

Midweek Lent 4

March 2, 2016

Sermon Text: John 19:25-27

Her eyes traced every corner of the bedroom. She could picture the twin bed wrapped in pirate bed sheets. The carpet still holds the imprint of where the computer desk sat for so many years. Bare clothes hangers now dangle inside the empty closet. For eighteen years she watched her son grow up in this room. Now he has grown out of this room. Its emptiness marks a new change in life.

He stood at a place he never thought he would. Birds tweeted their pretty little songs. Towering cedar trees stretched up towards the heavens. Green grass rolled out like a red carpet leading up to the tombstone itself. A familiar name is etched into its granite. Never in a million years did he imagine himself standing here. A chapter of his life has closed. Now he would begin a new chapter in life without his loved one.

The hands could no longer work the tools they had held for so many years. Sewing needles, saws, a shovel and rake— none of them. Joints grew stiff; muscles weaken; balance is decreasing. The beloved hobby is over; life would change.

Life changes, does it not? Years continue rolling by— and with them age increases and life-situations change. Some changes are expected: moving out of the family home or your parent-child relationship maturing or leaving for a new job. Other changes are forced on you: saying “good-bye” to a loved one or declining health or an unwelcome change in relationships. Some changes you welcome. Other changes may bring a feeling of complete abandonment.

Even in the most heart-wrenching of changes, see your Jesus work a real, lasting life-change for you. **LIFE-CHANGING LOVE EMBRACES YOU** *changing your life forever, even when life changes for you.*

After twelve nighttime-hours spent in courtrooms and a morning spent in Pilate’s courthouse, Jesus hears the awful sentence: “Death by crucifixion.” Soldiers immediately march in, grab Jesus, and push him all the way up Calvary’s hill. Their strong hands stretch him out on a cross, hammer nails through his hands and feet, and hoist the cross into place. Someone scribbles out a mocking “King of the Jews” sign and hangs it over his head. Then Jesus watches as the clothes he wore one day earlier are being gambled away.

That sight announced the grim reality in which he now found himself. He was not getting down from the cross alive. He would leave only when dead. Already his muscles

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²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” ²⁷ and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

begin cramping. His joints ache. His breathing becomes short gasps. His brain screams for more oxygen. In just a matter of hours, life would change; Jesus would die.

Life would not only change for Jesus. **Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.** Their beloved friend is leaving them— and leaving a gaping hole in their hearts.

Mary's sister and the wife of Clopas look up at their object of love. This man took the ugliness of their sin and washed its guilt away under the waves of his love. Jesus told them how he would make them worthy before God in heaven. His teachings gave their hearts true, lasting rest that a world filled with heartaches could never offer.

Mary Magdalene stands beside the One who changed her life entirely. At one time seven demons had tormented her body. Yet, the Almighty God commanded those unclean spirits to forever leave ([Luke 8:2](#)). Not only did his words bring a change to her body, but his words brought an eternal change to her heart.

Mary, his mother, watches life trickle out of her oldest son. She pondered the joyfully miraculous events surrounding his birth— and desperately sought to reach into the heart's storeroom to relive that joy. All she feels right now is a sword piercing her heart ([Luke 2:35](#)).

Life was going to change; it was undeniable. Jesus would die, but his friends would remain. So, how do you rebuild life without him? What can you take away from this scene which whispers the quiet truth that everything will be alright? The One person in whom their hearts found love's warm embrace is being so forcibly taken away from them— and they will feel all alone.

Can you relate to that feeling? Eventually everyone faces a monumental life change. You may have to bury your loved one. Your health may decline, leaving a mixture of frustration and sadness. Relationships might heap more responsibility on you— giving you a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. When life changes you may feel all alone, as if it is up to you to figure out how to bring peace and happiness back into your life. You may feel that pit of despair sink in your stomach— as if God himself has turned his back on you. You may feel those bouts of anger, feeling the urge to shake a fist at God, wanting to accuse him of being the reason your heart hurts.

I am not sure how many would welcome loss into their life. Yet, when life changes, see the Savior's compassionate eyes touch you— assuring you that you never live life alone.

Your Savior endures a change in his life. Death was approaching. In the midst of such pain, God his Father does abandon him— turning his back on his every need. Jesus suffers the crushing consequences sin deserves— including all those times we may accuse God of not caring our troubles!

So, Jesus loses his life so that you may have life. He is actually abandoned by his Father so that you might never be eternally abandoned. He suffers such immeasurable agony so that your life will be forever filled with tear-free comfort. On the cross you see just how much God cares about you. **LIFE-CHANGING LOVE EMBRACES YOU** *changing your life forever.*

That is why four women and the dear disciple John stand around the cross. Their lives have been forever changed by the saving message of Jesus. In the middle of perhaps the most horrific sight in their life, they see their forgiveness on the cross. They see the reason for eternal hope. **LIFE-CHANGING LOVE EMBRACES YOU** *even when life changes for you.*

In the midst of such pain, **Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son.”** Already at the cross, her life had changed. Jesus reminds his mother not to see him as a young child who must submit to her wants and wishes. Instead, he points out the very fact that he is the Son of God Almighty and the Savior of the world. He suffers to change her eternal life. Yes, even her earthly life would change— and Jesus would still be there to grant her comfort.

He said **to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.** John’s life would also change. Mary is now his adopted mother. She would live in his house. His money would provide food, clothing, heat, and housing. He would watch over her health. He would tend to any medical needs. He could assist with any struggles which came with old age. The love Jesus had for him would now be the love he demonstrated to his fellow believer.

Life does change. Sometimes change will leave you with a feeling of uncertainty, fear, loneliness. Yet, when it appears that God does not care for you, lift your eyes up to the cross.

See the physical, literal cross— something which reminds you of the battle your Savior fights. On Calvary Jesus pours out his life. What would move him to pay such a high, awful price? Because of his compassionate love for you.

The love which gives you heaven is the same love which walks with you on earth. Sometimes in life you may feel like you are suffering agony by a cross. Remember the relationship Jesus has established with you. He remains in his Word so that you might always be filled with the hope of knowing he has established peace between you and God. Now he makes his Father in heaven your Father in heaven. You now have the One who hears your requests and answers you in the most perfect of ways. **LIFE-CHANGING LOVE EMBRACES YOU** *even when life changes for you.*

Years will continue rolling by— and with them age increases and life-situations change. Some changes are expected: moving out of the family home or your parent-child relationship matures or leaving a familiar job. Other changes are forced on you: saying “good-bye” to a loved one or declining health. Some changes you welcome. Other changes may bring the feeling a feeling of complete abandonment.

Because Jesus suffers and dies for you, you are never alone. Right now you hold this absolute certainty that you will live with your God forever in heaven. He has changed your life forever.

Not only do you look forward to that day, but rest assured that your Savior’s love embraces you right now—even when life changes. He stands by to comfort in his Word, to hear your prayers, to bless you in the most needed of ways.

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