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On November 4, one of two candidates who have been preaching “change” will be elected President of the United States. We have seen the slogans and heard the catchphrases: “Change We Can Believe In” and “Change We Need” and “Vote for Change” and “The Right Change”. I’ve heard so much about “change” from each of the major party candidates that I can’t remember which slogan goes with which man. One thing’s for sure, though: there will be change.

But the change we really need and that matters most is the change we are unable to make on our own. The change comes to the heart and is an act of grace from God. Maybe sometime you have heard grace defined by the acronym “God’s riches at Christ’s expense.” Another acronym that’s maybe more helpful is “God’s rescuing and caring exertion.”

God, by his power and because of his mercy, rescues us regularly and unceasingly cares for those who belong to him. Those who belong to him have been given new life by him. He brings life to spiritually dead people – that’s why we call it being “born again”.

Without God’s grace and without the change God makes in our lives, we are goners. It’s not that we are not going down for the third time and he throws us a life preserver and with our last ounce of strength, we reach out for it. Instead, we are doing the dead man’s float and he flips us over, plucks us out, and breathes new life into us. That’s the change that matters most, and it’s change I can believe in.

I believe it because it’s what I read in the Bible. The apostle Paul wrote to followers of Jesus Christ when he wrote the letter to the Ephesians. We read in chapter 2 of that letter: “You were dead in trespasses and sins...But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved...For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

This is real change. This is the right change. This is the change that matters most. And then, by God’s grace, we continue to change, becoming more and more like Jesus, the one we call our Savior and Lord.

We are being transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18), but the change process occurs gradually, and over the course of a lifetime. Christians do not live perfectly as followers of Jesus, and sometimes we make quite a mess of things. Sometimes we damage ourselves and our reputations. Sometimes we hurt others and we hinder people from knowing who Jesus really is because our sinful selves get in the way.

But we hang onto the One who hangs onto us, since by his work he has made us into a new person (2 Corinthians 5:17) and he promises to hang onto us forever, and change us ultimately and finally and perfectly in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:51).

These are promises God has made, and God always keeps his promises. That God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us on the cross (Romans 8:32), shows he is serious about his promises (2 Corinthians 1:20).

God does not change (Malachi 3:6 and James 1:17) and because he does not change, we can be confident that he can, and does, change us. And that will be for his own glory, and it will be for our own good.

Cory Dahl is pastor of First Baptist Church of Sturgeon Bay. His e-mail is fbc@sturgeon-bay.com
Bible verses are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV).