

Coach House Church BEACONS

ALL CHANGE

15TH MAY 2020

There's something good about a list and being able to work your way through it – carefully ticking off each item or even better, dramatically crossing out. It is a satisfying feeling to know you've made progress, you've used your time well, or just got rid of some annoying job that's been lingering around for a while.

In general, we like to have structure in our lives and a 'to do' list is just one of the many ways we like to be organised and to be efficient – to be in control of the situation.

When I'm at work and have too many things to fit into one working day I like to make a list. It stops me feeling overwhelmed and brings a modicum of order to the chaos. It doesn't mean I get to the bottom of the list but it does somehow make my tasks more manageable and I can see how much I have achieved.

Remember when you were little – did you have a story you liked to listen to over and over again? Or maybe you are the person now reading to young children -the same story, watching the same cartoon, playing the same game...over and over again. It's true that young children like structure and repetition. The familiar is comforting. Being able to predict what comes next is safe and secure. How many adults have a bad start to their day because something unpredictable has happened to put a spoke in the wheel of a well oiled machine.

But what happens when our normal orderly lives have to deal with the disorderly, with change and disruption to our daily timetable? What happens when the unexpected comes our way? Of course we all react in varying degrees to changes in our lives.

For some, change heralds the opportunity for a fresh start, an adventure into the unknown.

For others, change looms large as a challenge, an obstacle that threatens to disrupt and ruin.

There are some examples in the bible that can help us to make sense of change and how to deal with it.

Abraham is 75 years old and God tells him:

Genesis 12 ... Abram,

"Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. 2 I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. 3 I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you."

In other words, change is happening. You are moving house and I am just giving you general directions. And if that's not enough to deal with, although you have no children, you will be the father of a great nation!

So, what did Abraham do?

"...Abram departed as the Lord had instructed."

He had such trust and faith in God and knew that he had to follow the instructions he had been given. God made a promise, so Abraham had his eyes on the fulfilment of that promise, on the end goal. That's not to say that the journey to that promise would be straight forward, easy, without difficulties but as it is recorded in

Hebrews 11

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith—for he was like a foreigner, living in tents. And so did Isaac and Jacob, who inherited the same promise. Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city with eternal foundations, a city designed and built by God.

For Abraham, change was something he embraced because he knew that God was in control of all the circumstances. And more than this, Abraham was looking beyond his lifetime – towards eternity – to heaven and an eternity with God.

The apostle Paul experienced a miraculous change in his outlook, attitude and future plans. After he met with Jesus, in a vision on the road to Damascus, his whole life changed from a prolific persecutor of Christians to an enthusiastic and dedicated teacher and advocate of the gospel. On the one hand, his new life working for God, involved all manner of adventures travelling across the Mediterranean and surrounding countries.

His lifestyle changed instantly he met with Jesus. On the other hand, not everyone trusted him, based on his past history-which was understandable. Can a leopard really change its spots? Well yes, if there is repentance and an acceptance of Jesus as saviour. However, not everyone was ready to accept his message of a changed life and as a result, Paul endured many challenges- persecution, beatings and false imprisonment.

In Romans 8 he says:

Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.

Paul was secure in his belief in Jesus as Messiah and Saviour. He had his eyes fixed on God's promises and the surety of God's love for him.

Romans 8:38

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love.

Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In more recent history, Corrie ten Boon was a Dutch watchmaker who endured life in a concentration camp during WW2. This was the price she paid for helping Jewish families to hide in her house and escape persecution. Her life was full of change- not the adventurous type of change but rather the dangerous challenge that goes alongside the unpredictability of war.

After the war she was honoured by the state of Israel as 'righteous among the nations', a title that recognised how she risked her life during the holocaust – a righteous gentile- a high honour indeed.

She had her eyes fixed firmly on the end goal and, through her experiences, was able to write some amazing insights, reflecting her understanding of and her personal relationship with a Sovereign God.

She wrote: "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

2 Corinthians 4: 17+18

For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

In a world of change we can put our trust and faith into someone, Jesus, who is unchanging, who doesn't change his mind to suit his mood...who is not unpredictable, volatile or fickle.

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.

There is a security in knowing that Jesus does not change, that what Jesus accomplished through his crucifixion and resurrection stands for eternity. His sacrifice was once and for all, totally acceptable by God the Father. That God the Father kept his promise to provide a Saviour so that we can one day enter that perfect, peaceful place.

A great old hymn says:

"Great is Thy faithfulness," O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
"Great is Thy faithfulness," Lord, unto me!

I pray that in the days to come that are inevitably full of change and often uncertainty, that we can put our trust in Almighty God. I pray that we consider how much God loves us that he provided his only begotten son to be the perfect sacrifice that opens up a way to heaven itself.

I pray that change will be a change of mind and of heart to fix our eyes on the end goal, to one day meeting Jesus face to face and that we will experience God's unconditional love for us.



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