

God's Purpose for Change - GOOD Friday Night 26th March 2010

On a journey together

- An exciting adventure?
- A difficult time?

Change - easier to speak about and look forward to than to actually experience

Bible - change means challenge.

God uses change to change us

- For OUR GOOD!

God Promises Israel - freedom from their bondage; a land flowing with milk and honey. **A VERY GOOD THING**

From **Egypt > Red Sea**

- *We are going to die!*
- GOD: GOOD TO GO THROUGH THE RED SEA

Wilderness - *We are going to die! We want to go back!*

GOD: IT IS GOOD TO GO **THROUGH THE WILDERNESS** – miracles, signs, wonders and the Promised Land!)

Promised Land - We see giants, walled cities and a land that will consume us. If we go in we will die! And during the next 40 years they died!

GOD: GOOD TO GO INTO THE PROMISED LAND – victory, land, blessing

A new Joshua generation had arisen > they went in and defeated the giants, destroyed the walled cities and enjoyed their inheritance

BUT NOTE WELL: that **the battles never ceased** and they took the land a step at a time.

Moses the great leader of Israel personally went through changes:

Brought up **in the palace** with a dream to set God's people free GOD: GOOD TO MOSES – saved him from death and blessed him >

Disaster (fleeing for his life into the wilderness) > humbled, changed and back to Egypt >

10 supernatural plagues, with criticism from the people he came to set free (it wasn't the first time *they wanted to kill him*) >

Red Sea > Trials of the wilderness (people) > **Saw the goodness and glory of God** >

Rejected by people > saw promised land > raised up Joshua to take the people in

- All the way through God wanted GOOD for Moses and the children of Israel.

Nehemiah: So the great need in Jerusalem – to establishing the walls and gates there >

- Threatened, criticised, mocked and despised >
- Would not come down and play the devil's game >
- Stayed the course >
- Had plenty of opportunities to give up, pack up and go home

Joseph: Dream the dream of greatness >

Into the pit > wasn't killed > Sold as a slave > to the right > Became a steward >

Tempted to sin > Resisted and fled > Falsely accused > Into Prison > Left to rot >

Brought into the palace (and the saving of the children of Israel) fulfilled the dream God had given him > **Never became bitter and resentful > Saw God in it all**

Change is not bad.

It all depends on how you see it!

It doesn't matter what people (brothers) do to you; what the devil does; what circumstances do.

IT ALL DEPENDS ON HAVING GOD AND SEEING GOD IN THE MIDST OF IT!

Question?

WILDERNESS: Good or Bad?

PROMISED LAND: Good or Bad?

MERGE: Good or Bad?

THE BIRTH OF A CHILD? > through pain and travail

- Why do women continue to put up with it?
- Do they look forward to it?
- Is it good or bad?

Look at the life of Paul!

- Shipwrecked, beaten... Good or bad? GOOD when God's GRACE WILL BE THERE!

Nelson Mandela: dream > prison for 27 years > loss of family > president

- Good or Bad?
- What Apartheid meant for bad, God used for good
- Saved a nation

Brother Yun: Follow Jesus > prison > torture > witness to the world > prison > witness

- Prison / Beatings – Good or bad?
- Very bad? “But all things work together for GOOD for those who love God and are called according to purpose.”

I could go on and on...

What is Jesus after? Disciples, followers

- I know that some of you here in this meeting and listening by audio are finding **a time of change - really difficult**.
- And it is.
- I am not trying to down play it.

What I am saying is **LET JESUS INTO IT!** He will turn it into GOOD

I am not only speaking about the merge.

- Some are going through change in your job, relationships, physical condition, financial position etc.
- I do not want to underestimate the difficulty

Personally

I don't like seeing people struggling with life. I don't like struggling with life myself.

But the reality is that God allows a whole lot of stuff to happen in our lives

- He may not be causing it – we may be causing it
- He says, “Forsake all and follow Me!”
- “Israel, follow Me through the desert to the promised land!”
 - **They chose** to do it the hard way - 40 years in the wilderness
 - They could have followed Him into the land in a couple of weeks

Why does God love change?

- To help our faith grow
- To change us
- To help us get our priorities right
- To get us connected to Him to do greater things
- To prepare us for better things

If I know you are in trouble I will do what I can to help

But sometimes it isn't to come rushing to your side to make sure you are not offended and everything is OK.

More and more the Lord has me praying for the people to whom He has connected to me.

You may prefer I spent more time visiting you (I will visit you if you invite me or if the Lord send me) but I am commissioned to obey Him.

I want to see you come forth “and be all that God created you to be, and doing all He created you to do.”

It is a challenging time

- **Did I know it would be challenging? Yes**
- **Did I do it anyway? Yes**

Accusations will come – the devil is still on earth

- Have we done it well?
- How could we have improved it? (I am sure we could have).
- What if people leave because we didn't care for them well enough?
- What if we left some people out of the decision making that we should have included?
- Did we give enough notice?

Any parent, leader or anyone with responsibility should know how easy it is to “belt ourselves up” because we know we probably could have done better.

But as I have spent time with the Lord He has helped me.

I think He is saying something like this,

“This change is of Me and I have far more in mind than you do.

“This is My opportunity to reveal what is in everyone's heart.

“I have a revival in mind. I have something so good in mind but it will require sold out lovers of My Son, who will serve others and love others and forsaking their own desires, and pray for My desires to be done on earth.

“When I move in this city and bring the hurting, beaten, despised, unlovely, sick and demon possessed people into my kingdom, it will take transformed, grace-filled disciples who depend upon Me and My word to disciple them.

“What do think an outpouring of My Spirit upon all flesh will look like? What do you think a church full of people who have come out of a sin-filled life-style, are suffering from despair and depression and are suffering from sickness and oppression will look like?

"I bring about change to change you so you will be able to rejoice when the lost come flooding into the church and miracles take place through you that you never thought possible."

So what am I saying?

- Rather than **resist change, why not embrace it**
- See it as a challenge for us to **build our faith**;
- See it as **an opportunity to hang out with Jesus** far more seriously;
- See it as an **opportunity practice loving, accepting and forgiving** the people we are connected with now?

Determine to love one another, be friendly, be gracious, be kind and be patient, heal the sick, cast out demons and follow Jesus.

Our job to love; don't try to change people; leave that in God's hands

The test of a person's faith and faithfulness can never be known when the sun is shining and all is well in their world. It is only known when the day is dark, the storm is blowing and pressure comes from every side. Only then can we tell.

Genesis 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."

Romans 8:28