

Community Church of Issaquah

April 27, 2025

## When Change Happens

Rev. Vincent Lachina

As I've moved through this aging process and tried to adapt to all the different ways my age now is nothing like my age when I was, say at 40, or half of my age now. The one thing that I do not like at all and that is very hard for me to deal with is this thing called 'change.' From time to time, I'll spend an hour or so looking at old photographs from my past. One of those that always caused me to shake my head and try to remember that I could have done that. It's a photo of me as the drum major for my college. The new band director wanted our Baptist college band to be more like the Florida A&M Black band. There was a lot of jumping and shaking if you can imagine. And there, as the drum major was me. Believe it or not, I could bend over backwards so far that the top of my hat touched the ground behind me. I could also dance on the field. Once, when our band performed at the half-time when we visited a sister Baptist college, their student newspaper took a photo of me going wild and titled the picture, "The Bugaloo Baby." Let me know if you ever want to see it, I'll show you.

But I've changed. Life has changed. Our world has changed. The core of all our lives now is the word 'change.' As we give our focus to the resurrection of Jesus that we are celebrating on this very day. For some time, I have been thinking about exactly what that event means, and

even more so, what it meant for the people in the day of Christ. Here are a few thoughts that have flooded my head during this Lenten Season and especially as we give our attention to the death and rising from the dead of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Have you ever thought what it was like for the followers and disciples of Jesus who were living through this heartbreaking time? For 3 years of ministry, Jesus was there. They could see him. They could hear him. They could touch him. He was real. And then he was arrested, put on trial and convicted. Then he was crucified – put to death. His human body wrapped in burial cloths and put in a cave. No one could see him or touch him anymore. He could not be seen. But confusion came when he conquered death and came back to life, not in his human body but in his heavenly body. Changed from human to heavenly. That was difficult enough for them to comprehend or even understand.

And then things changed again. Jesus left this earth and went up to live with his Heavenly Father, God. The change was overwhelming – it was change from the seen to the unseen. Jesus was walking the roads of Galilee or teaching in the temples or riding a donkey into Jerusalem. He was seen until he left this earth and ascended into heaven and was unseen. That was the left for those in the earthly world of Jesus. For us, we've never seen the human Jesus. We live and honor the unseen Jesus. Try to wrap your head around what people who knew Jesus or saw him had to deal with when he was no longer there. He was unseen,

and they were asked to continue following the rabbi who was gone and they couldn't see him anymore.

At the very center of all that is the reality of our Easter, the resurrection. What was the change in that? There was Jesus, taken from the cross where he had died, likely of suffocation. The women who were there had faithfully begun to do what they knew to do with a dead person -- to clean them, wrap them in burial clothing and prepare them for the final burial. He was taken to the burial site, a cave, and because it was already sundown that begins the Jewish sabbath, they had to leave his body there with the sadness that they would need to come back to finish their work. Jesus was dead and the grieving began.

Returning to the grave site after the Sabbath was over, there was an encounter with someone inside the tomb. Startled, the voice spoke and said, "why do you seek the living among the dead. He is not here. He has risen. He had risen indeed." There was a change. A huge change. Jesus was no longer dead. He had changed to be living again. Though the message for the women was powerful and surprising, it was the reality that Jesus had foretold before his death. Death would have no victory over Jesus. The reality was a change from dead to living. He has risen.

This resurrection had a huge impact on the beliefs of those who chose to follow Jesus. They no longer simply followed the words Jesus spoke to them. There was the complexity of their having to change from their old faith beliefs to a whole new world of faith. When they had chosen to follow Jesus, they had to rearrange their Jewish traditions and

their understanding of God and Jesus. Now it was even more complicated. They were called to change from the way they had grown up to believe and change to a new faith.

God had promised to send a Messiah, a Savior, and Jesus had claimed to be that. Many believed him and many didn't. It was those who did believe that changed their spiritual lives and faithfully followed Jesus and his teachings. Accepting Jesus as Savior does indeed cause change in what we believe, just as it did for them. For me, one sad part of this story about the death and resurrection of Jesus is that there were those who refused to change from an old faith to a new faith. It was those who rose against Christ and led in his crucifixion and death. Perhaps it's similar to that now in our world as well. There are many who refuse to change from not believing in Jesus and choose to stay in their "old faith" rather than rebirth in a "new faith."

A last change I've been thinking about is the change from the ministry of Jesus that centered in one nation in the Arab world to the massiveness of Christianity that now encircles the entire earth. Twelve disciples and a couple of apostles travelling around country to country to preach the Gospel to millions of missionaries, ministers, laity preaching and leading so many to believe in Christ. Do you think that the disciples would ever have imagined the incredible change from a small band of believers in Israel to the presence of believer in every country in the world? I'll be Peter and Paul would be gulping in disbelief if the Holy

Spirit would have told them what things would be like in two thousand years.

Change. Things change in our lives constantly and often we don't give it much thought. But, as we close this Lenten Season and celebrate the return from the dead of our Lord, Jesus Christ, it might not be a bad thing to give some consideration to not only the change Christ brought about in life, but the incredible change he brought about in death.