

## EASTER 2020 - CHANGE

CHANGE! Change is in the air. Everywhere you look, change is taking place. The way we shop, communicate, dress, our healthcare, education, relationships, economy and the list goes on. The challenge is “we don’t like change.” As human beings we like status quo but COVID-19 has swept in and CHANGED our world!!

Peter was busy building the church when suddenly he was challenged to change. In Acts chapter 8, 9, & 10, the Holy Spirit moves in Peter’s ministry and there is change. Challenging, uncomfortable, transformational change. In chapter 10, we see the exclamation point of the Spirit’s moving, but the question would be will Peter embrace, will the church embrace this CHANGE and follow God’s lead?

In the midst of the stories of change (chapters 8, 9, 10), we see God bringing people together with the spirit and God’s leading. Many focus on the Ethiopian, Paul/Saul or Cornelius; but is the focus and call to the church/Peter/ you and I, one of welcoming all people?

Prior to this, the new church was being formed by those who were former Jews and those connected to the establishments. In Acts 10 we see CHANGE come to the mind, heart, and soul of Peter and his ministry. Is it possible that among all the changes of COVID-19, God is calling us, on Easter 2020 to CHANGE? To embrace a new way of living, loving and walking within our world?

Our passage from Acts 10 teaches us:

1. Peter “opens his mouth”

Most translations share that Peter “opened his mouth.” Why is this important? This statement emphasizes the importance of what is to follow. Peter/we all say a lot during our lives. Much of what we say can be summed up with “Blah, blah, blah”. Here the writer (Luke) wants people to LISTEN because Peter has opened his mouth for an important message, lesson, CHANGE! ARE you listening?

2. Favorites?

If we don’t like change as humans, we do like/love to have favorites. Favorite teams, foods, stores, hobbies, pets (dogs), and people! Peter is transformed by the Spirit to show no partiality (Romans 2:11 *For God does not show favoritism.*) Suddenly he is made aware that the Gospel is for all; the promise is for all nations (Genesis 12:3 *all peoples on earth will be blessed through you*). No matter of origin, race, economics, politics – the Gospel/Easter is for all people.

In this COVID crisis, I have heard many sad stories of people needing to choose who gets medicine, ventilators, and treatment to save lives while others die. The Gospel is for all so that all might LIVE!

3. Fear God “Boo!”

No, not the normal *fear*. Fear as we know it (especially with COVID-19) is about isolation, protection, and immobilization. Scripture often states, “fear not.” The fear that Peter speaks of is profound acknowledgment! Acknowledgment of God’s holiness, power, love, presence and the AWE of the Almighty, Living God. This fear does not handcuff us but changes us and sets us free to be disciples and do what is right and what is Godly.

4. The Gospel

Peter shows us that the KISS (keep it simple) method is best when sharing the Gospel! The love of God embodied in the life, ministry, suffering, death and RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ! KISS. No rules, laws, or personal opinions!

We must keep it simple and let go of our opinions of what is important or a must. Many of us need to change, to simplify.

5. Open our mouths

We all need to share the Easter story! John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Jesus died, Jesus lives for all people and we need to share it. OPEN our mouths!! Not opinions, rules, laws and judgment, but GRACE. So many people hear the Blah, blah, blah of "God's people" but they have never heard the Gospel story (KISS version) because we get in the way. It's time for us to open our mouth in a way that people will listen.

When COVID-19 is in the rearview mirror, our world will have changed! So many things are so different than they were before. Well, what about Easter 2020? Will it change you? Will we allow the Holy Spirit to move among us and change us, our method, our commitment, our relationship with Christ and the world we live in? CHANGE

If you were unable to worship with us at 10am on Facebook live, we want you to know we celebrated communion together. We want you to be able to celebrate with us as well! If you would like to take bread and juice and serve yourself and those with you, please follow this simple outline:

**Meaning:** Communion is a time to:

- A. Remember Christ's life, death, and RESURRECTION!
- B. Commune with Christ and the community of the saints
- C. Hope in the message of salvation and our promise of eternal life

**Elements:**

BREAD:

Server: "This is the Body of Christ given for you."

Receiver: "Thanks be to God."

CUP:

Server: "This cup is the new testament in my blood: as often as you drink it do so in remembrance of Christ."

Receiver: "Thanks be to God."

**Word of Thanksgiving:** (to be read) Psalm 103