

Weekly Evotional

By Rob Leveridge

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“If 20 years ago the criminal justice system sent me to prison based on the content of my character *then*, then I should be able get a job today based on the content of my character *now*.”

These words were spoken Monday in the Kingdom Baptist Church by a man who described the difficulties ex-felons have finding employers who will hire them. Many struggle mightily to meet their personal and family needs upon re-entering society as responsible citizens. The speaker was advocating for an expansion of the sealing of records in Illinois for non-violent offenders, part of the Community Renewal Society’s Platform for Renewal in 2012. Dozens of First United Church members joined hundreds of others for this Faith in Action Celebration on Martin Luther King Day.

It’s a horribly inconvenient expectation, that we be willing to change the way we view another person. It’s the type of thing that puts a well-meaning person ill-at-ease.

The man coming out of prison made absolutely terrible choices earlier in life, but is committed to living well from here on out.

The young woman everyone believed would be this kind of star or that kind of scholar has chosen her own path of self-discovery, and no one is happy to see her go... that... way.

The family member whose emotional burdens led to words and behaviors destructive to many loved ones has undertaken the grueling work of healing and reparation, and asks now for forgiveness.

Don’t you sometimes just want other people to be who you had decided they were, rather than who they intend to be? I’m guilty of this, I’ll admit it.

We worship God as Creator, the source of our life and the animus of our living. If God were merely the instigator of existence, God would be worthy of our respect and appreciation, but not our worship. We worship because God the creator *creates*; God is making something new all the time, even when we think we’ve seen all there is to see, and even now, even in people we’ve wanted to think we had all figured out.

Want proof? Look closely – God is making a change, bringing about something wonderful and new, *in you*.