Finally he went to his boss and told him he felt he had been neglected. "After all," he said, "I've had a quarter of a century of experience." "My dear fellow," sighed the boss, "you haven't had a quarter of a century of experience, you've had one experience for a quarter of a century." (Source Unknown)

If your secular job is anything like mine, you are expected to be getting better and better at it. To not do so is considered a bad thing. And it's no different with your walk with Christ. Are you getting closer to Him? Are you better at it today than yesterday? Are you "growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior?"

2. It's true with respect to our physical health.

Few things are as sad as a child that doesn't properly develop. Just up the road from us a few miles is the Hattie-Larham Foundation, a facility dedicated, among other things, to providing help for severely ill children. If you were to go there and walk the halls of that institution, you would be touched in the deepest part of your soul. You would be saddened beyond imagination at the plight of some of those little ones.

And yet, it is no different when a Christian remains undeveloped, is it? To remain in the same state we were in when we trusted Christ, and to never grow, is just as unhealthy in the spiritual realm as in the physical.

No matter where you are in your Christian walk, you need to be growing... changing... letting Christ make you new. Every day.

Have you heard of the famous cellist, Pablo Casals? I read that when he reached 95, a young reporter threw him a question: "Mr. Casals, you are 95 and the greatest cellist that ever lived. Why do you still practice six hours a day?" And Mr. Casals answered, "Because I think I'm making progress." (Dr. Maxwell Maltz, quoted in Bits & Pieces, June 24, 1993, p. 12)

And of course, you know how the Apostle Paul continued to study and grow and change right up until his death. While in prison in Rome, he wrote the book of 2 Timothy. In that letter he asked Timothy to come to him in Rome, and he wanted him to bring along some things. *The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.* (2 Timothy 4:13) Did you see that? Those books and parchments were items he would use in study. Here he was at the end of his life, knowing perfectly well he was "about to be offered" (martyred), and yet he was still seeking to grow as a Christian.

And I say to you this morning, that as your pastor I will love you enough to challenge you to keep growing. And I ask the same from you.

You see, you have a right to expect that I will work hard to grow as a Christian, and work hard to grow daily in my understanding of and application of the Bible. But here's a shocker - do you know that I have a right to expect the same from you? There is no distinction in the Bible between pastors and parishioners when it comes to the necessity for growth - we are all supposed to be equal in our efforts there - if we're not growing, we're not healthy!

Are you growing?

*"Behold I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)*

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

### **When we are changing, we may be uncomfortable.**

Now here's where it sometimes gets difficult. Change is not always easy. Sometimes it is downright hard. You see, when all things are constantly new, we may sometimes find ourselves out of our comfort zone. After all, as human beings we don't like new things, for the most part. (That's why every generation only seems to like their own music!)

Peter experienced a little of this discomfort in *Acts 10:9-16*. He was used to certain rules and regulations in his religion. He was used to dietary restrictions that had been handed down for generations. And yet God gave him a vision in this passage; a vision that showed God's clear expectation that Peter CHANGE his way of thinking to conform to God's new instruction. We must always be willing to grow in Christ, constantly expanding our understanding of His Word and His will, even if it makes us temporarily uncomfortable.

I would suggest to you that our new relationship is an example of this. We will probably all be a little out of our comfort zones as we work through what my being pastor here means. We have different traditions, you and I, which, if we're not careful, will get in our way.

The Lord led me down a road with certain traditions. And I think He knew what He was doing. He doesn't make mistakes. So I am here today, with that background, because that is precisely what He wanted. However, this just may cause some discomfort on both sides.

- By accepting this assignment, I have to be willing to examine some things, and consider changing to conform to some traditions that differ from what I'm used to. After all, God has kept this church here for so many years for a reason. (And you are to be commended for your faithfulness, by the way.)

If it's just a preference on my part, I'm willing to consider change.

If it's a Biblical truth, though, I pray that I have the fortitude to stand for it, no matter the cost.

- By you calling me as pastor, you have to be willing to examine some things, as well. (I assume you are so willing, or you would not have called me.)

Preferences are negotiable, God's Word is not. Traditions are negotiable, God's Word is not. If either you or I are committed to any tradition above the Bible, we are going to be uncomfortable.

If you and I agree to commit ourselves to the Word of God as our sole guide, above all traditions past and present, we will do just fine. (By the way, as I read the history of the Christian Church, I find this to be a pillar - the Bible is to be the sole standard for faith and practice. No tradition is to ever trump God's Word. "Where the Bible speaks, we speak" (Get this quote)

One thing we can be sure of - God does not make mistakes. If it is God's will for me to pastor this church, then I believe He knows exactly what He is doing, and that we will succeed.

In order to experience all things being made new, we MUST step out of our comfort zone. And we must do it over and over. That process never stops.

ILLUS - Song "Step into the Water"? The one Beth likes about pushing out into the deep?

## Conclusion:

Now let me draw this message to a close with a couple of final reminders. We'll talk about these things more in the future, but I want to just mention them.

First, it's important to remember that not everything changes. The "everything is relative" mindset of the day is wrong, so don't be caught up in it. There are things God has declared as absolutes; foundational truth that never changes. For example, just to name a few - God never changes, Jesus Christ never changes, and the Word of God never changes.

Second, realize the urgency of things. We do not have forever to get with the program! I am convinced the time is short.

Jesus said *"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. (John 9:4)"* (We need the same urgency.)

*Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. (Luke 12:35-40)*

As we begin 2007, and as we embark on this new relationship between you and I, let us remember that if we are walking with Christ, He will change us, first in our salvation, and then continually throughout our lives.

May I challenge you to examine yourself in two ways this morning?

1. Have you experienced and embraced the change of salvation? Are you certain that you are saved and on your way to heaven? Contrary to what you may hear from others, there is no other way to heaven. You must be born again, changed by the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Are you in the process of changing daily? Are you growing as a Christian, or are you stagnant? Are you closer to Him today than you were the first Sunday of 2006, or are you pretty much the same?

May God help us all to let him work in our lives, to change us, to make all things new, today and everyday.

