

CHANGE THAT MATTERS

CMBC November 29, 2015

Ephesians 4:17 - 24; 5:1 - 2 Colossians 3:1 - 4

You don't usually hear people say, "My you have changed!"

Sometimes people say, "My, you haven't changed a bit." But you know that isn't true. We have all been changing.

We live in a world of change.

1. THE AVALANCE OF CHANGE

a. Overwhelmed with changes

i. How we communicate is a huge changes

1. We used to write letters

2. Then came the phone

a. On the wall

b. Cordless phone

c. Cell phone in your pocket

d. The cell phone has more computer technology than did the manned flights into space

e. All carried in your pocket

f. But not only just a phone, but a camera, a radio, a music box, an adding machine, a library, I have 12 versions of the Bible in mine, a television, an internet computer, a global positioning device, a game board, only to name a few.

g. Last week we talked to our grandson's wife, Sarah, on the phone while she was riding in the car. Not only could we hear her, but we could see her and she could see us.

h. The changes in the phone are happening faster and faster. Constant up dates. My phone isn't even 3 years old and I was told that it can't manage the updates any more.

3. Phone isn't the only communication

a. Email, face book, twitter, and stuff I don't even know how to do.

b. If you want to connect with your grandchildren, you need to know some of this stuff

4. Television

a. When the bombing in Paris happened, within minutes we are sitting there on the street watching it all happen.

ii. Transportation changes

1. 70 years ago, I was travelling to church in the winter by horse drawn box sled.

2. Could you imagine back then being in Calgary from here in less than an hour and a half?

3. Today they are seriously testing out cars that drive themselves. Some already even parallel park themselves.
4. 100 years ago, Vancouver had the first ambulance. Its first emergency trip to the hospital was for a man the ambulance itself had run over.
5. Would you like to do without ambulances and fire trucks today?
6. Incredible changes happening faster and faster.

b. Change that destroys

- i. Not all changes are good. Some changes destroy.
- ii. Lots of pollution from these changes
- iii. Life styles have changed
- iv. Lots of great medical and surgery changes, but now they now even try to make a man into a woman.

c. Change we come to expect

- i. We may be confused by the computer, but our lives are dependent on it for how our elevator runs, to how our cheques are sent to us.
- ii. We want the grocery store to know they are running out of a product on the shelf that we want to buy tomorrow.
- iii. If we need it, we want a little computer planted in our chest that regulates our heart beat, and be able to read it without cutting us open again.
- iv. We totally expect that this service will be available at home on our television set, with good sound and a clear picture.
 1. Remember when we sat leaning into the battery operated radio straining to hear every word?
 2. In a week or so, our service will be available anyplace in the world on the internet. Your grandchildren will be able to see if you are sitting up front or in the back. Now there is a good change.
- v. We just take a lot of the changes for granted. Changes that are important to us.

2. WHEN CHANGE IS NECESSARY

No matter about all of the changes that we can't keep up with. Some changes are terribly necessary.

a. The most important change in your life

- i. Is when you trusted in God to give you His salvation.
- ii. On Saturday night we heard the stories of men and women whose lives had been totally ruined by drugs and alcohol, and now was changed by trusting in God for the power to be changed.
- iii. There is no change more important, and more of a miracle than the change God brought in your life.

b. When God insists on change

- i. Most changes don't really don't matter that much – the computer, the phone, the transportation.
- ii. What matters is what God wants to change in our lives.
Ephesians 4:17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. [18] They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. [20] You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. [21] Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. [22] You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; [23] to be made new in the attitude of your minds; [24] and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
- iii. These are the changes that matter.
- iv. Paul had to remind the people of this because it is so hard for us to make these changes on our own.
- v. Jeremiah put it this way:
Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian* change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good **who are accustomed to doing evil.***
 1. Notice the last few words, "accustomed to doing evil." The Hebrew says, literally, "**learned in evil.**"
 2. Now, that's quite an admission!
 3. Chuck Swindoll says, "We who are "learned in evil" cannot do good; evil habits that remain unchanged prohibit it. Evil is a habit that is learned; it is contracted and cultivated by long hours of practice. We cannot change, don't even know that we need to change, we are so used to living that way. **Or we think that our excuses make it unnecessary to change:**
 - "Well, nobody's perfect."
 - "I'll never be any different; that's just the way I am."
 - "I was born this way---nothing can be done about it."
 - "You can't teach an old dog new tricks."
- vi. We fail because get focused on the things WE need to change, rather than on the central REASON for the change.

c. Centered on the key focus for change

- i. The need for change comes down to this: a growing deepening relationship with God
- ii. **Colossians 3:1** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.
- iii. The focus is God
 1. Yes you will need to change in areas of your life
 2. The reason for the change is so that you can be closer to God
 3. It isn't about the change. It is about God.

- iv. **ILL.** According to Dr. Linda Gottlieb, the practice of psychotherapy in the United States is losing its client base. In 11 years the number of patients receiving psychological interventions plummeted by 30 percent. According to Dr. Linda Gottlieb, the practice of psychotherapy in the United States is losing its client base. In 11 years the number of patients receiving psychological interventions plummeted by 30 percent. The reasons for this decline are complex, but Dr. Gottlieb focuses on one trend: psychotherapy involves the long, hard work of facing our own issues, but many people today would rather blame others for their problems. In other words, psychotherapists used to see patients who were unhappy and wanted to understand *themselves*. Now they see more patients who come in "because they wanted someone else or something else to change." As one of Gottlieb's colleagues put it, "I'd see fewer and fewer people coming in and saying, 'I want to change [myself].'" Consultant are tell Psychologists, "Rather than saying, "I treat people with depression and anxiety," advertise your services by asking, "Are you having trouble with the difficult people in your life?"
- v. What they miss that it isn't first of all about changing my problems and failures, but about recognizing my hopelessness unless I am in a growing relationship with God.
THAT IS THE CHANGE THAT MATTERS.

3. CHANGE THAT MATTERS IN MINISTRY

The same is true in changes that happen in ministry, in how we service the Lord, in what the church does.

- a. We are in the midst of evaluating how we do ministry here in the church.
 - i. I am pleased to see the involvement of so many of you, and the insights in what God is calling us to be.
 - ii. Are we looking to be like some other church? That would be a huge mistake.
 - iii. God has made us who we are.
 - iv. And by the help of the Holy Spirit to do better what He has called us to do.
 - v. Do we need to make changes? Absolutely! Over the 75 years we always have been making changes and we always will be.

- b. The New Testament tells of many changes in how and where ministry was done
 - i. Peter going to the Gentiles
 - ii. The Apostle were the leaders of the church and then God raised up Paul who became the greatest leader
 - iii. Paul wanted to go to his own people in Asia Minor and God called him to go to Europe
 - iv. Even when the widows complained about being discriminated against, the church changed its structure

- v. What is the reason behind these ministry changes? It is about the mission to which God called the church.
 1. Brining people into the Kingdom Of God.
 2. Making disciples.

c. We need to know the reason for change
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- i. Often the church has made changes for the wrong reasons
 1. Sometimes it was to exercise power and control
 2. Or wanted to impress
 3. Or a hundred other wrong reasons
- ii. Change in the church must be about the commission that Jesus gave – make disciples
- iii. But isn't the church about helping us in the church to grow in our relationship with God.
 1. Yes
 2. But that is like saying the garden is about preparing the soil to be good soil and not about planting seeds.
 3. Jesus said, Go, make disciples
 4. He said, Be my witnesses – Look at the field ready for harvest
 5. He said, "I am come to seek and to save that which are lost"
- iv. When church is about us, then we lose the vision to which God has called us.
- v. The final purpose of the church is not about us. It is about the people who are not followers of Jesus. It is about the Kingdom of God.
- vi. That is done in many different ways:
 1. Sometimes it is going out into the community and build relationships
 2. Sometimes it is about making the seeker very welcome in the church
 3. Sometimes it is about helping them out with their need
 4. It is always about that seeker knowing that the people of this church do all they can to help me come to know God
 5. It is about people seeing the goodness of God through the church.
- vii. Does that mean that we have to do this like other churches do?
 1. Not if we are listening to God
 2. He calls us to our harvest field
 3. The changes we see in the New Testament aren't all the same. They are changed to meet the need of the people God has called them to reach.
- viii. Here is an example of what happens when we try to do things like others have, or when we won't change to meet the changing needs: **ILL.** Eric the Red and the Vikings that landed on Greenland were farmers and ranchers. 5000 people and they lasted 450 years and then they vanished. When the trees were all cut down they began to loose their fertile soil. They began to starve to death. The greatest source of food around them was fish, but eating fish was a cultural taboo.

- ix. I read recently that over 100,000 churches in the US have closed in the last several years. Why? Many because they lost their vision.
- x. Church History tells us that whenever the church has lost its vision of making disciples, and the focus is instead on making the church better for the people already in the church, and the church has moved into debate, division and decline.

d. Committed to change that matters

- i. We need to make changes for the purpose of bringing people into the Kingdom, to bring people into a right relationship with God.
- ii. Not only is it the church that needs to make those changes that matter, but I need to make the changes that matter for the sake of the mission of church which Jesus has called us to.
- iii. What must I do to bring about the spirit in the church that makes it possible for my church to be faithful to the mission Jesus called us to?
- iv. Not that we are so good, but that they see God is a wonderful God.