

3. Preparing for Change (2Q 2019—Family Seasons)

Biblical material: 1 Cor. 10:1–13; Gen. 2:24; 1 Cor. 13:4–8; 1 Sam. 1:27; Psalm 71, 1 Cor. 15:24–26; Psalm 85:13.

Quotes

- Change and decay in all around I see... *Hymn*
- Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change. *Wayne Dyer*
- If we don't change, we don't grow. If we don't grow, we aren't really living. *Gail Sheehy*
- Nothing is so painful to the human mind as a great and sudden change. *Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*
- I will prepare and some day my chance will come. *Abraham Lincoln*
- All things are ready, if our mind be so. *William Shakespeare*
- If you believe you can accomplish everything by “cramming” at the eleventh hour, by all means, don't lift a finger now. But you may think twice about beginning to build your ark once it has already started raining. *Max Brooks*

Questions

How can we truly prepare for change? What if we don't want to change? How can we grow and develop our important relationships? How do we know when God is calling us to make a major change in our lives? Does God see important things in life the same way we do? How can we share with others that God is the “anchor of the soul”?

Bible summary

In 1 Cor. 10:1–13 Paul gives examples from Israelite history of their varied experiences with God. In marriage, two become one (Gen. 2:24). 1 Cor. 13:4–8 gives us the foundational principles of love. 1 Sam. 1:27 is part of Hannah's prayer dedicating Samuel to the Lord. We take refuge in our God (Psalm 71). The last enemy destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:24–26). God prepares a way for us (Psalm 85:13).

Comment

Life is all about change. Whether we like it or not, change happens. Change is the one thing that never changes! So the real question is, “Are we prepared for it?” Some things are hard to prepare for—like accidents and disasters. But we can certainly mentally prepare ourselves to be ready to deal with change when it happens.

The most important certainty in life is God, and our role is to make sure we keep that relationship strong. For whatever life throws at us, God promises he will help us deal with it. The problem is that we are often all too ready to deal with things ourselves, and to do so in less than helpful ways.

When it comes to families, change is happening all the time, though sometimes we don't notice until some major event happens. Our children are growing up before our eyes. What was yesterday a tiny baby is today heading off to college. Before we know it, parents become grandparents, our children are getting married, and suddenly we realize we can collect our pensions!

Choosing our life partner is a major change. Getting to know someone in such a close way, working out disagreements, allowing love to transform us—that's all part of it. And we do need to prepare for those kinds of changes! Sometimes we only see the idyllic side of marriage, like a fairytale wedding. But the harsh realities of life soon creep in, and we need to be prepared to deal with them.

Then there's the ultimate change, when it all comes to an end. Whatever we try to do, we can't change the fact of death. Fountains of eternal youth, cryogenic chambers, miracle drugs—all failures that cannot deliver what they promise.

What is life? A sparrow flying from the darkness into the warmth and light of a banqueting hall for a time, then flying through a window on life's far side, to disappear once more into the darkness. An old Anglo-Saxon picture of life, expressing a dark and fatalistic understanding. Truly that seems all we have. In ourselves, there is nothing more.

But...And that has to be the biggest "But" in the universe! There is a way out. Death is not the end. For the Answer is in God. The difference between despair and hope for all of us. "Just as death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead came through a man. Just as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." 1 Cor. 15:21, 22 FBV. The coming of God to this world as Jesus is his way of ending sin and its consequence, death. For all who choose he offers life—full and happy life now, eternal life to come. Are you prepared for *that* change?

Ellen White Comments

True, we cannot change ourselves; but the power of choice is ours, and it rests with us to determine what we will become. {COL 56.1}

My brother, I have an intense desire that you shall be a man after God's heart. You must make a change in your life. You have most precious truth to present, but you must put on the gospel shoes--your feet must be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." {Ev 639.1}

What a change was wrought in the hearts of the disciples as they looked once more on the loved countenance of their Master... What a preparation these disciples had received for the work before them! They had passed through the deepest trial which it was possible for them to experience, and had seen how, when to human vision all was lost, the word of God had been triumphantly accomplished. Henceforward what could daunt their faith or chill the ardor of their love? {GC 349-50}

All our preparation for heaven must be completed here. When Christ comes, our characters will not be changed. These vile bodies will be changed, and fashioned after the likeness of his glorious body; but there will not be a moral change wrought in us then. At that time, those who have endured the work of the Master-builder, and have been hewed and squared and polished, will come together into that glorious temple, each in his place, without the sound of ax or hammer. The work of preparation will be close and trying to our natural hearts; but it is the only way that has been provided by the God of wisdom, whereby we may become living stones in his great spiritual and eternal temple. {RH, August 7, 1888 par. 17}

The words "A new heart will I give you" mean "A new mind will I give you." This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our view of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the Word of God. {CTr 351.3}

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