

# Changes for the Better

by Elmer G. Klassen

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*Elmer G. Klassen's sermon emphasizes that lasting changes for the better are the result of supernatural interventions by God through the Holy Spirit and personal obedience.*

**Scripture:** Acts 5:32

**Topics:** "Personal Transformation", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

Elmer G. Klassen preaches about how changes for the better are not natural but supernatural, emphasizing that only God's sudden, supernatural interventions can bring lasting improvements. He highlights the importance of God working in individuals first before there can be any significant changes in society. Klassen shares testimonies of individuals who experienced dramatic transformations in their lives through prayer, reading revival materials, and receiving the Holy Spirit. He urges believers to seek personal transformation through prayer, reading revival materials, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

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## Transcript

Changes for the better are not natural but supernatural. Contrary to the evolutionary theory only changes for the worse in our society come by natural means, while changes for the better are the result of sudden, supernatural interventions from God. Man is born with nothing that can contribute anything to improve the direction our country is going. The desire and the power for changes for the better are the results of miracles happening in man first. God must first do a work in us before there can be any lasting changes for the better around us. Of this we are witnesses.

We are witnesses of sudden, dramatic and lasting changes for the better since the day of Pentecost. The Apostles talked about what they had heard and seen when they testified about the death and resurrection of Jesus. After Pentecost they testified of the changes they had experienced in their own lives when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them all. Those who have heard and believed their reports since then are witnesses of changes in their own lives as well because of the power promised by our Lord Jesus Christ to all who would receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Prayer and the publishing of these reports in one form or another has changed people throughout the last 19 centuries.

We at the Herald of His Coming are continuously witnessing changes brought about by prayer and by reading revival messages. So we ask, if you want changes for the better, why don't you read more about revivals that have changed lives and nations for the better in the past?

When the Bible was translated into the language of the common people, then read and believed in Europe in the seventeenth century, the continent was changed for the better. When the reports of these workings of the Holy Spirit were read and believed since then, nations have changed for the better. Of these there are many witnesses.

"We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32).

Prayer and good reading change people. In 1957 I was directed to the apartment of a former Russian army officer in Frankfurt, Germany. Each Sunday morning I would knock at his door and ask to have a Bible study. We opened our Bibles to the Gospel of John and read Sunday after Sunday till we got to chapter three, when Leonid announced that he wanted to be "born-again." He prayed and confessed Jesus Christ as his Savior.

We continued to meet regularly. Then one day I noticed a definite change in him; so I asked him about it. Then I heard a story that Leonid did not tell others. When he fled across the border from East Germany, he went to the American military in West Germany, hoping that they would tell him about their God, but all he got was a job and cigarettes. After we had met and he had "accepted Christ" he began reading his Bible and books before sleeping. One night, as usual, he got into his bunk, turned on the night lamp and began to read "Rivers of Living Water" by Ruth Paxson. After reading for some time he turned his light off and just thought of what he had read. Then suddenly his body began to feel warm and he could think of nothing but Jesus and fell asleep.

The next morning the first thing he thought of when he woke was Jesus. Throughout the day after that about every hour while at his desk at work, he would take off his glasses, bow his head and just pray a little. "Before I had to pray," he told me later, "but now I want to pray." Leonid was a changed man. Soon we were publishing a Russian Herald of His Coming and later he was making Russian broadcasts for Trans World Radio and others.

With tears we often prayed for Russia. A few years before the Berlin Wall came down, he called me from the hospital and explained that the doctor had just told him that he had only a few more months to live. So he came to my office for the last time. As we often had done we got on our knees to pray and together we thanked God for the change He had wrought in both of our lives because of what we had read. After a good Russian bear hug he walked out of the office as a well-prepared soldier, with broadcasts made for three years in advance and ready to die, having lived a fruitful and fulfilled life for his master.

In 1957 a secretary at the Frankfurt Airport came to our office to help in Christian work. She had made a public confession of accepting Christ at a Youth for Christ rally and had completed the navigator follow-up Bible study. While at work in our office Gisela confided to me that she did not think that she was "born-again." Nothing had changed in her. After some counsel from the Book of Romans she was advised not to be satisfied till she knew she had been changed. When she returned to our office some days later, I told her that she need not say something had happened. I already had seen the change. The change that God had wrought in Leonid had also been done in her. She became one of the best secretaries the German Herald office ever had. Later she married and has had a blessed life of missionary work in South Africa.

It takes more than Bible knowledge or attendance at "support groups" to experience changes for the better. Changes for the better is a work of the Holy Spirit who is given to them who will obey Him.

"It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man" (Psalm 118:8).

"This is what the LORD says: Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD" (Jer. 17:5).

"Cast all your cares on Him because He cares for you" (James 5:7), etc. etc.

One day I got a telephone call from a Dutch business man at the Frankfurt airport on a business trip to Eastern Europe. He wanted to talk to me. Then I heard his story. As a good Christian family man and active member of a Brethren Assembly he was reading *De Stem in de Woestijn*, the Dutch Herald of His Coming. Since we offered books free of charge he received a copy of Torrey's *THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE DOES*. One night after supper Oswin decided to read the book. Once started it interested him so much that he kept on until 2:00 a.m. when "it happened," as he explained it. When he came for breakfast the next morning his wife asked "What has happened?" He was a changed man and people saw the difference. Oswin later became Campus Crusade for Christ's first Dutch representative in Holland. He had become a changed man for life and was now busy in helping others to change. If you want a change, read revival materials.

People considered me a Christian as a teenager even though I doubted it myself. When I asked for counsel, all I got was comfort that all was right with me. So I asked the church to be baptized and after examination I was baptized upon the confession of my faith, whereupon I became the most miserable person. I knew I was a hypocrite. There had been no change in me. I was trying to do things that I really did not want to do. After a year of this I went on my knees with the Book of Romans before me and experienced a change in me for time and eternity at the age of seventeen. Now I did not have to pray anymore; I wanted to pray. I had learned to put my trust in God rather than man.

People are being changed by what they read and believe. One day a Seventh-day Adventist evangelist came by the office in Frankfurt. He had given Torrey's book on the Holy Spirit to the young people in the churches where he was evangelizing. The lives of these young people had changed so much that he kept coming back to pick up another 100 of these revival books. Because of the positive changes in the lives of so many readers of this book his denomination promoted the book in their official Sunday School material.

Why do I write all this? Our churches have many Christians who have never changed! They do not want to pray; they can not open their mouths at work or school to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and do not have the will or the power to obey God's laws. Their lifestyle and interests have not changed much from nonChristians. They love what the world loves and talk like the world talks. Their lives show no evidence of a changed life. They do not confess that they are "in Christ" and therefore a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). Many have confessed this to me and seemingly many of us are not concerned about it. If you want America to change, if you want a revival in the church, why don't you pray and read revival materials until you witness a change brought about by the Holy Spirit in your life and in your church? This is the change that God wants.

Leonid read "Rivers of Living Water" and lived a changed life. Oswin read Torrey's book on the Holy Spirit and has seen many lives changed as well as his own. Gisela was not satisfied until she knew she had been changed.

Let us mail you some good revival materials. Write us for a list of materials we have available free of charge. God has used these materials to change many Christians.

Do you want America to change? Start with yourself and with your church. That is God's method of making lasting changes for the better.

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