

**McCabe United Methodist Church**  
**“In-Between Bars!”**  
**Mark 6:30-44: June 15 & 16, 2013**  
**Pastor Rick Fossum**

Did you hear about the hillbilly from the Badlands of Western North Dakota? He didn't get around much. One day he brought his family to the big city of Bismarck. He always wanted to see the capitol building and so that was the first place he brought his family. As he was standing there, for the first time in his life, he saw an elevator. He watched as this old, frail looking woman hobble inside and the doors closed. A few minutes later the doors opened and a young, attractive woman walked out. The hillbilly hollered to his youngest son, "**Billy, go get your mother.**"

Change isn't easy, but sometimes it's necessary. I wish I had a nickel for every time I've heard someone mention 'change' during these last few months. Yet, life is about change. Think about the last 100 years or so and all the changes that have happened. Better yet, think about the changes since you were born.

During the past one hundred years, The U.S. went from 45 states to 50. A hundred years ago a dozen eggs cost 34 cents while today a dozen eggs are pushing \$2.00. Average life expectancy has gone from 47 years of age to 79 years of age today. Over the past one hundred years we've seen the invention of the flush toilet, the Model T, jet planes, the telephone, polio vaccines, television, computers, I-phones, I-pads, 9-11, plus a lot, lot more. And these were just changes during the past 100 years.

What's that you say? You don't like change. I'm sorry, but change is all around us.

When the railroads were first introduced to the U.S., some folks said that the railroad would be the downfall of our country. Martin Van Buren, the Governor of New York at that time and later our 8<sup>th</sup> president, wrote a letter to President Andrew Jackson expressing his concerns about the railroad. The letter is dated January 31, 1828 and it goes like this: *"Dear President Jackson, as you may know, Mr. President, railroad' carriages are pulled at the enormous speed of 15 miles per hour by engines which, in addition to endangering life and limb of passengers, roar and snort their way through the countryside, setting fire to crops, scaring the livestock and frightening women and children. The Almighty certainly never intended that people should travel at such breakneck speed."*

And now look at us today! In last week's bulletin there was a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson. It goes like this: *"Unless you try to do something other than what you have already mastered, you will not grow."* Change, by its very nature, challenges

people to grow and that includes churches.

A big change for me will be saying goodbye to Ray. I'm going to miss Ray. Ray is not only my partner at McCabe, he is also a good friend. Ray is the kind of person that I could vent to when one of you made me angry or upset or hurt me. "**Ray,**" I'd say, "**did you hear what so and so said or did?**" And we'd talk about it and it helped.

Ray and I did a lot of planning together. We spent a lot of time discussing *church stuff* over lattes at the *Café Aroma* or *Bone Shakers* or *Starbucks* or some other place. I think McCabe is in pretty good shape thanks to all that planning. The '*Ray and Rick*' team won't be around much longer and it's going to be hard on me.

I want Ray and Sarah and their boys to know that we, as a church, will continue to pray for them. Being in ministry, wherever a person is appointed, isn't easy. You have to learn to be as *Christ-like* as you can be. Part of that means bringing light into dark places. It means learning to turn the other cheek when you'd rather not. It means going the extra mile for someone when everyone else thinks you've gone far enough. It means loving not only the lovable, but also the unlovable and it's not easy.

So to Ray and Sarah I wish them God's best. I pray that they will flourish in Minot and will find a home there just like the home they had here.

What about the rest of us? I'll be the first one to admit that I'm a bit nervous about this change. Concerned, worried and anxious would also fit some of my feelings. What about you? Are you a little worried, concerned about your church?

In a way, McCabe is like a trapeze artist. Picture with me a trapeze artist swinging high in the air on a tiny bar. Do you see him or her? The trapeze artist is swinging back and forth high above the ground. Back and forth.

Now, comes the moment when the trapeze artist has to let go of the one bar and reach out for the next bar. Are you still with me? This is when things get a little scary. This is when they're sailing through the air while holding onto nothing. They've left the one bar where they were comfortable and are headed toward another bar, but they're not there yet. They're in-between bars.

It's called hope. You and all the people watching them are hoping that they'll catch that next bar and everything will be fine.

This is McCabe. We're making a change. We're letting go of one bar and we're reaching toward the next one. We're letting go of the '*way things have always been*'

and we're reaching toward a new and exciting future.

It will take all of us, but do you know what? I believe that we'll be just fine. In fact, I want you to repeat after me, **"We will be fine."**

We have some work and planning to do, but **"we will be fine."** We have some decisions to make, but **"we will be fine."** We have some challenges to solve, but **"we will be fine."**

We'll be fine for two reasons and I want you to remember these two reasons. They're important. First, we'll be fine because of you. McCabe Church is full of wonderful, talented, faithful and prayerful people. When I look around this room, I see the *'body of Christ'* in all of its glory. YOU will step up and YOU will help make this church stronger and better and more vital than we've ever been. And folks, I can hardly wait for that to happen.

In our Scripture reading today from Mark, we heard the story of Jesus feeding the five thousand. It's a great story. Jesus told his disciples to **"You give them something to eat"** meaning the five thousand.

The disciples objected. **"Lord,"** they said, **"feeding all these people will take almost a year's salary. Do you want us to spend that much money?"**

Do you remember what happened next? Jesus asked them, **"how many loaves of bread do you have?"**

The disciples did a quick inventory. They reported back, **"Lord, we have five loaves of bread and two fish."**

Now this is the amazing part. Jesus told everyone to sit down. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, looked up to heaven, gave thanks to God and served all the people. Did you hear that? He served *ALL* the people. The Bible tells us that when all five thousand had eaten and were satisfied, the disciples picked up *twelve* basketfuls of bread and fish. They had leftovers!

So, where did that extra bread come from? This is what I think. I think the five thousand dug into their own baskets and came up with all that extra bread and fish. It's amazing what can happen when *'the body of Christ'* is determined to serve God.

This is McCabe. Right now, it might be a bit scary to think about our future and the changes that we have to make, but folks we have what it takes to help this church flourish and blossom in the months and years ahead. We have what it takes! We'll be

fine.

Second, I believe that we'll be fine because we're not alone. God is with us. God has always been with us. And God will always be with us. When we let go of that bar and go sailing through the air, God will be with us to help us find that next bar. We won't be alone.

One of my favorite verses is from Psalms 30, verse 5b: "*Weeping may linger for the night time, but joy comes in the morning.*" Yes, there might be some challenges ahead, *but joy will come in the morning.* Yes, there might be some mistakes made, *but joy will come in the morning.* And yes, some things might not be the same, *but joy will come in the morning.*

This is why I love our last hymn today. It's called *Trust and Obey* and you'll find it on page 467 of your hymnal. Would you humor me this morning and would you read these four verses with me? Think about the words as you read them. Think of God. Think of McCabe Church.

*1. When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way! While we do his good will, he abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

*2. Not a burden we bear, not a sorrow we share, but our toil he doth richly repay; not a grief or a loss, not a frown or a cross, but is blest if we trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

*3. But we never can prove the delights of his love until all on the altar we lay; for the favor he shows, for the joy he bestows, are for them who will trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

*4. Then in fellowship sweet we will sit at his feet, or we'll walk by his side in the way; what he says we will do, where he sends we will go; never fear, only trust and obey. Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.*

Change isn't easy, but sometimes it's necessary. I know that we'll make our share of mistakes and errors. But folks, we're in this together. We are the '*body of Christ*'. We can face our future knowing full well that we face it not alone. God is with us. In God, we can *Trust and Obey*. Do I hear an amen?