

will come in.” Not your mother or your father or your grandparents but you must open the door to this alive-again Jesus. Since He resurrected from the grave, He has not stopped knocking at human heart’s doors.

#### **IV. The Priestly Confession has been changed.**

Religions have always rotated around their confessional booths. The power of the priest only to forgive hung as a club over the head of the guilt-stricken sinner. A resurrection wave of joy and gigantic sigh of relief washed over mankind when it was stated about the risen Jesus, “for there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all people” (Timothy 2:5). Just before His death, Jesus had taught, “When the spirit of truth has come, you will know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you” (John 14:17). That huge curtain in the Temple that separated the people from the ‘Holy of Holies,’ the very presence of the Living God was complete, it had forbidden the people to think that God was approachable. When Jesus died at Calvary that giant curtain was torn into two pieces and the people could see that God was not there, hidden from the people. They now had access themselves to God and Jesus breaking out of the grave guaranteed a new day of hope for them. The shock in the Temple on Friday gave way to joyful excitement on Sunday. Hebrews 4:16 invites us, “Let us approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” The ‘confession booth’ is now erected on the spot where we meet Jesus and He says, “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us all of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

#### **V. The Threat of Death has**

#### **changed**

Never again do men have to fear death or what happens one second after death. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 1:10, “Jesus has destroyed death and brought life.” This is the greatest discovery ever revealed to mankind: Jesus holds the secret to defeating death. The last enemy that wants to destroy mankind is death and death has been defeated in a graveyard. “Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:54-57). The last moment of life gives way to the fullness of eternal life in heaven with God and the home that is prepared by our master carpenter and savior, Jesus, the defeater of death.

#### **Conclusion**

The changes that Jesus instituted are still changing lives! And still infuriating the religions of the world. Christianity is still viewed as the most radical attack on established cultural religions ever launched. Record numbers are being killed daily! The teachings of Jesus have been banned, reading the Bible has been forbidden, converting to Christianity is a certain death sentence and believer’s baptism can only be observed in strictest secrecy lest the converts whole family be banished. While here in America, the church of our Lord Jesus is mainly ignored.

Still He repeats his call for change: “Follow me and I will make you to become....” Will you cast your vote today for Christ? Will you come out of your private world and join the procession shouting, “Hooray for Jesus!”

  
**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

*Let Us Share First With You.*



March 16, 2008

Palm Sunday

Sermon by:

Pastor Charlie Chilton, Interim Pastor

**Jesus: The Candidate**

**For Change**

Matt. 21:1-11

First Baptist Church of Memphis  
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Introduction: For several months now we have been hearing the appeal for change. Although the presidential candidates started with several different appeals, all eventually came around to claim that they would be the best “agent for change” for America. It was wisely observed that change takes place whether we like it or not, we all must adjust. The candidates, of course, replied that they would work only for positive change. Only three remain to claim the prize of making change. When Jesus rode into a packed Jerusalem on a donkey’s back during the height of Passover, there was a mixed reception. Even His own followers were not sure. The air was similar to a political convention. There was much speculation if the teacher from Galilee would show up. It was the day Jesus came to Main Street! It was the day Jesus threw down the gauntlet and challenged every religious teaching that they had claimed as a “non-negotiable.” It was the day Jesus “staked His claim” for the human heart and set in motion a series of changes that reverberate right down until today. In fulfillment of a prophecy voiced by the prophet Zechariah (9:9) that a righteous and gentle King would come riding on a donkey’s colt, He signaled a change of thought pattern: God’s King and God’s way would not fit into the human pattern! He is entering Jerusalem to offer redemption to mankind by way of a cross. A priestly King who would offer Himself to open the way to God for all people to have a personal relationship was a wonderful idea. Could He follow through on the promises of His “royal entry?” Let us see the changes He made.

### **I. The day of worship has been changed**

When Luke 24:1 begins with the

dramatic statement “On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb,” Sunday would never be the same again. The followers would never be able to get over Resurrection Day! No day could compare to it! Who could ever get past the fact that Jesus came out of the grave on Sunday? They would worship on Saturday and Sunday at the temple as long as they could until they were driven away. The more they assimilated the reality of the resurrection, the more that everyday became a Sunday. Acts 2:46 would report that “everyday they continued to meet together in the temple courts.” Romans 14:5-6 has Paul explaining, “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers each day alike. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord.” The Jewish rulers moved these worshippers from the inner courts to the outside porches to off the premises but they could never move them from Sunday resurrection day worship.

### **II. The dietary laws have been changed.**

It has always been hard for the people to understand the connection between diet and devotion to God. It was a hard burden to remember and often became a barrier to God. Jesus spoke to this in Mark 7:18FF, “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from outside can make him ‘unclean?’ For it does not go into his heart but into his stomach and then out of his body.” In saying this Jesus declared all foods “clean.” The Apostle Peter had a private lesson in resurrection freedom from diet when the Lord spoke to him in Acts 10:15, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” The infant church that was flourishing because of the resurrection was constantly nagged by the Pharisees check-

ing their menus. God created food to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe in Him “for everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.” (I Timothy 4:4) Paul instructed in I Corinthians 10:25-26, “Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising question of conscience, for the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” Food does not bring us near to God! (I Corinthians 8:8) Your body is the temple of God and Jesus is living in your heart through His resurrected power. The question is not, “What is in your stomach?” but, “What is in your heart?”

### **III. The inheriting of faith has been changed.**

My favorite passage in the entire Bible states: “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God; children not born of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” (John 1:12-13) They had assumed that religion went from generation to generation and usually does. That is the nature of religion, but resurrection life is a different matter. Indeed, the problem of inherited sin, judgment, and condemnation had been confronted by God through the prophet Ezekiel in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. “A man will not die for his father’s sin. The soul that sins is the one that will die.” (Ezekiel 18:20) The resurrected Jesus clarified the issue once and for all that a “personal decision” must be made about the God-Man Jesus. “As many as personally received Him as Savior, the same were changed.” Remember how John 3:17 emphasizes, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him.” Revelation 3:20 is so simply beautiful while quoting Jesus “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any person will open the door I