

Change Begins with Me

Psalm 64

Psalm 64

- “Hear my voice, O God, in my meditation; Preserve my life from fear of the enemy. 2 Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity, 3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword, And bend their bows to shoot their arrows-bitter words, 4 That they may shoot in secret at the blameless; Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear. 5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter; They talk of laying snares secretly; They say, Who will see them? 6 They devise iniquities: We have perfected a shrewd scheme. Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep. 7 But God shall shoot at them with an arrow; Suddenly they shall be wounded. 8 So He will make them stumble over their own tongue; All who see them shall flee away. 9 All men shall fear, And shall declare the work of God; For they shall wisely consider His doing. 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him. And all the upright in heart shall glory.”

Change Begins with Me

- If change is important to me, it must begin with me.
 - I must change myself to best facilitate the change around me
 - I must then encourage others to become involved in a worthy change.
 - I must trust God Who will determine how much change will take place and who will help with it.

Change Begins with Me

- If change is to occur, someone else is responsible to begin it.
- Or, if we begin it and others do not quickly come on board, we become discouraged and quit and blame others
 - 2Tim. 4:16-17 - “But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18 And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom.”

Change Begins with Me

- Jer. 20:7-11 - “O LORD, You induced me, and I was persuaded; You are stronger than I, and have prevailed. I am in derision daily; Everyone mocks me. 8 For when I spoke, I cried out; I shouted, Violence and plunder! Because the word of the LORD was made to me A reproach and a derision daily. 9 Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name. But His word was in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, And I could not. 10 For I heard many mocking: Fear on every side! Report, they say, and we will report it! All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, saying, Perhaps he can be induced; Then we will prevail against him, And we will take our revenge on him. 11 But the LORD is with me as a mighty, awesome One. Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not prevail. They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper. Their everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.”

Change Is Essential And Inevitable

- Some people hate change of any kind. “If you want to make enemies, try to change something.” (Woodrow Wilson)
- Without change there is no growth and progress. “It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: It would be a jolly sight harder for it to learn to fly while remaining an egg.” (C. S. Lewis)

Change Is Essential And Inevitable

- Change around me does not begin until I begin to change. “One of the things I learned when I was negotiating was that until I changed myself I could not change others.” (Nelson Mandela)
- In the end, the only thing we may have the power to change is ourselves; can we learn to be content with that? “Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over instead of craving control over what you don't.” (Steve Maraboli)

Where Does Change Begin?

- The Jews of Paul's day often complained about the immorality of the Gentiles
 - Rom. 2:1-3 - "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. 3 And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?"
- In condemning the Gentiles, they were condemning themselves.

Where Does Change Begin?

- They were not wrong in condemning the sins of the Gentiles. Their sin was in not starting with themselves
 - Rom. 2:17-23 - “Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, Do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?”

Where Does Change Begin?

- David knew what was wrong with the rich man in the story Nathan related
 - 2Sam. 12:1-6 - “Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.”

Where Does Change Begin?

- The Jews built memorials to the prophets of old, showing their conviction that the prophets were righteous men revealing God's will. In this, they condemned their fathers as murderers of the righteous.
 - Matt. 23:29-32 - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' 31 Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt."

Who Will Bring About This Change?

- Not the ones who call on the Lord but are not obedient
 - Luke 6:46-49 - “But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? 47 Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.””

Who Will Bring About This Change?

- Not those who talk about change but do nothing
 - Matt. 21:28-31 - “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father? They said to Him, The first. Jesus said to them, Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.”

Who Will Bring About This Change?

- We are known by what we produce, not by what we talk about producing
 - Matt. 7:16-20 - “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles?
17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

Who Will Bring About This Change?

- If I recognize there is a problem, then responsibility for improvement falls on my shoulders first. To complain and do nothing contributes to the problem
- “We cannot change the things we've done; we can only change what we will do next.”