

Date: May 2, 2021

Scripture: Revelation 21:1-5a

Title: GOD CAN MAKE ALL THINGS NEW!

I've said it before and I'm saying it again today, I believe the Scriptures, can meet our deepest needs. Consider today's word, from the book of Revelation: "Behold, I make all things new." Wouldn't it be great, to have God, do a new thing in your life today?

According to today's lesson, God is in the business of making all things new.

It's like the story of a man who was selling an old warehouse. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Gangs had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and thrown trash everywhere. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, he took pains to say, that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. The buyer smiled and said, "Forget about the repairs. When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site."

When God does a new thing in our lives, God starts with the site, and builds from there. At Lystra, there was a disabled man, who couldn't use his feet. It was Paul, whom God used, to give this man new hope, new life. Paul, looking at him intently, said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And the man sprang up and walked. He had been given a great gift, the gift of a new and improved life. Now, Paul himself, knew what it was, to be made a new person. Saul, the dread persecutor, became Paul the dynamic preacher.

New teachings, new life, new hope, new direction, that's what the Gospel is all about. We can be new persons. We can have new life in Christ. "Behold, I make all things new."

What is it, that prevents real change, from taking place in our lives? It all come down to two small voices, deep in our consciousness, that speak to us.

The first voice tells us, that "we are too good to change." You and I may recognize that our lives are not, all they could or should be, our families are not, all they could be or should be, our relationships with the world, are not all they could be or should be, but we, are not ready, to pay the price of change. We're coping. We're getting by. Let the rest of the world change to accommodate us.

Michael Slater tells the story in his book *Stretcher Bearers*, of a teen at the beach with his friends. He's in trouble in the water, but doesn't call out for help. A lifeguard notices his struggle and rescues him. Later he asks the teen, "You were drowning. Why didn't you cry out?" The young man responded: "What would my friends have thought?"

Some of us have a voice within us that says, “I know I need to change, but I can’t ask for help. What would my friends think?” Some of us have a voice within that’s saying to us that change is for other people, but not for us. We’re good enough, strong enough, capable enough. So, we miss the joy of a new life, because we listen to the voice that says, we’re too good to change.

But, there’s another voice that speaks to many of us. It’s a voice that says, we’re too bad to change. It’s a small voice that says, “You can’t do it. You haven’t got what it takes. You never see anything through to completion. You’re irresponsible. You’re a bum. You’ll never make it.” So, for some of us, there’s a voice that says, “You’re too good to change,” and then there are others with a voice that says, “You’re too bad to change.” Some of you know what I am talking about.

What we need, is to hear God’s voice saying, “Behold, I make all things new.” We, are important to God. As someone once put it, “If we were the only person in this world, Christ would still have given his life in our behalf.”

The late R. L. Middleton told about an Englishman, who had a beautiful estate on the Yorkshire coast, where you could see a great distance in every direction.

One day, the man and his daughter, climbed to the summit on the estate, and the man said, teaching his little daughter a lesson: “Look up.” Then he said, “Look down.” And then, “Look out. Now turn and look behind you.” He then added, “Dorothy, just so high, so deep, so wide, and so broad is the love of God for you.”

She learned a lesson, she would never forget, but she also taught her daddy a lesson, that he never forgot. She said, “Daddy, If God’s love is so high, so wide, so deep, and so broad, then we’re living in the middle of it!”

What difference would it make in your life, if you really believed, that you’re living in the middle of God’s love? God loves you, and wants to do a new thing in your life. We’re never too good to change, nor, are we ever too bad to change. But, how does God make all things new? God does it by giving us three things, a new confidence, a new perspective, and a new dream. Let’s briefly consider, the three gifts God would give us.

A massive change would take place in our lives, if we could have new confidence, confidence in ourselves, confidence in God. What a difference, if we could wake up in the morning and say, “Truly this IS the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it”! Or, if we could, live openly and honestly, with the belief that God is with us. We may not feel adequate, but, God is adequate.

Have you ever watched a basketball player when he or she is “hot?” The basketball player who is “hot,” gets the feeling that everything he or she touches, is going into the basket. That confidence, in turn, engenders success.

Start each new day with the positive affirmation, “God is making me into a new person. God is with me.” God gives us a new confidence.

But, God also gives us a new perspective. One of the greatest gifts, that we can receive, is the ability to step back, and look at our lives realistically. It's so tempting, to be defeated by those inner voices, that tell us, we can't. It's so common to exaggerate, the difficulties that confront us. How often do you say or feel, "This is the worst thing that has ever happened to me." When an objective view, reveals it to be only a minor and temporary setback.

Spending time alone in prayer with God, helps us to develop a new perspective, a perspective that allows us to reflect, rather than simply react. Prayer, is the most important thing we can do, in developing the true sense, of where we are.

A new confidence, a new perspective, but God gives us one thing more, a new dream. To a great extent, we are shaped by our dreams. Most people get out of life, exactly what they really desire. The problem is, in knowing ourselves well enough, to know, what it is, we really desire.

For instance, a young person might say, he wants to be a great musician. But, he won't put in, the necessary practice time. You see, what he really desires is, more leisure. Then he learns that an excellent teacher has moved to town. What a great opportunity. But our young friend, is too timid to pick up the phone, and call this teacher. You see, what he really wants, is to avoid rejection. He says his greatest desire is to be a musician, but really, his greatest desire is to avoid work, and avoid rejection.

Do you know yourself well enough to know what your deepest desire is? For some of us, it might really be to please our parents, even though our parents may be dead for many years. For others, it may be, to be respected by our colleagues. What's your deepest desire? What is your greatest dream? Wouldn't it be great, to be liberated from our inferior dreams? "Behold, I make all things new."

One of the stars on the TV show *Hee Haw*, Lulu Roman, grew up in an orphanage. Her greatest dream was to be adopted, and have a family who loved her. She remembers sitting in her closet, at the orphanage, crying each time a car pulled away with another child. No one ever came for her. Lulu had a thyroid problem, and was a heavy child. Her weight made her a target for bullies.

Lulu started taking drugs to escape the pain of loneliness and rejection. In fact, she was high when she auditioned for *Hee Haw*. As the show became more successful, Lulu's addiction grew. She got kicked off the show and was told to clean up her life. At about this time, Lulu discovered she was pregnant. She became bitter and angry toward God. She felt there was no way God could love her.

Lulu's son, Damon, was born with serious health problems, related to her drug use. When the doctors told her that Damon wouldn't make it, Lulu reports, "I can remember lying in that hospital bed trying to pray, but I was so mad at God, that I didn't want to have anything to do with God. The only thing I knew to say was, 'Yo, dude, if you're real, I'll make a deal with you. If you'll let me have my baby, then I'll straighten

up, and stop doing drugs. I won't do anything except, what you want me to.” A few days later, Damon’s condition improved, and Lulu took him home from the hospital.

Not long afterwards, Lulu ran into Diane, a girl she’d grown up with in the orphanage. Diane had become a Christian, and she wanted to share her faith with Lulu. Lulu tried to shut her up, but Diane said, “Just listen to me. Let me tell you that Jesus is real. Let me tell you how Jesus changed my life.”

Lulu listened, and she prayed to receive Jesus. She says, at that moment, she found the love, she’d been searching for her whole life. She instantly lost her desire for drugs. When the producers of *Hee Haw* saw how completely Lulu’s life had changed, they asked her to come back to the show. She has used her fame, to share her testimony, of how Jesus had changed her life completely, how Jesus love and grace, had given her a new life, she once thought, was impossible for her.

Many of us have been listening to the wrong voice. We need to listen to the voice, that seeks to encourage us and remake us. “Behold, I make all things new.” Let us Trust, Believe, and have an Active Faith in God making disciples of Jesus Christ in the transformation of the world. Amen.