

God Messes with our Gyroscope

Second Sunday after Pentecost

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Have you ever thought of change as a source of suffering? For most situations I think change does cause us suffering. Change disrupts our lives, breaks our comfortable patterns, causes us to think things through. This last weekend, Sunday evening, my brother, sister, and I had a family reunion with our children and grandchildren. We had a picnic at the campground my wife and I were staying. Now when my sister suggested we have a picnic, the response wasn't what is a picnic? Everyone knew what a picnic was. A picnic is a traditional event in the American culture; it is something you do outside. You don't have a picnic in a banquet hall, for example.

Anyway, traditions help us in not having to reinvent things. We know exactly what to do. When we or someone else disrupts these traditions, our equilibrium is disturbed.

I think this is why Jesus said. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." His disciples could handle only so much learning. Of course, we are no different. Fortunately, God's revelation unfolds one puzzle piece at time. And quite often our lives are like a box of 1000 puzzle pieces with no picture. Putting the pieces together is a painstaking process.

Learning, you see, involves suffering because it disrupts your normal state of being. Jesus says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth." Truth as it has its effect on our lives brings different results. But in general it produces suffering. Paul says in the text read today, "Suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character and character produces hope..." The Holy Spirit guides as we face challenges, difficulties, and disruptions. The Gospel is not a sedative; its not a guarantee that everything will stay the same; it doesn't promise a predictable life. It does tell you that the light at the end of the tunnel is the message of hope and grace. As you persevere through unbearable circumstances, impossible odds, incredible obstacles, the Holy Spirit will help you to endure. This is how God builds character. Our spiritual roots have to sink deeper into the promises of God, when we face various trials. Trusting in his love and mercy, we continue to work through challenges.

Change is very often painful. But God promises us, "The spirit will guide you into all the truth." We definitely are resistant. My grandmother cried when she realized it was no longer necessary to slice the bread. It came already sliced. And before that she always made her own bread. Half of the people in the American Colonies were against the Revolutionary War. This Spring, my son coached Junior High Girls Track Team in Albert Lea. He told one girl to run the 400—that's once around the track, full bore. She said she never ran it before; therefore she could never do it. He told her she had to do it anyway. She did. She became the fastest runner in the 400.

In the spiritual world it is no different. Status quo or tradition thwarts the guiding of the Holy Spirit. Tradition is the way we have always done things. In fact, tradition becomes very convenient because it is placed on the level of God's revelation it becomes an untouchable. We believe God ordains worshipping in pews that you can't have worship unless you have a pulpit, pipe organ; or you can't have worship if you don't have drums and guitars. Tradition becomes an excuse not to grow, a smoke screen.

But the real question is, "does whatever we do advance the message of the Gospel? Does the Gospel serve the status quo or does the status quo serve the Gospel?"

Doesn't tradition or the status quo serve the Gospel instead of the other way around? Proverbs 16:9 says, "The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps." Not tradition or status quo, but God directs our steps. Otherwise we ending up worshipping tradition and status quo and we push God out of the sanctuary, and out of your lives.

Jesus teaches us that the Spirit is like the wind. You feel it or maybe even hear it but you can't see it. No one has control over the Spirit. Revelation is more than doctrine, rules and patterns; it is about a way of life. "13b For he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

The Psalmist says in Psalm 86, "Teach me your way, O Lord that I may walk in your truth. Give me an undivided heart to revere your name." When the Spirit guides us something dynamic goes on here.

We go places we didn't know we were going. Three years ago, if you had told John and Marilyn Fitzner that they would be training Stephen Ministers for Stephen Ministry, they probably would have told you, no way. They have trained one group and they are beginning to train another. There is something dynamic going on here. It is the nature of the Holy Spirit to disrupt, alter a person's course in life. All the while we are experiencing disruption and discomfort, the Spirit is conforming our lives to the life of Christ.

This messes up our gyroscope. We all have a spiritual gyroscope. And the Spirit is messing with it. Did you know that...

"Gyroscopic behaviour is used in the racing car industry. This is because car engines act just like big gyroscopes. This has its uses, for example in the American Indy car racing some of the tracks are in an oval in shape. During the race the cars go round the circuit in one direction only (the car only ever turns in one direction e.g. left). Because of the of the gyroscopic forces from the engine depending on whether the engine is spinning clockwise or anti-clockwise the cars nose will be forced up or down. Providing the engine spins in the right direction it can help the car to stay on the track."

Have you heard of the phrase gyroscopic inertia? It simply means the gyroscopes help a vessel to stabilize by resisting any significant changes. It is referred to as rigidity in space.

Jesus died on the cross in part because he messed with the status quo; he messed with the gyroscopes of the religious leaders, with their rigidity in space. I would say turning over the tables of the money changers in the temple is a good example of this. He messed with people's gyroscopes. He messed with business as usual.

This never changes; the Gospel always overturns tables. To want things our way is human nature.

God tells us that we can run the 400 and our response is that it is not possible. Individually, we say, I have never done that before.

But with the power of the Holy Spirit God does great things through us. The Spirit is guiding us, leading us in to new places. Recently, I read this quote. God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called. Let me repeat that. God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the called.