

I Am Made For: Change

Change is very difficult. Whether it's changing a habit or attitude or job or city, change is always a challenge, and change is even more difficult when it's imposed on us suddenly or without our approval.

There is also an element of pain in change even when the change is for good. Like when a new and better job in a new city means leaving friends and family behind. This is why people typically avoid or put off change because they want to avoid the pain that usually comes with change.

Of course we know that not all change is good. There are many changes in life that are both painful and sad because the change that takes place is for the worse, not better. For example, changing careers only to find out that the job doesn't really make sense for you or make you happy, couples getting divorced thinking that this change will solve their problems and they find out that the divorce only brings them new problems to solve.

But today I want to focus on the challenges that positive changes create and how we can meet and overcome them.

The Bible is filled with stories of people who had to experience the pain associated with change in order to receive the blessing that positive change brought into their lives. Turn with me to **Genesis 12:1-3**
"The Lord said to Abraham, leave your country, your people and your father's house and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever

curses you I will curse, and all the people on earth will be blessed through you.”

Wow who wouldn't do that right? Abraham had to leave his country and go live in a foreign land that he didn't know. So let's look at the pain involved in this change.

1. He had to deal with the fear of living in a different culture, language, and traditions.
2. He had to deal with the pain of leaving his family, his home, and friends.

So often, fear takes center stage when change is required. We focus so much on the unknown that we forget about the blessing that is associated with change. Things like:

1. His name and family would be great. God would give him many descendants. And the world will be blessed through him.

Abraham considered the change and examined the pain and decided that the blessings were worth it. Today, Abraham is called the father of all those who have faith. ***Galatians 3:7 says, “Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.”***

Look at the Rich Young Ruler. ***Matthew 19:16-22***

“Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life? Why do you ask me about what is good? Jesus replied. There is only one who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments. Which ones? The man inquired. Then Jesus replied, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honoring your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself. All of these I have kept, the young man said. What do I still lack? Jesus replied, if you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give them to the poor, and you will have

treasures in heaven. Then come, follow me. When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

We all look at this guy and we say things like, “**man he blew it**” or, “**are you crazy?**” But how many of us truly, if we’re being honest, see ourselves in this rich young ruler?

Jesus is asking this young man to change his value system. He valued money and the security and prestige that it gave him. Jesus meets this man and challenges him to change everything.

This young man would experience the pain that comes from swallowing his pride and allowing his relationship with Jesus to be the thing that makes him perfect, not his ability to know and obey the law. Also he would have to learn how to rely on someone else for all of his needs instead of himself.

Don’t miss what Jesus invited him to do. He invited this young man to come and follow him just like he did his disciples. The disciples excepted the challenge to change their lives, their beliefs, their jobs, in order to follow Jesus faithfully. This young man will always be remembered as the one who went away from Jesus, how sad, because he wouldn’t change.

How many of us today, because we don’t want to change in areas that he is asking us to change have walked away from him? We blame others, we blame the pastor, the church, circumstances and we walk away because we believe too much is being required. We forget that every time the Lord asks us to change or brings us through a season of change that blessing accompanies it.

I want us to decide if our faith is going to be a part of our lives or if our faith will become our lives.

Let me explain the difference. When faith is part of our lives, we control it. When faith is our life, it controls us.

As in every change there is pain connected with this kind of transformation. The pain that comes with removing self as a focus of every decision and making Christ the one you live for. There is also the inconvenience of making Jesus and his church a priority over career, recreation, even family at times.

And let's face it, people don't really mind if religion is just part of your lives like a hobby, but they get upset when it becomes our lives. Why? Because it threatens them. But we also realize there is blessings that comes to us when this change is made. We understand that ***"blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled."*** When your faith is your life you are actually able to see and taste heaven here on earth no matter what you're going through.

So I want to ask you today what change needs to take place in your life in order to make God the priority, and not just part of your life? Do you need to repent and be baptized? Do you need to step up your giving, your service or your attendance? Do you need to pray for your health, your marriage or your life in general to be a greater man or woman of faith? Do you need to abandon the secret sin or obsession or addiction?

Maybe it's giving up a negative attitude toward someone you know who has offended you. Or maybe you need greater faith to enable you to persevere in a difficult situation or relationship.

Whatever it is, be willing to make the change.