

*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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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, 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade different. In 6<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.