



# *Lakeside Sermons*

Lakeside Baptist Church • Rocky Mount, North Carolina  
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JULY 15, 2018

Waiting On the World To Change  
Gatekeepers Workcamp 2018 Reflections  
Isaiah 43:1-4a, 18-19a; II Corinthians 5:17

Change can be difficult. Even when changes are overwhelmingly positive, it can be hard for us to move from our comfortable places and into the unknown, to leave behind the familiar and embrace new experiences. And change can be especially challenging when it is happening to us on the inside. Sometimes it is hard for us even to admit that we need to change. When circumstances cause us to re-examine our hearts, minds, attitudes, and assumptions, we tend to want to stick to what we know, sometimes stubbornly clinging to our old ways of thinking, doing, and being in the world.

But our faith teaches us that Christ wants to transform us from the inside and then send us out into a new way of life, a life where we give generously, speak kindly, act justly, and live vulnerably. Christ changes our hearts so that they are open to loving others and willing to serve them. Christ changes us so that we no longer regard our own needs as higher than those of our neighbors, we trust God's provision and protection enough to order our priorities according to the values of God's kingdom, and we humble ourselves enough to acknowledge our inability to change ourselves and our complete dependence on God's grace.

This week at Gatekeepers Workcamp, our theme verse and daily devotions helped us to focus on the change and renewal Christ brings to our lives, to the lives of those whom we served, to those who worked alongside us, and to the community in which we live. This morning, several of our Lakeside participants will share some thoughts about how this week has changed them, their crew members, their homeowners, and Rocky Mount. We invite you to join us in reflecting on Christ's promise to make of us new creations and the ways you can participate in the work of reconciliation and transformation in our community. You will find a Litany of Response printed on the insert in your Order of Worship. When prompted, throughout this time of reflection, please join us in singing the congregational response:

Leader: Thanks be to God! In us and through us, Christ is making all things new!

**Congregational response: So if anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation. Old things are past, and all is new.**

**Jan Raynor:**

Our homeowner, Ms. Viola, was speechless and in tears when she saw the changes and repairs we made to her home. We painted, she got new shingles and roof repairs, her fence and gate were repaired due to damage from her neighbor's trees, we power washed her house, fixed wood rot and replaced a toilet. But she also showed us HER gifts, not only of the flowers and treats for us, but what she does in the community.

She has fostered many young adults over the years who needed love and guidance.

She sits with the elderly and takes them to appointments, grocery shopping and other field trips. She does these things even though she takes care of her mentally and physically challenged 26-year-old daughter, mostly by herself.

Even though she can no longer take care of her house physically, she welcomed us into her home, trusting us with her house key while she was in and out all day long, and treated us like we were one of her own.

Gatekeepers repairs and rebuilds homes. Ms. Viola repairs and rebuilds confidence and also nourishes lives in our community. Her card read, "It was really appreciated".

**Jacob Watkins:**

At first, I questioned why I was being part of Gatekeepers this year. This is my sixth year. I am a rising college freshman. After spending six hours cleaning a little girl's room so that she, for the first time, could have her own space outside her dad's production studio (He is a very talented musician), we made her bed and rearranged it how she wanted. For the first time, she had made her bed the next morning and kept it that way. That was when I realized that not only had Gatekeepers changed lives for them, it had also changed me.

**Carol Barker:**

Monday - What's a scraper? Have you ever painted anything? No, never.

Tuesday - Popcorn ceilings can be repaired without a mess! Ms. Carol, what are those T-things/poles in the backyard? An outdoor clothes line.

Wednesday - Repairing and replacing of windowsills. Learning what a turnbuckle will do on a restrung clothesline. A fresh new mailbox set in concrete. Fresh paint on the home's exterior.

As of Thursday - A home on the verge of significant moisture damage both inside and outside, restored and transformed by volunteers. Eight homes restored and transformed by volunteers, three-fourths of which were youth.

My Daddy said to these volunteers at lunch on Friday of Gatekeepers 2017: He thanked them for the hot and dirty, yet amazing work they were doing in the 90-degree heat. He addressed the fact that they gave up pool time and couch time. All volunteers got up before sunrise to be at Lakeside by 7:00 a.m. every day for five days to be dispatched to their job sites, and they paid (NOT got paid) to participate! He finished by saying that his hope for the future of our local community and the community of mankind had been restored by what he saw each day in these volunteers.

May I add the renaissance in the lives of strangers helping strangers and in the lives of new friends helping new friends could go a long way in the world today.

**Louis O'Neal:**

I had the pleasure of being with Crew #8 and I can assure you that Carol Barker's voice was good last week. As you can imagine, she is very well organized. I was assigned to window detail with two youth who had never been to Gatekeepers before. They had very limited experience with hand tools and zero with power tools. But, in that process, we had three major repairs to windows and eight or nine minor repairs. By the end of the week, they had used three different power tools, hand tools, and they were doing it on their own. That was a big change for these young people, considering they were rising seniors and had made these changes in their lives where they can use these tools and feel confident. They were telling me what to do before the end of the week! My hat is off to Carol for her well-organized assignments.

**Spencer Edwards:**

The main thing I took from Gatekeepers is how I take things for granted. I realized that a working toilet and bathtub are not guaranteed things. We improved the homeowners' lives dramatically by giving them a safe and stable deck.

**Chuck Taylor:**

At the beginning of the 13th century, St. Francis told his fellow monks to go out and preach the gospel and, if necessary, use words. This past week, I worked and sweated alongside remarkable people—men, women, boys and girls; bright youth and snow-crowned age; black, brown and white—all with a common mission: to create positive change in our community. You have heard and will hear the many forms that change took. I am here to tell this congregation that last week in our community, the gospel was preached, and no words were necessary.

**Andy Barker:**

A most respected member of this congregation once taught: Jesus calls us to serve the needy, not necessarily the grateful. It can really renew your heart when you can spend a week doing both.

**Madi Adkins:**

This is my second year doing Gatekeepers. This house was most definitely different than the one we had last year. She made her home our home. It takes a brave and special person to allow mostly kids to come into your house. We at Gatekeepers are so lucky that they do. I made some great friends this week and got to reconnect with some old ones. It was a great and rewarding week for me and our crew.

**Ginny Cobb:**

I saw smiles and grateful eyes.

I saw old made new and new skills learned.

We made not-so-clean clean again.

We shared time and fellowship with those who care.

We were given blessings and received blessings in return.

**Henry Williams:**

For the first ten years of my life, I lived in Rocky Mount, and then I moved to Raleigh. Before I moved, I was too young to realize how unfortunate some of the citizens are. But this year, when we ripped off shingles and ripped open wood, and termites came pouring out, I realized how lucky I am to live in a house without termites, with a roof over my head and warm clothes and air conditioning that works. Every morning I had to get up at 5:30 to come here, and I would complain to my mom, "I'm never doing this again because I'm so tired," and on the way home, something changes, and I said, "I can't wait until next year." Every year after Gatekeepers Workcamp, we all feel accomplished but tired.

## **Dianne Bulluck:**

Let me start by saying that every year, Gatekeepers brings about a sense of renewal and change in my heart as a servant of Christ, and this year was no different. I was the leader of Crew #3.

On Wednesday, our devotion was dedicated to the topic of how Hurricane Floyd negatively affected Rocky Mount in 1999. After insightful discussions, it was summarized that even after suffering devastating changes, good can arise from bad.

I think my very young crew learned the importance of embracing change in their lives in a positive way, by trusting that God always has a plan to make our lives better, in his timing. They realized that if their perspective of how they react to change would remain positive, by their faith, knowing that a never-changing God is always with them, then they can influence others to be positive, too.

Collectively, by the grace of God and the ministry of Gatekeepers, I feel that crew #3 changed its outlook on where their Rocky Mount community is heading, and they will now go forth proclaiming to others the same.

Leader: Thanks be to God! In us and through us, Christ is making all things new!

**Congregational response: So if anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation. Old things are past, and all is new.**

Jesus said, "Follow me" (Luke 9:59).

I replied, "Yes, Lord, I want to follow you, and I will. But I'm so busy right now. There are so many important things that need my attention, and my schedule is pretty tight. Give me a little more time, and I'll follow you just as soon as I can get around to it. Besides, following you means that I might have to change some of the places I go or the people I hang out with. It might make me change my opinions about some things, and I've grown pretty attached to my opinions. So I'll think about it, but I'm not sure how far I'm willing to follow you."

Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-20). And he said, "Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will wear . . . But seek first the kingdom of God

and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:25,33).

And I said, "Oh, yes, Lord, I know my focus should be on the most important things, on eternal things, instead of so many temporary concerns. If you'll just let me make sure I've saved enough for the future, and there are just a few more things I've been wanting to buy and a few more things I need to accomplish. And I work so hard all week, so Sunday is my only day to relax and sleep a little later. But I will. I'll start doing better soon."

Jesus said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit you if you gain the whole world but forfeit your soul?" (Mark 8:34-37)

"I've thought about this one long and hard, Lord," I said. "There are so many things tugging at my conscience right now, so many issues of justice confronting me every day. I feel overwhelmed by all the needs out there. I know I ought to speak up more when I see cruelty and hatred, but it's so risky, Lord. What if it makes my friends angry or causes tension with family members? What if it hurts my business? What if people label me? I know I should use my voice and influence to stand up for what's right, but it's so risky and scary! Maybe I should just mind my own business so people won't think I'm a troublemaker."

Jesus said, "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3) and he said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

I replied, exasperated, "Lord, those people just make me so mad! They are mean and hateful and condescending! How can they be so narrow-minded? How can they claim to be Christians and still believe those things? I don't know how you expect me to pray for them, Lord, unless I pray for everything about them to change! They just rub me the wrong way, and I don't see very much about them that is lovable at all. How in the world am I supposed to love them?"

Jesus said, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Luke 6:31). And Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

"Lord, I want to be a good person and help other people. Truly, I do. But how do I know if they deserve it? All these people who are asking for help won't do enough to help themselves, and some of them just want handouts. A lot of them made poor choices to get themselves into this situation, and now they want good, hardworking people like me to bail them out. How do I know if they are trying to scam me? What if they don't use the money I give them the way they should? It's so hard to decide what to do, Lord. How do I even know if the charities asking for support are helping the people who need it? I know I've been blessed and that I should be compassionate, but I've worked so hard for the things I have, and I just don't like to be taken advantage of."

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 25:37-40).

I asked Jesus, "Lord, I just don't understand why so many terrible things are happening and why so many people are suffering. Sometimes I watch the news or hear about all these injustices that are plaguing our nation and our world. Lord, why don't you do something to help these poor people?"

Jesus said to me, "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets." And Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

And then I said to Jesus, "I wish everyone would just stop bickering about everything! Everywhere I go, people are arguing about politics, and everyone is blaming everyone else. And those people in Raleigh and in Washington: What did we elect them for? Why aren't they doing something to make things better? They say they are going to change things, but nothing ever seems to improve! Lord, change their hearts so that they will do what's best for us."

Jesus asked me, "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" and he said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

And then I prayed, "Lord, there are so many people who call themselves Christians but don't act like it. Please change them so that they will live like they should. And there are so many other people who have never heard about your love for them, so I pray that you will call missionaries to go out into the world to share the Gospel. I will pray for them and for the local ministries that

are helping to meet people's needs. I just feel so sorry for all those people who are suffering and lost."

Jesus said to me, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit you if you gain the whole world but forfeit your soul?"

I said to Jesus, "I know that I don't talk to you as much as I should—some days I barely acknowledge you at all. I have good intentions about coming to church and getting involved in Bible study. I wish I knew people in the church family better. I'd like to get more involved in all the things they are doing in the community, and I know I should give more. But I'm just so busy and stretched so thin. With work and the house, the kids playing so many sports, and trying to find a little time for myself, I know I neglect my spirit and my relationship with you, Lord. My soul feels empty, and you seem so very far away."

Jesus said to me, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." And he said, "Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will wear . . . But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

I said to Jesus, "I don't know which way to turn, Lord. Everywhere I look, there are so many paths to choose, or the way I think I should walk seems treacherous. I feel lost and scared most of the time, and even when I'm certain you are calling me to do something, I'm not confident that I have the resources to do it. There are many things I need to change, but I need your help, Lord, and admitting that I can't do it on my own is so hard. I'm not sure what I should do next or which way I should go."

And Jesus said to me, "Follow me, and I will change everything. I will make of you a new creation! What are you waiting for?"

Let us pray:

Change us, Gracious God, for we know that we do not have the strength or the wisdom to change ourselves. Mold us more fully in the image of Christ and transform us by the work of your Spirit so that we can be about your work of justice and mercy which has the power to transform our community, our world, and even our lives. Amen.

**July 15, 2018**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession**

Most of us will admit, O God, that, at times, the prophet's words sound like little more than ecstatic hyperbole. We know the damage that water can do. We understand the devastation that comes with fire. We witness struggle and disaster every day around the world and here at home. And then we remember the times that we have come through deep waters and walked through scorching fire. We are primary examples of how many times you have done a "new thing" for us and within us. We bow in humble gratitude before your divine love which truly surpasses and envelopes all of the love we experience in life. Thank you, O God, for loving us into and through life.

As reminders of your love and care run through our minds, fresh needs of body, mind, and spirit also stir within our hearts. We know that you are mindful of all we need and act even before we pray, but we need to ask, and we need to know that you are present and acting for us and all who are in need. Bless us with awareness of your nearness and reassure us with reminders of your grace, we pray.

We thank you for the good work done in our community through Workcamp this past week. We are grateful for every person and church who participated and for every home owner and neighborhood who welcomed the workers each day. May the spirit of what was accomplished spread through us all like an invigorating breeze to refresh the spirit of our entire community.

We have many needs, O God, and we are always asking for your help. We also have grateful hearts and are aware of the blessings that are ours. Continue to hold us and our world in your strong and loving hands, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Jody C. Wright  
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