

Confessions of the Pastor's Wife – A Change of Heart

The other day, my 13-year old posed this philosophical question while we were driving:

Suppose you have an axe. You change the blade twice, and the handle three times. Is it still the same axe?

I thought about it for a bit...

Because the axe is not a sentient being, I argued, it is not the same axe. There is no life-force within the axe that would remain once its parts are replaced. However, I continued, the same is not true for humans, as we have an essence of life within us that cannot be changed. You can replace some parts of a human, like a knee, or hairstyle, but the essence of the person remains.

My son, not one to linger too long in the philosophical depths, quickly returned to his favorite topic—Baby Yoda. But I, having the nature of one who stewes, continued to think on the issue. Something was nagging at me...I thought about people suffering from debilitating mental diseases, like Alzheimer's and dementia. Are they the same people they were before the illness struck? In my experiences, the answer is both yes and no.

But, there's something else that is troubling me about my response to my son's query; because, at the heart of the question lies the fundamental belief in whether or not people can truly change. As a Jesus follower, I'm supposed to believe that people can change. As someone who has always been prone to optimism and idealism, I'm supposed to champion the belief that people can become better than what they were when they first started out. However...I'm not sure that my responses to others truly reflect this belief in the power of changed life.

Too often, I judge others based on past experiences. It's the basic survivalist instinct we're all born with. Our brains are hard-wired to seek and respond to patterns. So, if someone has been hurtful to us in the past, our human instinct tells us that they will likely hurt us again in the future.

Jesus' entire ministry, however, completely rejects this fundamental operating principle. Jesus changed lives everywhere he went. There's a whole list of people in the New Testament who were never the same once Jesus got ahold of them.

Peter, the impulsive young man who betrayed Jesus three times became the rock on which the church was established.

Paul, the egotistical and hypocritical religious leader who was intent on wiping out the early believers became one of the most outspoken proponents of the Gospel message.

Nicodemus, a wealthy Pharisee who went to Jesus in the dark of night later gave Jesus his own tomb for burial.

Zacchaeus, the tax collector who was likely a crook met Jesus one day and decided to repay everyone he'd ever cheated in order to follow Jesus.

The list goes on and on and on.... people who change because of the message of Jesus Christ and the imprint God makes on each of their souls.

I, too, am a continual work in transformation, as God leads me to be kinder, more accepting, more grace-filled, and to serve others more than myself.

So, with so much overwhelming evidence to the potential of people to change, why do I stubbornly persist in refusing to believe that others change, too? Why do I cling to the idea that people are what they always have been, and will continue to be that way? Honestly, the answer is probably because it's easier. It's easier to believe that people are what they have always been than to admit that people change. This is because change is frightening. Change messes up those patterns our brains depend on to make meaning in this world. If we accept the idea that people change, then we have to reject the idea of stasis, of permanence, of solid foundations. We must admit that, perhaps, we don't know everything, and that there are other truths beyond the ones we stubbornly cling to in order to make sense of this crazy world. We like the known, the absolute. It's comforting...but that kind of comfort leads to closed-mindedness. And Jesus was about opening minds, not closing them.

I'm not the same person I was 5, 10, 15, even 20 years before. God and I have been working hard on a lot of different aspects of my being to try and make me better than I was before. I'm guessing the same can be said for each of you. So, this week, let's embrace the idea that people can change. And let's praise God for the work he's doing in our lives to continue to make us more like him.

Blessings and Peace,

Sara

Anyone who
belongs to
Christ is a
new person.
The past is
forgotten,
and
everything is
new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17
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February 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
2. Services 8 & 10:00 Super Bowl	3	4	5 Be An Angel Yoga 6:15 Women's Bible Study 7:15 7:15	6 Men's Bible Study 7:00	7	8
9 Services 8 & 10:00 Scout Sunday 10 Souper Bowl Coll.	10	11	12 Be An Angel 10 Yoga 6:15	13	14 Happy Valentine's Day	15 Harvesters 9:00 am
16 Services 8 & 10:00	17	18	19 Be An Angel Yoga 6:15 Women's Bible Study 7:15	20 Men's Bible Study 7:00	21	22
23 Services 8 & 10:00	24	25	26 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00	27	28	29

***Thanks everyone who came out to worship
and enjoy our Pre Superbowl Party. It was
a great time and we are so proud of our
Chiefs!***

***Please go to Facebook to enjoy
more pictures!***



Prayer



Les Case	Katie May
Donald Cohan	Derek Petty
Dorothy Conn	Don Raymond
Cromer Family	Steve Raymond
Wade Davis	Nancy Rowe
Chad Elmer	Erin Scott
Janet Ford	Larry Sparks
Richard Fuerst	Ray Trowbridge
Winnie Fuerst	Marc Willis
Harvey Geary	Elaine West
Michael Hatfield	Dorothy Wilson

Congregation de Mellier
Heart and Soul Children's
Learning Center
All Ministries
of the Church

Souper Bowl Soup Collection

February 2 & 9

Benefiting the
Hillcrest Food Pantry

**SERVICE DAY
AT HARVESTERS
SATURDAY, FEB 15 9:00 - NOON**



**SIGN UP IN THE
CONNECT AREA**