

“Challenged by Change”

Luke 5:27-39

(A complimentary transcript of this sermon is available at the Information Desk in the Lobby)

THEME: Practically everything we learn about Jesus Christ from the Bible is punctuated by change. He changed the world.

Throughout his earthly life and ministry Jesus upset social and religious conventions. In every respect he was too much to contain. Even death could not hold him. He blew it to smithereens!

According to the principles of thermodynamics, any physical system will spontaneously approach a stable condition called equilibrium. It settles down as energy dissipates.

The same tendency is found in organizational systems, including the church. But the church is also a living spiritual organism, the body of Christ.

A church intent of settling down to a comfortable equilibrium inevitably becomes an empty shell as the Spirit dissipates from the body. But a healthy church experiences a constant infusion of spiritual energy.

In our text today, Luke 5:27-39, Jesus Christ reveals some timeless **principles** that govern every healthy church today.

I. TRANSFORMATION INSTEAD OF CONFORMITY (5:27-32)

II. ORGANISM ABOVE ORGANIZATION (5:33-39)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

May 20, 2007

OPENER:

1. What are some ruts you had to get out of or structures you had to break out of in order to express and develop the person God made you to be? Do you still feel trapped? Have you given up and settled into a disappointing life? Pray for each other.
2. Cite someone you know or some historical person who defied convention and made an impact on you or others.

I. TRANSFORMATION INSTEAD OF CONFORMITY (5:27-32)

3. Some people come to faith in Christ in a traditional Christian family. Others come to faith from a background that had little or no Christian influence. Which of the two describes you? Describe your experience of being transformed.
4. In some churches there is a tendency to welcome mostly respectable, religious people who are like the members. How successful do you think First Free has been in resisting such a “safe” tendency?
5. Read Luke 18:9-14. What should a church learn from this parable?

II. ORGANISM ABOVE ORGANIZATION (5:33-39)

6. Consider this statement, “In the church of our Lord Jesus Christ everything except the Scriptures should be ‘written in pencil’—erasable.” What does it mean to you? Should we affirm it?

7. Identify some threadbare or brittle forms in churches today that cannot hold the fresh energy of God’s Spirit? Explain your choice.

8. How have you been stretched recently by what you sense our Lord wants to do in and through your life?