

SUNDAY, April 21, 2024 “Jesus Brings Change”

John 10:11-18      Luke 5:17-39

Do you believe in miracles? But what is a miracle? We've shared these definitions: “a surprising, extraordinary event that is taken as a sign of the supernatural power of God which is explicable by natural or scientific laws. We have also learned that the purpose of miracles is to prove and legitimize as well as value the one who is God's messenger. Miracles appear in both the Old and New Testaments but it is the miracles that Jesus does which call us to understand who He is, what he does and the relationship he builds with others prior to his death and helps us to see the glory of his resurrection. We also look to Jesus' miracles not just as a challenge to our minds, but a promise to our hearts because the world we all want is coming—some day! That is, miracles of Jesus serve as a glimpse and just a bit of what God will accomplish when in the future there will be the New Heaven and the New Earth. Things will be different from what they are today and this is the good news.

Some people don't like things to change yet with Jesus, change is inevitable! Even today when we experience the waters of baptism for little Lizzie! Through baptism we welcomed her officially into God's Family. For those who are a part of the family of God, have experiences the waters of baptism often as an infant or child and later on come to profess faith on their own as young people or adults. And when one does profess their faith in God, Father, Son and Spirit change happens. The old passes away and the new begins. For anyone in Christ is a new creation, the old is gone and new life begins.

This is also true for those who encounter Christ and come to know him in faith. Our reading from Luke 5 tells the story about a group of men who were carrying a man on a bed. They knew that Jesus was there and these men believed Jesus could help their friend. We don't know the relationship of the man who was paralyzed with those who carried his bed, nor where

they came from, but they believed that if they could get their friend to Jesus he could do something for him. Something that would change his life and probably theirs as well!

They found no way to get into the house because of the crowd around Jesus so they go up on the roof, move the thatch and tiles that were and lower him down in the midst of the crowd right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw their faith- he said, "Friend your sins are forgiven you " Not only did Jesus forgive the man who was in need of healing, but he saw the faith of his friends, so determined to help him. There was a discussion about forgiveness and healing with the Pharisees and whether Jesus had the authority to do so. But Jesus countered this what is different-to forgive sins or stand up and walk. Then Jesus says, So that you know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralyzed man, stand up, take your bed and go home. The man did just this but glorified God!. Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

Strange or miraculous things? They witnessed the healing of a paralyzed man who could now walk freely. With the help from his friends he met Jesus, was forgiven and healed. Because of Jesus, things changed!

As we continue to celebrate Jesus' resurrection, things change. You might say that there are changing all around us all the time. We are not the same as we were yesterday, nor are we or will we be the same tomorrow. But are we willing to trust the one who rose from death, who healed the paralyzed man and who is alive and with us now?

We say yes we will follow Jesus but are we going to do this as Jesus' co-pilot? Or are we going to be like sheep and enable the Good shepherd to truly lead us?

The Good Shepherd is an image used in John 10:1–21 where Jesus Christ is depicted as the one who lays down his life for his sheep. Similar imagery is used in Psalm 23 "the Lord is my Shepherd" and in Ezekiel 34:11–16. 11 *"For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. 12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where*

*they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. 14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign Lord. 16 I will search for the lost and bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.*

Jesus describes his role as Shepherd- the one who maintains the gate and is the door, the one who calls his sheep by name and leads them out. He leads them to the pasture where they are fed and watered, where they live in the world and where life happens. Jesus is our Shepherd and if we know him as Saviour, he calls us out to follow him into the world. We are not abandoned. We are fed, nurtured by the Spirit and led to live in the world according to his teachings of love.

Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection enables us to learn of the depth of his love. Jesus leads us but we must follow and let him lead us wherever he calls us to be his hands and feet. But are willing? Are the changes that Jesus brings to our lives what we really desire or are we only wanting a little bit?

Jesus wants you- all of you= and He wants you to follow him for better days will come. There will be days of joy and love, hope and peace, if you follow the shepherd, believe in Jesus' and live for Him. This is wonder of Jesus' Easter Miracle. Do you believe?

Let us pray.

God of grace we thank you for Jesus as he is the Good Shepherd who died for us all. Give us courage to walk by faith knowing that we are not alone. Help us we pray. Amen.