**“Some Things We Cannot Change”**

Jarrod Jacobs

In the long ago, Solomon said, “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered” (Ecc. 1:14-15). This is a hard truth for many to grasp. Put simply, there are some things in life that we cannot change!

Friends, we cannot change our past. As much as we would like to go back and rewrite our personal history, it cannot be done! Our bad decisions, unkind words, and misdeeds are forever written in the past. We cannot change those things. David felt the brunt of his past sins as he wrote: “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me” (Ps. 51:2-3). The apostle Paul understood this as well. He wrote about his past, saying he was the “chief of sinners” for what he had done to Christ (I Tim. 1:15).

What gives us hope is knowing that while we cannot change our past, we can receive forgiveness for our sins, and make a better future (Acts 2:38)! When we follow the Lord’s plan of salvation, our past sins can be washed away (Acts 22:16). We can be made right in His sight!

Secondly, we cannot change people to suit us! No one will change against his will; but people can change their ways when they are taught the truth! Is this not the very essence of Bible teaching (See: Jer. 7:3, 5, 26:13; Lk. 13:3, 5; Acts 8:22, 17:30; etc.)? God’s plan of salvation is based on the fact that people can change their ways, and willingly turn from sin to follow the Lord! We could list numerous people who changed from unrighteous to righteous when they heard and obeyed the word of God. They did this, not because they were “forced” into it, but because they made a rational choice to do what is right when they were presented with the truth. It is evident that the only one I can control is myself. Thus, the Bible teaches us that people can change themselves, but we cannot change others to suit our whims!

Another thing we cannot change is the consequences of sin. “The wages of sin is death …” (Rom. 3:23). As much as people wish to “white-wash” sin, and even deny the reality of it, the truth is that no one can change the consequences of sin! Sin’s spiritual consequence is death. It has been this way since the beginning (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:3). Sadly, sin’s effect is felt all over the globe: “There is none righteous, no, not one …. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:10, 23). In fact, the unchangeable consequence of sin is so serious, that it required Christ to come and die as a sacrifice for our sin (Matt. 18:11, 20:28; Jn. 1:29; Rom. 5:6-10)! This was necessary, not because Christ’s sacrifice ended sin’s consequence, but so we might escape from sin’s grasp!

How will we respond to things we cannot change? Choose wisely as you answer that question. It is possible that your eternity will depend on your answer!

*-- Jarrod Jacobs preaches with the Caneyville church of Christ in Caneyville, KY. He can be reached at (270) 589-4167.*