
Graphics and Audio Notes

- There **will** be a sermon starter video.
- There **will** be notes and / or scripture to show on screen during the sermon.

Text highlighted in this way will have a slide prepared to be on screen.

Text highlighted in this way is a reminder for Andrew during delivery.



Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about transitions and the beginnings in our lives.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because the new beginnings are always possible in our lives, especially after endings and time in the wilderness. Our faith offers us tools to help us make progress through new beginnings.

What is the good news?

The good news is that the power of God can make us new over and over again.

What are the next action steps?

You are invited to be ready to die to our old selves,
journey in times of wilderness and struggle,
then at the right time find new life, new hope, new beginning, and resurrection!

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the second sermon in a series focused on transitions. It is the second Sunday of worship in the Fellowship Hall during renovation of our sanctuary. It has been prepared with help from a series preached by Dustin Petz at Norfolk United Methodist Church in August of 2014.

Metadata

Topics

- Change Lives

Sermon Books of the Bible

- John
- Mark

2nd Sunday after the Epiphany
Making Sense of Life's Changes - Beginnings
First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

January 22, 2017
Mark 10:46-52
Preaching Target Word Count: 2,098

Tags

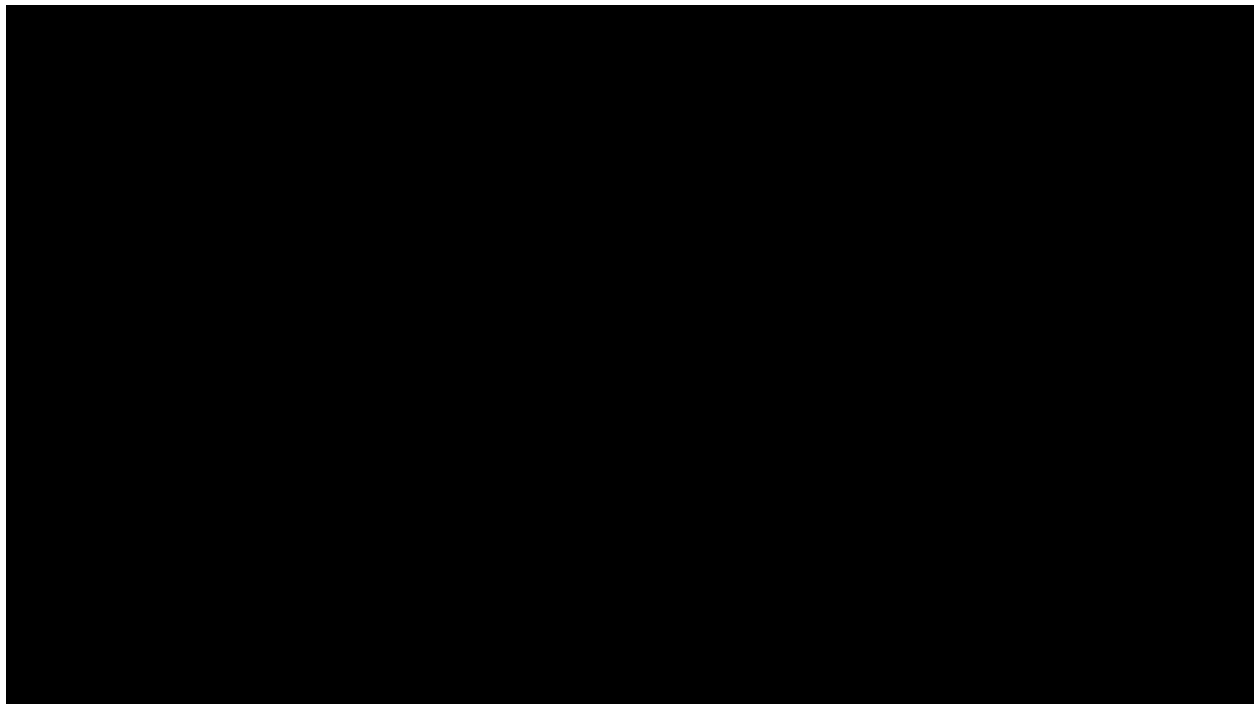
sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, Eldorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, transition, transitions, change, changes, newbeginnings, beginning, beginnings

Sermon Audio

9 a.m. Worship

11 a.m. Worship

Sermon Video



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Mark 10:46-52, CEB
Response to Scripture
Sermon Starter Video

New Beginnings **5**

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Introduction

Mark 10:46-52, CEB

⁴⁶Jesus and his followers came into Jericho. As Jesus was leaving Jericho, together with his disciples and a sizable crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, Timaheus' son, was sitting beside the road. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was there, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, show me mercy!" ⁴⁸Many scolded him, telling him to be quiet, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David, show me mercy!"

⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Call him forward."

They called the blind man, "Be encouraged! Get up! He's calling you."

⁵⁰Throwing his coat to the side, he jumped up and came to Jesus.

⁵¹Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man said, "Teacher, I want to see."

⁵²Jesus said, "Go, your faith has healed you." At once he was able to see, and he began to follow Jesus on the way.

Response to Scripture

One: The word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Starter Video

Play sermon starter video.

New Beginnings

Transition from Wichita to Salina

Imagine being in 8th grade...

Now, let me tell you a story about my life...

Middle School Life

I completed 8th grade at Pleasant Valley Middle School in Wichita twenty-two years ago. I felt good about middle school... Well, as good as you can feel about being in middle school - as a middle schooler.

Move to Salina

That summer, I went through a huge change and transition in my life. Our family moved from Wichita to Salina. Life as I knew it in Wichita ended and life in Salina began. Even though we lived near the middle of town, a few blocks from the high school, that summer I felt as if I was living in the wilderness.

Questions of Identity

Who was I? Would I stay in touch with my friends from Wichita? How would I meet friends in Salina? I was grieving life in Wichita where I knew who I was and what life was all about. I wasn't quite ready to make a new start.

Summer Wilderness

That summer felt like the wilderness for me. I probably thought, "Why God have you sent me to this horrible place? To kill me? At least back in Wichita, I knew who I was." – sounding like the Exodus cry of the Israelites.

Sports Camps

My parents encouraged me to sign up for the summer sports camps. Are you kidding me? I don't know anyone, much less want to really get to know them. I did end up going to basketball camp, but football camp was too much that first summer. I was overwhelmed. I was confused about how to make a way forward, when there didn't seem to be any way forward with hope.

School Lunch

Then school started. Two days a week, my brother and I would have the same lunch time and we would sit together - instead of sitting by ourselves. I began to recognize people from class and I remembered a few from basketball camp.

New Beginning

Then, one day, I decided that I would go up and ask if I could sit with them. They said, yes. I still remember that table - I sat between Chris and Aaron.

This was a new beginning.

I was going to make it in this new place.

It was the start of new life.

Pause

Series Review

Today we come to the end of this sermon series about transitions. It is appropriate that here, at the end, we find a new beginning, and new life. That is often how it happens. We go through the journey of a transition – where we experience an ending, with the loss and grief that happens in the loss, ...then we walk in the middle wilderness zone, ...finally when we come to the end, maybe even when we are not sure we will make it, we discover newness of life, possibilities that open up, and new beginnings!

Key Scripture - John 12:24

Jesus speaks about this in John 12:24, where he says:

"I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit."¹

Invitation to Reflection

What new beginnings have you had in your life?

As you look back, can you see the ending, neutral zone and beginning?

¹ John 12:24, CEB.

Pause

Beginnings

We follow this pattern in most of our times of transition in life.
We have an ending of some sort,
then we journey through a period of wilderness in the middle, where there is significant emptiness and time of laying fallow,
but then a seed is planted, germination happens, and a new beginning comes!
This isn't normally something that we can make happen – we cannot engineer a new beginning. There is no start-up manual or procedure, that if we applied it correctly we can make a new beginning happen. Rather, when the time is right for the new beginning to begin, it will spring forth and new life will come.

Pause

Inner Journey of Transition

We live in a very mechanistic world that is orderly, where we have checklists and procedures, but in our more organic life, those things don't work. We can buy a book that says, 10 steps to the new you – but many times, it won't work, unless we have made that inner journey into the valleys of deep darkness, and it is a right time for a new beginning.

Let me give you a few examples...

Stop Smoking

Maybe you have tried to stop smoking multiple times, but then at the right time, without really knowing that a new beginning is about to happen, you try again, and it works.

Relationship at a Party

Or you go to a party or event that you never really intended to go to, and end up meet your significant other or a new business partner.

What are your new beginnings?

Pause

Untidiness of Transitions

We want our transitions and beginnings to be nice and neat, but they are not.
We want total control of them, but we do not have it.
An English novelist once said, "The beginnings...of all human undertakings are untidy."

At the right time, when we have gone through a time of emptiness and fallow, when we have discovered an inner realignment and renewed our energy, then out of the

depths of our losses, springs forth new life – a new beginning – resurrection! We have died to our old self and a new life begins.

Claim Ending and Live in Wilderness

We can't jump to a new beginning. or force some new.

When we do this, it is often a way of denying the ending and the losses associated with the change.

It can also be a way of skipping over the difficult wilderness journey.

So we have to first validate and claim an ending when it happens, and then we let go of our control and just be in the time of wilderness, so that we might find ourselves renewed and regenerated.

Then at the right time, at some point in time in our lives, we too come to discover that something new is coming forth in our lives – we know germination is happening, we have hints that a new beginning is about to spring forth.

Pause

It is then that we have to walk boldly into the new beginning.

Pause

Actions for New Beginnings

One of my favorite books about change in our lives is Transitions by William Bridges.

[Show Image]

In this book, Bridges says that there are four things that we can do, once we sense and discover a new beginning is about to spring forth:

Stop Getting Ready

The first is to:

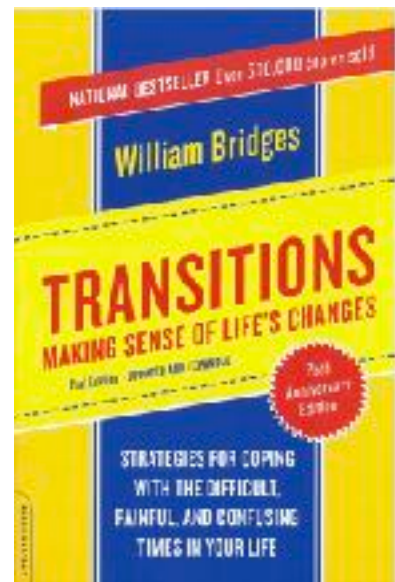
Stop getting ready

We must stop getting ready for a new beginning, and go – act – leap, and begin.

Unfortunately, we can get stuck preparing. We can get stuck in the starting blocks, when at the right time, we have to go, we have to begin.

New beginnings are often messy and untidy. We might tell ourselves that we will wait until it is less messy, but if we do that, we will never start. If it is really a new beginning and we have really processed the transition, we will be ready.

As ready as we will ever be.



So stop waiting for something outside of us to tell us to begin, and listen to the still small voice within us and go.

Begin! ... The man alongside the road at Jericho knew what he wanted, and seized the day to proclaim his faith and found a new beginning! Begin!

Pause

Live in the New

A second thing we can do is to start identifying with and living as the person we seek to become. We can live in the new.

Stop getting ready

Live in the new

You have heard it said that we are to dress for the job we want – I think this is connected. Start identifying and feeling like and acting in ways that are consistent with the person that we seek to become in the new beginning. The more we connect with, feel like, and believe ourselves to be the person we are being called to become, the more the sprout within us will grow.

Pause

Recognize Resistance

A third thing we do is to realize that **there will be resistance** to the change and new beginning happening in us.

Stop getting ready

Live in the new

Recognize resistance

There will be resistance from ourselves as we let fear overwhelm us...and resistance from others. When we begin something new we will all of a sudden start breaking the unspoken expectations and contracts we have with others.

Resistance from Ourselves

Our unconscious minds often seek to protect us from being hurt, and when we begin anew there are real risks as we grow and change....our own brains within us will work to keep us from trying anything – we will encounter resistance

Resistance from Others

Others will also do this. They will say, wait a second. Who are you? I don't like this new you...come on. Become who you have been before.

You see, when we change – that means all of our relationships and those closest to us will also have to change as well. We don't live in world all ourselves. Our change will indirectly or directly affect and change others....maybe they don't want to be changes. They will fight it.

Bartimaeus seeks healing

Bartimaeus is seeking to be healed and to see again. When he begins to call to Jesus he discovers significant resistance, for probably others who know him, as well as the disciples. They keep telling him to be quiet, don't bother Jesus.

Sometimes we find that when we seek to change, we will encounter internal and external resistance. We, as people, get used to way things are and when something changes, we resist. It takes us out of our comfort zone and we like our comfort zones. When that happens, persist, stay steadfast.

Pause

Transfer Energy to the Process

Finally, we can get so caught up with the final outcome, that we might miss the journey. Bridges invites us to **transfer our energy and purpose from the end destination to the *process* of reaching the goal.**

Stop getting ready
Live in the new
Recognize resistance
Transfer energy to the process

He knows that we can quickly tell ourselves that we haven't gotten to the end destination as fast as we wanted, and that we can talk ourselves out of the change and new beginning. Instead of focusing only on the end, be open to the learning and growth that will happen at each stage along the way. It will be an amazing adventure, if we change our focus and keep on keeping on!

Bartimaeus begins new

Bartimaeus is healed and begins anew really quickly. Most likely many of our transitions will take some time. When we turn to focus our attention on the process we are on, instead of the end destination and our tendency to say we have either made it already, or we have failed, we will discover our lives will be transformed and a new beginning will come.

Pause

Conclusion

The conviction of our faith is that Jesus lived, he died on behalf of all of us, and on the third day he was raised to new life.

What if that process is what is to happen in us?

Good News

The good news is that the power of God can make us new over and over again.

Call to Action

Be ready to die to our old selves,
journey in times of wilderness and struggle,
then at the right time find new life, new hope, new beginning, and resurrection!

Invitation

I am excited for the journey ahead for all of us.

Our journeys in life will be ones with multiple endings, wilderness places, and new beginnings!

This process happens for our church in the multiple changes that we go through as this community of faith. New beginnings is a desire and a divine calling we have for our congregation and our ministries to make disciples and transform our world. It is a process that we get the opportunity to walk through over and over again. It is not an easy journey, but in the end God will be glorified!

This process of endings, wilderness, and then new beginnings happens over and over in our family and individual lives.

Therefore, be open to the transitions in your life – and trust in Christ as you begin anew. Let that which has already been planted come forth in your life!

Closing Prayer

Will you pray with me?

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.

Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.

Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.

I trust you with my life.

Help me receive your forgiveness.

Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.

In your holy name, Amen.