

Sunday, July 8, 2018

Lectionary 14

7th Sunday after Pentecost

Some Things Will Never Change

Ezekiel 2:1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

Delivered to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

1301 N. Broom St Wilmington DE 19806

Rev. Jason Churchill

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable
in your sight o God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

Amen

In his book, *You Can't Go Home Again*, Thomas Wolfe wrote:

“Some things will never change. Some things will always be the same. Lean down your ear upon the earth and listen.

The voice of forest water in the night, a woman's laughter in the dark, the clean, hard rattle of raked gravel, the cricketing stitch of midday in hot meadows, the delicate web of children's voices in bright air--these things will never change.

The glitter of sunlight on roughened water, the glory of the stars, the innocence of morning, the smell of the sea in harbors, the feathery blur and smoky buddings of young boughs, and something there that comes and goes and never can be captured, the thorn of spring, the sharp and tongueless cry--these things will always be the same.

All things belonging to the earth will never change--the leaf, the blade, the flower, the wind that cries and sleeps and wakes again, the trees whose stiff arms clash and tremble in the dark, and the dust of lovers long since buried in the earth--all things proceeding from the earth to seasons, all things that lapse and change and come again upon the earth--these things will always be the same, for they come up from the earth that never changes, they go back into the earth that lasts forever. Only the earth endures, but it endures forever.

The tarantula, the adder, and the asp will also never change. Pain and death will always be the same. But under the pavements trembling like a pulse, under the buildings trembling like a cry, under the waste of time, under the hoof of the beast above the broken bones of cities, there will be something growing like a flower, something bursting from the earth again, forever deathless, faithful, coming

into life again like April.”

— Thomas Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again**

Some things never change.

“Jesus came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded.” The people wondered out loud...is this not the carpenter’s boy? Is he not one of our locals?? Who does he think he is???

In this case, Jesus could not simply just go back home without question. He went back home after traveling and healing and preaching...he went home a different person than when he left and the reception was not all that great.

Some things never change.

Throughout the Bible, prophets and wise people were never accepted in their hometowns...“truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his home town' (Luke 4:16-30), “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.”

“Is this not the carpenter’s boy? Is he not one of our locals?? Who does he think he is???

In what sometimes seems a changeless world, change...when it happens...is met with such resistance...such fear and uncertainty...

But just as somethings are forever changeless...in other ways, change is inevitable. Just as Jesus and Thomas Wolfe may say you can’t go home...Jennifer Nettles and Bon Jovi pose the question “who says you can’t go home?”

When God did something new in Jesus Christ, the changeless world changed.

It changed in such a way that retained the beauty of creation...the fact that while yes lovers are buried and return to the dust from whence they came...the power of God’s love washed over the world so that things like death no longer had any say.

Love and compassion could overcome and defeat even armies and empires of fear and destruction.

The foolishness of peace and forgiveness would crush hatred and spite...the very mechanics of the world changed because of Jesus Christ...and while this message may not seem to have gotten past his own village, it spread over millennia into a world that we now stand in and wonder...

Will the armies and empires of fear and destruction once again prevail?

Will hatred and spite overcome peace and forgiveness?

Even in this time and this our own corner in the world we live amongst a “rebellious house” as did Ezekiel...a house that will not hear, nor listen, nor see...

Some things never change.

But the word of God has come to us as it did to Ezekiel...“stand up on your feet...I am sending you to the people...thus says the Lord God...” fear and destruction are not the final answer...hatred and spite will not rule over you...for with God we know...for with God we know and will always know...

That when Jesus changed our world...when Jesus changed what we thought was unchangeable...love and compassion overcame the empire then and it will overcome it again today.

That peace and forgiveness can stand in the face of the deepest hatred and spite and overcome it in such a way that the Holy on of Israel...the Holy God of Jesus Christ himself...will be seen through us...

Because Jesus changed the world for us we now stand unchangeable in the love of God and through the power of the Holy Spirit we can change the stone-cold heart of a world and show forth the light of Christ.

That will never change.

Now you are not going to go town to town with nothing and chase out the demons from people and perform healings...

But your voice can be heard across this world through the ways in which you choose to use it...be it in conversation with your neighbor, a letter or email, or through a tweet...you can open yourself and be vulnerable to what it is and where it is that God sends you to be the voice of this unchangeable love.

Some things never change...

Some things change...

What in your life and your faith does not change and what in your life and faith needs to change?

* From p. 40 of Signet Edition of Thomas Wolfe's *“You Can't Go Home Again”* (1940)