

## Crossroads Community Church

Sunday January 11th, 2015

Gentle falling snow reminds us of God's tenderness and peace, no matter what lies ahead God is there to securely lead us. We worshipped him this morning for His constant presence that goes before us and with us. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, "Dear Father God we praise You for your unchanging love, our solid foundation through every new day, we ask for direction and guidance and give us a willing spirit to trust and obey even when the world around us tries to deter us from You, in Jesus name, Amen."

How many of us like change? It is safe to say that many of us have difficulty adapting to change, we would much rather have a heads up as to what lies ahead so we can prepare for anything, but life is not that simple. Christian writer John Maxwell quotes, "Change is inevitable but growth is optional." For some change is scary because familiarity is comforting and feels safer than the unknown. However change can be a good thing as when we stepped out in faith and chose to follow Jesus, we all know there were big changes that took place and then there are subtle changes that take place every day. Change is God's desire for us, "And he said: Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 18:3. This doesn't mean to be childish but rather to be trusting, humble like a child and have a sincere heart to accept the changes the Lord has for us, to be teachable like a child.

The apostle Paul preached the Gospel everywhere he went for that same purpose, he knew it would change lives, (Colossians 1:6). God's word informs us but more importantly it transforms us changing our hearts, purpose, beliefs, direction, attitudes and behaviours. Even God fearing people need changes, let us read in Acts 10, "In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment. He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God."

What could he possibly need to change may we ask? Hebrews 11:6 holds the answer, "And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." Although Cornelius was a good generous man and he was seeking God, he needed one more thing and God sent him an angel instructing him to call for Simon Peter. Cornelius quickly sent his servants, a devout soldier and a personal attendant to go find Simon Peter. Once Simon Peter came to Cornelius, the transforming Good News of Jesus Christ was shared and Cornelius changed his entire life, (Acts 10:3-8). By the same token, Simon Peter was also changed; his preconceived view of Gentiles was changed because God sent Him a vision to prepare him to accept entering into a Gentile's home which was against Jewish laws and customs of the time, (Acts 10:10-22).

The changes in these two men would change the entire purpose and direction of spreading the Good News in Rome. For both Jew and Gentile to be saved by the Good News of Jesus Christ, God had to change their hearts and their points of view of each other. When Peter entered Cornelius' home, he was accompanied by other believers, then he shared the Gospel, (Acts 10:34-43), after which God sent His Holy Spirit on everyone listening thereby showing that God's plan was to save everyone and He doesn't show favoritism to anyone. Peter went on to baptizing them in the name of Jesus as the great commission tells us all to do, (Acts 10:44-48).

Beloved let us take this lesson to heart; we are to share God's love and News of Salvation with everyone without prejudice. God knows people's hearts, and he calls us to make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We may need to ask God to change our hearts towards people around us that we have misjudged or avoided because of preconceived view of them, but we must remember that they too need to hear the Gospel as we did. If we don't know how to approach someone, we shouldn't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what we need, and thank him for all he has done. As Christians we have all underwent changes, and we shouldn't fear change because God loves to make everything new, our attitudes towards others can be transformed along with the way others view us. It may be challenging to be taken out of our comfort zones, but challenges change us for the better, God molds us into who He needs us to be so we can point those who are seeking towards Jesus so they can come to the Father! May the Lord be gracious and give us peace as He produces good fruit in us all, Asherey Shalom!