**“BUT NOW!”**

**GG, last sermon. LS Spanish. Godtalk, LLBN. Hinsdale, 20something, 8/24/19. LLBN Worship, 6/5/20**

**INTRO.** A. **HONOR to be part of this new WORSHIP SERVICE!** We have been dreaming and praying for this service for a long time—and here it is! Live every week, Friday night 6 pm. But it will also be replayed on Sabbath. We hope that it will build up an audience and be a true community.

 B. **TONY—I did a WEEK OF PRAYER in the Philippines—**the Student Body President who invited me, so upset at the University, could only sing hymns, no praise songs. Huge battle on campus. Got to the last Saturday night, these 2 guys told me, they had had it with the Church, going to leave. Said, “Give me one hour, **STARBUCKS!”** For an hour I fought for his soul. Don’t give up the Church. We can’t afford to lose terrific kids like you. Stay here, help us fight to make it better. Don’t give up everything else, just because of the music.” 10 years later, saw 1 of them, now one of the youth directors of the Division.

 C. **MERLE—**last week, we’re hanging out with our son, barbecue party with all his friends Saturday night—met one kid, teaches physics and astronomy in a high school, told me leaving the church. Too much evidence for long ages for the fossils. “**Don’t give up God and Jesus and heaven and Sabbath just over that!”** Thought he had only had 2 choices—believe stuff he didn’t believe, or get out. Met a **GIRL I** dated 40 years ago. Been out of the church all that time. She went selling books one summer, leader had some crazy ideas, made them all be vegan, add strip of cloth on the bottom of their dresses, 2 hours of devotions every morning. Hated all of it. Walked out—thought she only had 2 choices—stay and do all that, or get out. Nobody gave her another option, something that made sense.

 D. I’m sure you’ve heard these old ill. **HAM—**A young husband saw his new wife cutting off the end of a ham. “Why do you do that?” “I don’t know, how my mother taught me!” Asked the mother--“I don’t know, how my mother taught me!” So asked the grandmother—“When we first get married the oven was too small, had to cut off a piece of the meat!” The Russian **QUEEN** saw a guard guarding nothing. Got mad. Found out another Queen had planted rose bushes there 100 years ago, people got running them over, so she put a guard. Been no roses for 50 years, but still a guard. A Church in Eastern Europe stands up, turns around, looks at the back wall in silence, sits down. Why? 500 years before somebody had put the **APOSTLE’S CREED** back there, they would read. Been gone for 100s of years—still standing. **CHANGE IS HARD. Does Change mean the OLD was wrong? What is the NEW is wrong?**

 E. Lots of us have grown up with certain ideas. We grew up with all these rules in the church—can’t do that, no movies, no dancing, no jewelry, no rock music. Some just say forget about it. Others stay but they change, but worry that’s giving up the true faith. **IS IT OK to CHANGE if something you believed doesn’t make sense any more? \*\*EGW SAID, “I have been constantly learning for 60 years.”** Hard. If you’re a prophet, at 17, and you’re getting everything from God in visions, how can what you believe 60 years later be different? But she says, “I have been constantly learning for 60 years.” **What have you changed? Where have you grown? And she didn’t quit after 30 years, and say, “I think I’ve got it now.” 60 years meant just about the end of her life, still growing, still changing, still trying to get it right.**

 **F. I’m starting this first series for this brand-new worship service, “BUT NOW.”** It’s all through the Bible—I was, BUT NOW. **JOHN 9:25-26 “’I was blind—BUT NOW I see.’”** “You have heard—BUT NOW. You were lost—But NOW. So here’s the first one—But NOW.

**I. JOHN—SON OF THUNDER. A.** When John was young, they called him and his brother the **SONS OF THUNDER.** When people didn’t accept Jesus, **LUKE 9:54-55: “’You want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” Thought they could be like ELIJAH—calling fire down.** How cool would that be—anybody that messes with you--**KABOOM.**  Somebody cuts you off on the freeway—**KABOOM.**

 B. But then John spends 3 years with Jesus. And 50-60 years later—sits down to write a **GOSPEL.** Most of our best pictures of God—all from John. **JOHN 3:16 “‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that we should not perish, but have everlasting life.’” JOHN 14:9 “‘If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.’” JOHN 15:15 “‘I have called you friends.’”**

 **C. Pretty much the same thing has happened to me.**  **#1–**As a young pastor I believed in the **INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT—**your name could come up at any time, if not perfect, take your Name off the List. Glad my name started with “S”, have a little extra time! What I believed, what I taught people. Reason Jesus hasn’t come—working through 108 billion names. **BUT NOW--**The **Old Pastor Dan—**believes that the Judgment is not really about us at all, but about God. **REVELATION 14:7 “‘The Hour of HIS Judgment is Come.’” ROMANS 3:4 “May YOU be victorious when YOU are put on trial.” \*\***The **Young Pastor Dan** thought God was inside Heaven, you and I are knocking on the door, He looks out the window, decides if we’re good enough to get in. I spent the first 25 years of my life trying to be good enough to get in. I was better than most. But still scared to death of the judgment. **BUT NOW** the **OLD PASTOR DAN , WE are on the inside, GOD** is on the outside, knocking, and hopes we will look out the window, decide if He is the kind of God you want to be with for 1000 years. JUDGMENT is not against you, For you. He who has Son, you have life. If you have Jesus, nothing to be afraid of. **BUT NOW.**

 D. **#2–HELL—**The Young Pastor Dan didn’t believe in an **EVERLASTING HELL**, but he believed that some would **BURN LONGER** than others for their sins, maybe Satan would burn like two weeks. I was told, if you ask Jesus to forgive your sins, He forgives, but He leaves them on the record, and if you backslide, those sins come back on you, and you’ll burn longer for those too! HORRIFYING.  **BUT NOW the** **old Pastor Dan** believes that God is LOVE, good all the time, can’t burn people for 2 seconds, much less two weeks or forever. Jesus says, **JOHN 10:10 “’Thieves come and destroy life. I came to GIVE LIFE!’”**

 **1. SUNFLOWER—**a Jew in WWII was in prison, but working in a hospital. They brought him to a German kid, 21, covered in bandages. I’ve been burning the homes of Jews. When they jump, we shoot them. Can’t get their screams out of my mind. Going to die tonight—can you forgive me for what I’ve been doing to Jews before I die?” **Is that what God is like, burning His own people?**

\*\*\*The old Pastor Dan—would say, The wicked tell God, “Stay out of our lives, we don’t want you, we don’t want your church, we don’t want your religion, we don’t want your Sabbath or your rules or anything. Stay out.” God says, “You’ll surely die.” “No we don’t think so.” God honors their free choice. They walk out the door on God, and whatever happens out there **IS NOT FROM GOD!**  Fire only cleanses, not punishes.

 E. **#3–EVIL—**The **Young Pastor Dan** taught people that when they got **SICK OR DISASTERS** happened, God was trying to teach them something. He said that when people **DIED, GOD TOOK THEM** because He knew they were ready. I had to find some good thing about every bad thing that happened, otherwise why did God allow it? \***BUT NOW** after 45 years—can’t believe that anymore. **MUNA—**had a lady, one sister died the same weekend the other sister got married. God planned that? **\*\*\*9-11,** Plane crashes, 3000 people die, few months later, another plane crashes on a river, 150 people nobody dies. God chose, who got saved, who got lost? **TSUNAMI,** Thailand, Indonesia, India, 250,000 died—God chose that to be the time for all of them? The same day? No**,** It’s not God. **Someone gets healed, someone doesn’t**, not in the heart of God. The difference is how far science has become, it has figured some things out, but not everything.

 F. **#4–RULES—**The **Young Pastor Dan** told kids that some of God’s rules didn’t make any sense, but God made them so He could know if you were willing to follow Him, even if it made no sense. The young Pastor Dan had to get all the **JEWELRY** off before people could get baptized, if he heard, people went to the **MOVIES** or went **DANCING**, sure they were **ALL LOST. If drove down the STREET, saw people** **MOWING the GRASS** on the Sabbath, all going to hell! **BUT NOW** the **old Pastor Dan** if anybody followed me around would say **Pastor Dan is still very conservative**--Have never had a **COKE,** never had a cup of **coffe**e, don’t know how to dance! But he tries to get people connected to Jesus, and then tells them to do whatever Jesus would do. Do it for Him. All between you and God.

 G. **#5—EQUALITY—**The young Pastor Dan grew up in Thailand—where we were white, richer, bigger, and bigger house, had a car—begin to think, you’re better than other people. First time saw a picture of a woman doing a **WEDDING—**thought—Is that OK? First time someone asked me to come to their apartment, turns out was **GAY,** asked me to pray for him to change, I read him all the verses I could think of about change. Prayed for him. On the way out, scared people would think I was like him, so held my Bible out in front all the way to the car. Horrible. **BUT NOW—slowly**, you learn, you talk to people—had some **black friends talk to me, slowly learned. \*\*W**e **can never judge anybody for something they had no control over.**  Not their color, gender, where they come from. All one in Christ. \*\***Everybody is talking about what we need to do in our country, get police to stop killing people of color. Ore laws, more money, more prosecution. What that man needed was more Jesus. Problem is in his heart. All one in Christ.**

 G. **#6–CROSS—**The **YOUNG PASTOR DAN** believed and taught that the Jesus died to satisfy an Angry God, satisfy God’s justice. Like **JEPHTHAH** in the OT, thought God wouldn’t bless him unless he gave God a sacrifice, his only daughter. Jesus dies, we offer that sacrifice to God, hope that will change God from Anger to GRACE, let us in. **INDIA—woman, by river, holding sick little girl, little boy playing.** Missionary prayed over her. Later came back, still holding girl, boy gone. “Where’s the boy?” I scarified him to the gods. Why did you give the boy? You prefer the boys. Indian lady stood up—**“MY GODS ARE WORTHY OF MY VERY BEST.” One** CHURCH in Orange County in CA, when we sin it makes God angry, But JESUS is our **UMBRELLA, protecting us from the WRATH of GOD. Really?** The **OLD PASTOR DAN switched,** the Cross is not to soften up an angry God, win God over to us, but to win us over to God.

**II. THE TWO SIDES OF GOD. A. The young JOHN** thought there were two sides of God—**#1–**the loving, kind, gentle, gracious Jesus. The Christmas Jesus, the Cross Jesus. The Jesus who touched lepers, healed everybody. **#2–**But there’s another side of Jesus, the OT God, the God who hurls fire down on people who don’t accept Him, throws people into the Lake of Fire. Who sends **TSUNAMIS and TYPHOONS to wake people up, who uses cancer to punish people.**

 **B. But after 3 years with Jesus and thinking about it for 60 years—John figured out--THERE’s JUST ONE JESUS!**  Sits down to write the Last Book of the Bible—the book of Revelation. Jesus is a **LAMB. Yes,** He’s a **LION also.** But the idea that sometimes He’s a Lamb, and sometimes He’s a Lion, is not true! **He’s always a Lamb!! The LAMB was slain from the foundation of the world. We follow the Lamb wherever He goes. On the Sea of Glass we sing the Song of the Lamb. Angels can’t stop singing, “WORTHY IS THE LAMB.”**

 **C. #1–Hebrews says, Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and Forever. #2–The angels said—LUKE 2:11: “‘Today a SAVIOR has been born to you.’”**  He is always a Savior. He never takes off that hat and puts another one on. He’s a Savior from forever to forever. **#3–JOHN 1,** He says Jesus is **FULL of GRACE and TRUTH. There aren’t two sides of God. Not half LOVE, half JUSTICE. FULL OF GRACE. #4–FIRST ANGEL’S Message, He has the EVERLASTING GOSPEL. What does GOSPEL mean? GOOD NEWS.** How long is God Good news? Everlasting. He does not flip back and forth. Only Good News.

 **D. #5--He is the ALPHA and the OMEGA. THE BEGINNING AND THE END. HE’S THE BEST. YOU CAN’T MAKE UP A GOD BETTER THAN HE ALREADY IS. HE’S THE BEST.**

**APPEAL: A. BUT NOW. Where have you grown? Can you say like Ellen White, I have been constantly learning? And never give up on God or the Church because of some crazy idea? Give up the Crazy idea. And we can all say like the blind man—“I was blind—BUT NOW I see.”**