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Sermon Notes

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The King Chooses Changes

Matthew 9:14-17

I. The Challenge of Change

Illus. Amish in Lancaster County... a study in traditionalism

A. Change: A Constant Reality

1. Everything changes
2. Times, nations, cultures, bodies

B. An Age of Accelerating Change

1. Industrial Revolution
2. Technological Revolution
3. Triangle Region: Fourth Fastest Growing Region
 - a. history of Durham
 - b. small, rural town when this church founded
 - c. “Bull Durham”, tobacco companies
 - d. growth of health industry... Duke, UNC
 - e. RTP: growth of high tech industry

Change is unsettling!!! Where is the refuge??

C. Looking Backward

1. Looking backward... memories

2. Memories become traditions
3. Traditions become traditionalism
4. The indispensable role of tradition to the advance of the Kingdom of Christ

"Faith of our fathers..."

Traditionalism: seeks stability in unchanging external forms rather than in eternal truth

Relies on old methods because they have worked in the past (e.g. missionary or evangelistic traditionalism)

Need to steer a middle course "between rigid traditionalism on the one side and rudderless modernism on the other"

Jaroslav Pelikan: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."

D. Looking Upward... to the King who controls all change!!

II. John's Disciples: An Honest Question About Fasting

- A. Background: John's Ministry
- B. Missing the Boat: John's Lingered, Loyal Disciples
- C. A Message from the King: Time to Change

III. The Pharisees: The Bitter Opposition of Traditionalists

- A. Religious Traditionalism: Extra Fasts
- B. Religious Authoritarianism: Dance to Our Tune
- C. Christ's Total Independence
- D. Resultant Hatred
- E. Modern Traditionalism
 1. Roman Catholic Traditionalism
 2. Orthodox Traditionalism

3. Southern Baptist Traditionalism

IV. The Principle of the Wineskins

- A. Principle Illustrated Two Ways: The Patch and the Wineskins
- B. Principle Stated: Essence of Discipleship is Followship
- C. Principle Clarified: Some Things That NEVER Change

V. The Principle Applied: The King Calls Us to Change

- A. To Jewish Nation, First Century: The King Called Jews to Change
 - 1. To John's disciples: "Follow me... John is dead"
 - 2. To Pharisees: "Follow me... your religion is man-made"
 - 3. To Jewish nation: "Follow me... the Old Covenant is over, the New Covenant is here"

This is the message of the whole book of Hebrews: the Old Covenant is obsolete! Soon, the entire temple will be destroyed and the sacrificial system will be no more

Hebrews 8:8, 13 "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.... By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

Stephen preached to the Jews that the time was soon coming when the entire Old Covenant system would become obsolete:

Acts 6:14 For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

They were enraged at this and killed Stephen!!

They were stiff wineskins who could not handle the change God was making!

- B. To Individuals Today: The King Calls You to Change
 - 1. Regeneration: Change at the start...the new wine of the Holy Spirit cannot be poured into old wineskins

Matthew 18:3 Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

John 3:3 “You must be born again”

2. Sanctification: A life of change, a long journey to travel, with “many dangers, toils, and snares”

2 Corinthians 3:18 We are being changed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory.

We follow Christ through all the twists and turns in life as we step by step grow more like Him

John 10:27 “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

3. Glorification: Greatest changes yet to come!

1 Corinthians 15:52 The trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

C. To Churches Today: The King Says When and What to Change

1. Constant Growth

Healthy churches are growing churches... and growth means change

2. Constant Assessment

Change means constant assessment of eternal mission in light of modern setting

1 Corinthians 9:22 I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

“By all possible means” = all things not compromising the gospel message or the Word of God

Those non-essential means change with every generation... evangelistic strategies change all the time, missionary methodology under constant review

Churches have to assess their ministries constantly, too

When the time for something has passed, we need to let it go and move on to new ministries

3. Constant Truths

Remember what must NEVER change... Biblical truth is eternal

Balthasar Hubmaier: "Truth is immortal."

- Character of God
- Word of God
- Gospel of God
- Some methods of God (like preaching, contra "church growth movement")

4. Tradition ESSENTIAL to the Advance of the Kingdom

Tradition of genuine faith based on the word of God MUST be passed on

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures

Passed on to your children

Psalm 78:5-7 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

Passed on to your disciples

Matthew 28:19-20 ...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

5. Traditionalism of rigid outer forms must be resisted

Great show-stopper in Baptist churches: "We've never done it that way before!"

Traditionalism in worship

Traditionalism in witness

Our God is constantly doing a new thing!! Yet every new thing He does is founded on what He has done in the past, and is perfectly consistent with His Word

Revelation: "new"

- New name, written on a white stone
- Singing a new song
- Living in the New Jerusalem
- Living in the new heavens and the new earth
- Summary:

Revelation 21:5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"

Don't resist what the King wants to do in your life, your family, your work, your church, your nation, your world... He delights in making all things new! Don't be like the stiff wineskin or the old garment that resists the changes God wants to make! Follow Him as He leads you step by step!