**The Winds of Change**

**Old Testament: Isaiah 55: 8-9**

**New Testament Acts 2: 42-47**

We just celebrated Labor Day. Which I am a bit confused by. Instead of working and laboring, people are out at fairs, campgrounds, fishing, playing golf, or maybe shopping looking for that last good deal. Anything but work! Well, it’s Fall and we need to get to work! Today, I want to talk to you about something that we all struggle with. “The willingness to change or cope with change.” Now, I know that this is going to touch some of you on the wrong side, but change happens for a reason and for the most part, its for the good and not the worse. Let’s look at some changes. The seasons change, the weather changes, people change jobs, we change the color of paint on our house or doors, we change cars, we change the way we bake things, we change the way we dress, or wear our hair. Change happens all the time. Someone thought you needed a new door and you got one. Then the paint had to be changed. You have an elevator that now works. It hadn’t worked since 2018. Your session took a leap of faith and approved getting it fixed. You are hosting a monthly Men’s Breakfast. You have a new website, which by the way has had over 120 visitors just in the short time it has been up and running. You have a newsletter. But when it comes to our Christian ways within the church, we find it so hard to change and accept new challenges. I often hear; “Well we’ve always done it that way.” Or, “why do we need to change that?” Well, my friends “The winds of change” are upon us. We can either embrace the new challenges or we can go back into our same old ruts. We just came through 4 months of hosting another church in need of a temporary home. That was a change. I think it was a refreshing change that saw pews being filled and kids having fun and making new friends. There was collaboration and new friendships built and old friendships renewed. Isn’t that what the church is all about? Serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I hope you are ready to run with me this fall as we find new ways of serving our savior. I’m going to ask you to step out of your comfort shell and explore the new happenings. I want you to attend the new events, or at least try one for starters. I promise I will not leave you alone, however, I can’t do it alone either. It shouldn’t be Ellen did this, or Jan did that, or Jane provided that, or Paul did this, or Pastor Bill did that. We all need to step up and help out in ways that we can. The people doing things around here need to ask for help and not take the burden on yourself. It needs to be a team effort. I know you all like to do it and that’s why you do it but let’s get everyone involved. But I want us to work together to try new things and come up with new ways to server our Lord. In a few weeks, we will be having an all-church officer retreat. This will be a time of planning and coming up with new innovative ways to make JCPC a special place to come and worship the Lord. If you have ideas write them down and give them to us so we can share. I’ve heard so many good things about the past of this church and what you use to have and do for the community. It’s time to bring it back! Today, we are asking you to select a time for morning worship. We can’t please everyone, but we can at least come to a consensus and be respectful of others. This is your church and you should have a say in it. “My thoughts are not your thoughts.” If I didn’t learn anything from the last 4 months, what I did learn was collaboration. As I met with the leaders from Trinity, I was so gracious for their support and guidance a long the way. Your voices were heard, and that is why it was such a success. We can not just show up on Sunday morning and go home until next week. I have high expectations or goals for this church, and I want all of you to be a part of the new. If you are thinking about joining the church, now is the time. Join us after worship for a short meeting.

In his book Changing My Mind, Will Willimon emphasizes that leaders must be willing to adapt their own ideas and practices. Adaptation is part of the call: Willimon argues that Christian leaders must be prepared for constant change because they serve a "living God who is constantly on the move.” Willimon argues that change in the church must be spiritually grounded and driven by Christ's mission, not by cultural trends or institutional anxieties. He pushes against both stagnant traditionalism and uncritical innovation, advocating for a church that is always "in motion" with Jesus Christ. Change is inevitable, but a constant focus on Christ is essential. “Faithful leadership requires changing one's own mind.”

Farmer Brown and his family had lived out west all their lives, but they had to go to the big city to view some documents. So, they load up the utility truck and head to the city. They pull up outside a massive building and the farmer says to his family, "Stay here. I won't be long." Little Johnny says, "Aw, Dad, can't I come too?" "Alright," says the farmer. "But the rest of you stay in the ute." They get out of the truck, and up the steps to the front entrance, when the doors suddenly open. "Wow, did you see that Dad? The doors just opened by themselves." "Yeah, ya never know what they've got in the city, son." So they're wandering round, marvelling at all the things in the building. The farmer asks for directions, the clerk points at the lift door. They've never seen one before, so they go and stand in front of it, not knowing what to make of it. Next thing an old woman comes along, gets in the lift, and the door shuts. A couple of minutes later, the door opens again, and out steps a beautiful young woman. An old woman went in, and a beautiful young woman came out. The farmer turns to his son, "Quick son, go get your mother."

I chose the readings today that I thought spoke to us in a way that see us comparing ourselves to God. We see in Isaiah there is a difference and distance between God and Man. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So, are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God doesn’t think the way we do. We get into a lot of trouble when we expect that He should think as we do. Because we are made in the image of God, we can relate to God’s thoughts, but we cannot master them. Nor are your ways My ways: God doesn’t act the way we do. He does things His way, and His ways are often not our ways. We get into a lot of trouble when we expect that God should act the way we do.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth: How far is the distance between God’s thoughts and ours? How far is the distance between His ways and ours? The distance is as great as the heavens are higher than the earth. Gloriously, in Jesus Christ, heaven has come down to earth, and we can have our thoughts and ways transformed to be more like God’s thoughts and ways. This is what it means to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). The distance will never be closed; God will always be God, and we will always be human. But when our salvation is complete, and we are united with the LORD in glory, the distance will be as close as is possible. The difference and distance between God and man is revealed, not to discourage us from seeking Him, but to keep us humble as we seek.

In our second reading today we read “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Do you remember that day of Pentecost? The sound of the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, and the conversion of 3,000 were all remarkable events. But these things described in Acts 2:42 were the abiding legacy of God’s work. They relied on the apostles to communicate to them who Jesus was and what He had done. They just trusted in Jesus; now they wanted to know more. There was to be no departure from the apostles’ doctrine, because it was the truth of God. Thankfully, God allows us to sit under the apostles’ doctrine – the New Testament record.

The Christian life is meant to be full of fellowship, of sharing one with another.

· We share the same Lord Jesus. · We share the same guide for life. · We share the same love

for God. · We share the same desire to worship Him. · We share the same struggles.

· We share the same victories. · We share the same job of living for Him. · We share the same

joy of communicating the gospel.

In verses 46 and 47 we read “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Everything on earth changes, including the mighty continents. But for believers there are three crucial foundational things that will never change:

1. God doesn’t change
2. God’s word doesn’t change
3. God’s promises never change

These 3 things are settled forever in the heavens. So as the “Winds of Change” come, let us embrace and move ahead. A-Men