

Let us pray... God of wonder, you are holy. Create a space for holiness in our lives. Usher your Spirit in our midst. May we be open to change and to the transformation that happens through the power of your Spirit... Amen.

My husband, Keenan and I live in a tiny house... Not an official tiny house like the popular tiny homes, but we live in a small house...

So, it is important for us to be smart in how we utilize our space... And about a month ago we started looking at our space differently, allowing us to see new possibilities.

We started by reorganizing things and moving things around... We got rid of some things and got some things in, to help with organization.

And after some work, our home has been transformed.

I was most excited about this that I had to share it with my mom... So, I called her up, told her what we were doing, and exclaimed with glee, we have so much more space now!

And my mom, who knows our house, asked, how, did you add on by building a wall?

Now we didn't add any more space to our home but we changed our minds on what our space could look like...

And isn't that part of the wisdom we find in the beauty of fall?

Going for a walk, a bike ride, a drive, or simply looking out a window, you can see change right in our midst.

Where nature is showing off how beautiful it can be, by simply letting go...

A change that we see every year and is a well needed reminder for us... As it can be easy to become stuck in our ways... And as humans it seems like we need a reminder on the importance of change.

And this idea of change is central to the parable that Jesus told today...

We hear that the son who said he would not work in the field, changed his mind, and went to work in the field.

And the Greek word that is used here, the word the NRSV translated as changed his mind, is meta-mellow-my... Some other translations of this are that he repented, regretted, thought better of it, or had a change of heart...

Showing that this word, meta-mellow-my, has a more nuanced meaning than a simple change.

It's getting at the idea of what it means to change your mind or your perspective... But it goes deeper than that, because it is not just about what is going on in your head.

Part of the definition of meta-mellow-my as we heard in one of the translations, has to do with repentance, specifically getting at, what it means to repent to yourself...

The kind of repentance that stems from a change in perspective, which in turn influences your behavior.

Which in turn, becomes embodied in a way that is so significant, that others notice the change.

In an essence it is getting at what it means to live as a Christian...

Sure, we can say we believe in Christ, but our actions matter.

Which is what the entire gospel is getting at today...

And Jesus highlights this by putting the chief priests and elders in their place... As they were only concerned about authority.

What was actually being done didn't matter to them...

They were like the son who said he was going to work in the field, but didn't.

As the chief priests and elders claimed they were doing God's will, without actually doing anything.... They were keeping up appearances and putting on a façade...

And so, Jesus sends in a cold fall wind trying to shake them up with this parable... A parable that must have felt like a slap in the face...

A parable that speaks to us uncomfortably today... Because it causes us to reflect...

And wonder what kind of change might we be in need of?

Because we are always in need of some fresh air... To be filled with the breath of the Spirit and stir things up...

To remember why we are here and what we are called to do with our time.

Because so much of life is about change and discernment... And to grow in our faith, and to grow into the person we are called to be, we need to be open to this transformative power of God.

By asking, is God calling you into a change? Is there a ministry here at St. John you feel called to sign-up for when the stewardship sheets come out?

Is there a ministry here you would like to see started at St. John? Is there a need in the community that we can meet together?

Because these are the exciting and life-giving conversations we get to have together as we live a life of faith together.

We get to embrace change and we get to discover what it looks like to live out God's will, in a community and in our personal lives.

And sometimes that change will look drastic and different...

And sometimes that change may mean looking at the space we are in, and reimagining what it can be...

But sometimes, this may be a lot... So, change may mean stillness, silence, and rest... Because sometimes it is enough to be still and receive God's love...

Because you are enough, for you are a beloved child of God.

Meaning, you don't always need to have it all together... You don't need to have an answer or a plan for everything... Because that's the beauty about change... It allows space for curiosity, to learn, to grow, and to be transformed.

It allows space for you to discover your true colors, to deepen them, and show them off to the world like the trees are doing right now...

Leaving space for growth and transformation come spring...

And Jesus knew this in his very bones when he shared this parable...

Because this gospel takes place right after Jesus rode a donkey into the Holy City... Where people shouted hosana in the highest...

Because this gospel takes place during Holy Week. A week that led to the most transformative change of all.

Christ's death and resurrection... Where all of creations was made new, allowing God to work in each one of you.

Just think of the possibilities... Just think what can happen when you lean into God's everlasting arms... Amen