

Can people change? Some would say “no.” Some would say “yes.” I suppose both are right, aren't they? The person who resigns themselves to “the fact” that people won't change doesn't usually try to change themselves nor do they try to change others – good or bad, and so there usually is no change. And those who believe change is possible would do their best to make changes in their behavior, their way of thinking, all of it, and they'll try to help others. Change happens. I suppose there is a little truth in both. But David knows something the wisest of the world do not acknowledge – God changes people.

Remember Me According to Your Love, O LORD.

In his Love God changes

1. Your Status.

2. Your Future.

3. You.

Psalm 25 – Of David. In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

Sometimes a psalm heading will tell us what part of life, especially from the life of David, a psalm is from. With ones that don't tell us the exact occasion, it can usually be applied to most any time of life. From youth God had changed David's heart to trust in the LORD in every season of his life. There were times though when it was difficult or he failed in following God's plan. Yet he had learned this reality – “No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.” To some this may sound like karma – what goes around comes around. There is no such thing as Karma. There is only a just and merciful God who defends the cause of his people, disciplines them in love, and also holds the treacherous accountable.

David turned to the LORD his God, who revealed that very name “*the LORD*” to Moses on Mt. Sinai 500 years earlier “*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sins. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation”* (Exodus 34:6-7). David knew God's faithfulness. While God allows us to be beset by different enemies from without, God is faithful to us. He even uses hardship, enemies, awful situations, to drive us to himself, to train us to depend on him and not ourselves, to turn from sin and sinful ways which bring us shame or open us up to shame, and bring us back to himself. In him, we are not put to shame. God delivers us. God blesses us. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are good examples of this – they knew God had them either way.

God kept David the same in some respects, but he changed him in other respects. David had courage in his God. That did not change, except when sin led him to seek himself and his own interests breaking the 6th commandment with Bathsheba and then the 8th and 5th with Uriah and his fellow soldiers, or when he broke the 1st commandment and fell into pride as he counted his fighting men. Yet God changed David's heart when he brought him to repentance. He sent Nathan the prophet to confront his adultery, lies and murder. He sent Gad the prophet to give him his choice of discipline. God was faithful to David and changed him, bringing him to repentance, bringing him to stop allowing sin to rule him and lead him astray, bringing him to quit looking to his own strength and

pride and humble himself before his faithful God. God changed David. He addressed those attacking him or putting him to shame, but he also addressed David and his heart.

How has God changed you? How does he need to change you yet? Where have you let outside pressures and temptations get the best of you and sinfully have a home in your heart? Is it adulterous thoughts, actions (6th)? Is it pride which causes all sorts of bad things like jealousy and envy – why don't I have that and they do (1st)? Is it resentment – “I can't believe they'd do such a thing to me or say such a thing?” Is it trust in yourself – “My life is just fine right now.” “I really don't need God and his Word all that much.” “I can do it myself. I am self-sufficient and wise enough, smart enough, good enough to win in this life and probably in the next.” (1st). The reality is that we need changing. We need a good look in God's law like David did to see just how in need we are. And we need to see our Gracious God who changes things and us.

In our OT lesson God sent Ezekiel to confront his people who had turned their hearts from God. In our Gospel lesson God came in the flesh Jesus Christ to confront the Jews and leaders in their hypocrisy. God worked repentance in David. He said, *“Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways.”* David knew he couldn't change his past. He now saw clearly his pride, his immorality, his foolish sinful mistakes, the people he had hurt. He couldn't change it, but God could change the way he looked, he remembered. *“According to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.”*

So God did. God did not change. He changed where he looked. Our lesson from Philippians shows where he looked. He looked upon his Son who had come down from heaven to take our place, to be our substitute in life and in death. Jesus didn't need to change a thing – he was God's perfect Son – and he proved it in his life, his ministry, his attitude and his perfect obedience to God. Yet by coming to earth and living for us as our substitute he changed us and our eternity. *“He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”* He did that so God could change the way he looked at you. He chooses not to see your sin and rebellious ways, nor David's because Jesus has paid our debt in full. He sees **your status** now as his son, his daughter, because Jesus paid your debt on the cross, because Jesus robes you in his righteousness by your baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). Through faith in him you are God's dear child, forgiven, therefore **your future** is changed – eternal life with God in heaven. Jesus rose from the dead to prove it. **In Love God changes your status, your future, you.**

David knew God's love for him that changed him from sinner to child of God, forgiven, with a future in heaven. And he knew God needed to keep changing him in his living for his Savior God. He prays, *“Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.”* David knew God works through his Word. He knew he needed God's Holy Spirit to change his heart continually pointing him away from sin to his Savior God and living for him. And he trusted God in his grace to do it. He prays God to teach him. God did.

God has changed your status to child of God, your eternity from going to hell to going to heaven. He loves you. He will not fail to change and mold and shape your heart to him and his purposes. Go to the Word of God as David did. Hold God to his promises and pray for him to change you in all the ways he needs to as he already has your eternity.

Do people change? Maybe that's the wrong focus because our own efforts to change can only go so far. David's prayer to our God who does not change is better. **Remember me according to your love, O LORD.** He remembers his mercy and love for us. He guides us, leads us, and molds us by his Word. God changes people. **In Love God changes your status, your future, and you.** Amen.