

August 13, 2021

Here's Hope
by Rev. Jerry Rea

Maybe and Maybe Not

"They're never gonna change." Those were the words that drew me up short. They gave me pause because I recognized with all sobriety they were true, or were they? Maybe, and maybe not. It is a very common thought, though pessimistic, that we hear on a regular basis. The idea is that people don't change. Those who have been abused invariably wind up abusing others. Raised by an angry dad, we often turn out angry. In an environment where there is little hope, we turn out hopeless. Where opportunities are rare, we get used to the idea that we are victims and pigeon-holed into a pathway. We bow our eyes and say, "That's just the way it is." Change is only a fleeting dream.

Though the truth of these thoughts is real, there is another thought that rises within me. I believe that things can be *other* than what they *are*. I believe that we have the free will and the opportunity to change ourselves and the lives of those around us. If those around us are angry, do we have to be? If our environment is bad, that doesn't mean it can produce only evil. Our freedom of choice says that we may choose something else. Our future may be quite different from that of our parents. Circumstances may be bad, but our future may be good. I just believe it.

I believe it because of the idea of "free will." Today is an opportunity that has been placed in my hands. It is like money, I may spend it however I choose. I may have wasted yesterday but today is a brand new day. This morning is gone, but I have an afternoon waiting to be spent. I know (it doesn't take a college degree) what makes for a good life. I know, for instance, how to waste my money, and I know how to save and use it. I know telling the truth will lead to a lifestyle of confidence and self-respect, so I choose to tell the truth. I know that love for others begets friends and honor; therefore, I choose to love others, even when it's not returned. I know how to be a man of character. It's not hard to know what is right; the hard part is doing what is right.

Also, I know I can do all things through Jesus (I read that somewhere). Paul uttered those words in a part of Scripture where he'd just witnessed to the fact that he'd been through hard times. He'd had times in his life when the money was there and other times when finances were lean. In the midst of those times he'd learned that he could do all things. You, too, can do all things. He said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Things can change. Sometimes they begin to change when we change our attitude. My counsel is that you adopt a new perspective. That viewpoint is the one Paul espoused. I "can do" all things - through Christ. Things can be "handled" through Christ. You can live up to your God-given potential. Your life can (and needs to) change! We all need to be transformed day by day to be more like Jesus.

They're never gonna change. Maybe, and maybe not
Changing to look like Jesus - every day
Jerry Rea