

A sermon preached by Steven Deliman, 2010 Confirmation Class of the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, Ohio, Pentecost Sunday, May 23, 2010.

“A Life Changed”

As some of you know, I only came to this church a few years ago at the beginning of 6th grade. When I walked into the Sunday school room, I was just a new kid. A new kid. Since I've never moved before, it felt odd. I didn't know anybody. But everybody else knew each other. I hate it when I'm the only person I know or when I'm with a friend but his relatives are there. It's just awkward.

But as the year went on, I grew into being who I am. Now in order to get the gist of the sermon, you have to understand this. I had many doubts about God, the Bible and religion in general. I thought, “Not many of my friends believe in God, why should I?” Let me tell you, they were wrong and even more importantly, so was I.

Sixth grade ended. I moved into 7th grade. I was a lot more outgoing. That's possibly because I was older, but it doesn't really matter. When I look back now, 7th grade seems like a dark chapter in the book of me. I remember thinking when I was in health class and we were talking about depression, thinking I probably had this. I never remember being truly happy. There was something missing in my life. To this day I only know half of what was missing.

I moved toward the end of 7th grade, counting the days until summer and freedom. Then at the beginning of June, I did something new. I went zip-lining. That night, I thought of how it had changed me. For one thing, it had helped my fear of heights. But something felt different inside of me. As I tried to think of what it was, I realized I was happy. For the first time in a long time, I was truly happy.

The summer went by too fast. I arrived at 8th grade different. In 6th grade, everyone had known me (at school) and I was famous since I helped at lunch by pushing the trash can. Then the teachers stopped letting us do that. I was slowly forgotten. By the next year, many people had forgotten who I was. But now in 8th grade, there has been a “Great Awakening” and people remember me. I went through this year becoming more popular and happy almost every week. I also had Confirmation, which was sometimes fun.

Then on Easter night, as I stared at the stars out my window, I thought about something that had been nagging me for awhile. I needed the courage for something. Then I realized who I could get courage from, who I could talk to if I felt alone. God. Someone who had been there all along, but I had been blind to. I talked and prayed and a few weeks passed by. I turned 15 on May 8. I was happy then.

Last week, I went to Cedar Point and Kalahari with our school band and choir. That was the happiest I’d been in a long time. I got “Athlete of the Meet” in track. That surprised me. This last week, I finally got the courage I needed. But I realized I had had the courage all along. I just needed someone to help me find it. That person was God. He showed me that by following his example, I could have what I wanted. Even little things. As I said, I was nobody when I came, now many people know who I am. Once again, one night I thought, “Everyone is someone, unless they choose to be no one.” I chose to be no one in the 7th grade. But now I realize that was the wrong choice.

I’ve also changed my ambition in life. I now want to be an actor and movie director. I like making stories. All this goes back to God, the one who changed my life for the better. I have courage and I’m happy. Some of that is because I’m going to Washington, D.C., tomorrow, but I have to give God the credit. He’s the one who turned my life around.