

Pastor Brian's
Midweek Message
September 7, 2022

(Note: This devotion is the one that I presented at the Men's/Women's Breakfast this morning, I wrote it 10 years ago this month, with a few updates to make it current)

Can One Person Change the World?

Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. Romans 5:18

With somewhere north of seven billion people in the world, it would seem the odds are against any single individual making a BIG impact. Maybe, but don't tell that to Malala Yousafzai. At the age of 11, Pakistani Yousafzai began to write a blog for the BBC. In her writings she spoke of what it was like to live under the Taliban. She exposed their atrocities and began a campaign for Islamic girls to be educated. In case you don't know, the Taliban doesn't like the idea of educated women. That's why as Yousafzai was getting on a bus to take her to school, a gunman walked up to her and shot her in the head and neck. She was raced to the hospital, where they did all they could to help her. But that is not the end of Yousafzai's story. Yousafzai was evacuated to Britain where the care is better, and her chances for recovery are higher. Almost as importantly, the people of Pakistan became outraged at the assault on someone who was the unofficial poster child for the future of women. Indeed, the nation's top military officer, a man who is usually tight-lipped, issued a statement condemning the attack and promising the military would not bow to terrorists. He said, "We will fight, regardless of the cost. We will prevail."

Next month we commemorate the Lutheran Reformation as it was 505 years ago that a rather nondescript German monk and professor of theology nailed his "95 Theses" for discussion in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, chiefly in the area of selling God's forgiveness through indulgences, to the door of the Schlosskirche (Castle Church) in Wittenberg. In case you don't know, the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire didn't like the idea of its monks questioning its authority and practices. An unknown Martin Luther quickly became known, as an enemy, of the established church in the west. He was excommunicated and his life was constantly in danger, but through his efforts, and those who joined with him, the Church of Jesus Christ our Savior was brought back to the solid foundation of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Christ alone, revealed in His Word alone.

So, can a single person make a difference? It appears the answer is "yes." We Christians KNOW that the answer is yes. That's because we know Jesus Christ. In the history of the world no single person, no group, no committee, no party, no army, no nation has ever changed things as Jesus has. It's amazing that a Man who lived His entire life in a remote Roman province has had that kind of impact. How could it be otherwise? Repeatedly and regularly, He did what no other person has ever or could ever do. In spite of continuous opposition, He returned good for evil. More than that, He lived His life for others; He resisted their temptations; He fulfilled the laws they had broken. Yes, He lived for others, and He died for others. Carrying the sins of lost humanity, He allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross and died the death all of us deserved.

But there is more. Three days after His murder, Jesus defeated death and showed His victory by bodily appearing to His disciples and hundreds of others. Acting by God's plan, the Lord Jesus took our punishment and gave to us His victory. Since that time, in every land, in every century the message of salvation has been proclaimed; people have been brought to faith, and souls have been forgiven, lives have been saved. Can one person make a difference? He can if that Person is God's Son, our Savior. We can, connected to His power through His Spirit.