

**Devotion: June 4, 2020**

Revelation 1:4-8 New International Version (NIV)

<sup>4</sup> *John,*

*To the seven churches in the province of Asia:*

*Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.*

*To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, <sup>6</sup> and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

<sup>7</sup> *“Look, he is coming with the clouds,”  
and “every eye will see him,  
even those who pierced him”;  
and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”  
So shall it be! Amen.*

<sup>8</sup> *“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

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*“Hate Triggers Church Blast Kill 4 Little Girls”-----Birmingham Herald 1960*

*“Melee in Selma” ---Los Angeles Times 1967*

*“1000 Riot In Los Angeles”-----San Francisco Chronicle 1965*

*“Tear Gas, Troopers Block Rights March”-----Selma Daily News 1963*

*“Rochester Erupts In Violence, 3 Dead 350 Injured”-----Rochester Chronicle 1964*

*Tin soldiers and Nixon’s coming*

*We’re finally on our own,*

*This summer I hear the thunder*

*Four dead in Ohio.” Song; Ohio, by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young---1972*

*“It’s like déjà vu all over again.”---Yogi Berra*

*“What goes around comes around.”-----Somebody*

*“The more things change, the more they stay the same.”*----Somebody else

To those of you reading this who are under the age of 65, you might not recall what went on when your moms and dads were wearing bell bottoms, combing their long beautiful hair, wearing “Jesus” boots, and beads.

It was not a time of all peace and love and butterflies and communes surrounded by a haze of sandalwood incense to mask the smell of wacky tobakki.

There were protests, both civil and violent over a nasty, costly and senseless war going on in the little country of Vietnam.

There were Civil Right Marches, both civil and violent, for causes that seem ludicrous now.

Causes such as: A seat on a bus.

A stool at a lunch counter.

The right to vote.

The right to attend a school of your choice.

The right to use the same bathroom.

It seems nothing has changed. We remain unaware that there are people that have to struggle and suffer because of the color of their skin or the size of a paycheck. There are still neighborhoods where there is segregation.

And, my point is things haven't changed in the past 50—100—150—200----2000 years.

*“When will we ever learn? When will we ever learn?”*----Peter, Paul and Mary 1960

The passage above from Revelation tells of a love that will never change, even though we stubbornly fight change. John the Revelator writes of an unchanging God who sees all and can redeem all.

But what do we do with this God if our life is changing way too much — or if it isn't changing like we need it to?

*We need to trust the Unchanging.* It's difficult to trust anyone or anything that changes. The economy of these past months has proven that the job market, the housing market and the stock market are no place for our faith and comfort. Because God is the same yesterday and tomorrow, God can serve as an anchor point to a chaotic life. His words and the lifestyle he commands are a constant.

In these “Daja Vu’ days we may hesitate to believe that Jesus “loves us and freed us.” After all, look at our unemployment. Look at our pandemic. Look at our loneliness. Look at our Saturday-night decisions. Look at our Internet-browser history.

God won’t change on his position of grace and peace. Despite what we do, what we leave undone and what is done to us, our faith remains constant.

God loves us. God frees us from sins. God makes us royalty. God calls us to serve him.

Today, tomorrow and the next day we need to remember that there is a power far greater than tear gas and rubber bullets. There is a power more pervasive than all the armies on earth. It’s a power that can stomp out hatred, prejudice and injustice. It can bring together people of all colors and all cultures and enable them to accomplish great things. It’s a power that can uplift the lonely, empower the downtrodden, heal the sick, give sight to the blind and strengthen the weak.

And even though, right now, it seems that “The more things change, the more they stay the same”. We know that God keeps on living. And as long as he’s living in us, neither words, nor sticks and stones, nor anything else can ever really hurt us.

*Heavenly Father, our hearts are heavy. Please give us eyes to see and ears to hear where your Spirit is working. Help us to see every person the way you see them. Break our hearts for what breaks yours, Lord. Let us not merely say the we love one another. Give us strength to mourn with those who mourn, to weep with those who weep. Let your justice roll down like water. Let your righteousness and love flow from us like rivers of living water. Purify our hearts and fill us with a genuine hunger for justice, for mercy and for true peace. And dear Lord, let it start with me. Amen.*