

Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon 10.25.20 Matt 22: 34-46

Grace and Peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ Amen!

There are some interesting things going on in our readings today, some interesting parallels between what is going on now and what was on all those thousands of years ago. And that's great. That's what we need to know right now. That's what we need to hear. WE need to hear God speaking to us, guiding us. And that's exactly what we should expect every time we open the bible and read these holy scriptures. God speaks. God shines a light into the darkness of our lives. Hope is kindled anew. And that is what happens today.

We are shown glimpses into 2 chaotic times. 2 times of upheaval and change. Deep broad sweeping change. In our first reading this is Moses getting the 10 commandments. This is where the nation of Israel is coming together. This is the pivot point for the old testament. It's no longer a few or a family being blessed by God, this is the central guiding story for the people of God for the next 2 thousand years.

And then in our last reading, our gospel reading we are at another pivotal point in history. We are in the days right before Jesus Death. Jesus is basically in a fervor trying to give all these last parables and instructions. If you knew you were going to die this is how you would be too, get every possible thing done that you could right? Jesus is trying to lay some ground work so that his followers will be able to get through the turmoil and tremendous change to come. Can you imagine what they are about to go through? The tenets set down thousands of years ago, the majority of everything they understood about their lives was about to be shaken from the core and they would have to figure everything out on their own. Ok maybe you can understand that a little. Maybe we know what it means to be shaken, to have what was firm beneath our feet shake and shift.

This has not been an easy thing for us. This is a time of change, a time of pain and loneliness, of fear and confusion, but we follow in the footsteps of so many faithful and incredible human beings who have gone through dangerous changes as well. It's something to add in that today is Reformation Sunday. Today we celebrate another huge change that is still leaving its mark on all Christians today.

Change seems to be the only thing that is constant throughout the history of our Faith. But what isn't changing is our God. Our God who Blesses, saves, redeems. Our God who never gives up on us. Our God who has given us the laws to live a holy and righteous life. Love God and Love your Neighbor. Those are the things that have never changed in our Faith. No matter what change has come to our society those stand ever paramount, ever resolute, in our faith.

But while we have this firm foundation in Jesus Christ our Lord and savior, we also must see that God is the agent of change throughout the timeline of the bible, all of history and right now.

Moment of creation - huge change

Moses and the exodus - God driving the changes -

Jesus and the New Testament - God driving the changes

Reformation - God through the Holy Spirit driving the change

God is still driving change today -

Our God is one of creation. We have a living and moving God. We don't worship some static being - We don't praise a God every week that sparked the universe and thought that was good enough. Our God is creating and changing the world still today and every day.

And we feel that - we feel how God is tugging us in new directions and then when it gets hard, reassures us with God's presence.

Though the times we end up in are still hard. Moses still had 40 years in the desert and the people God were just at the beginning of their story

Jesus' disciples would be kicked out of their own community and every one of them died a martyr's death.

The Reformation was only "ended" after a horrible bloody war that killed millions.

What are we right in the midst of as well?

I wanted to close today with just one change that we are still just in the midst of.

2020 marks the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Women in the ELCA. First Lutheran has been served by so amazing female clergy over those 50 years. This also marks 40 years of ordination of women of color and 10 years of the ordination of LGBTQ. It's a big year. But we are only in the middle of this change. When we look back on how this came to be we see people struggling with God's call in their life and the world pushing back against them. We see people standing up and fighting the powers of this earth in order to preach the gospel with the authority given to all human beings. This is something we have been advocating for 50 years but we are still just in the middle of this change.

Video

It is time to embrace change. It is time to stand up against injustice. It is time to fight for those who have been silenced and mistreated. It is time. The church again and again and again and again has stood up in history and this is not right. This is not how this should be. This is not loving your neighbor or loving God. There is nothing political about that, this is not about power in the world, this is about our church and our God. Love God, Love your neighbor. it's what we are told, what we have been told to do for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. It is time to right wrongs. It is time to silence those who oppress our clergy and all the women of the world and let them know how much their God cares for them.

And this isn't the only change that we fight for, I know that, you know that. It's a messy world. But through it we Love God and Love our Neighbor because our God loves us. Amen