

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday May 19, 2019. "Transitions/Changes: How does change happen?"

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

B. Sunday.

Sunday was another important celebration in our community as we acknowledged the accomplishments of our graduates. What a great time of recognizing those who have put in some really hard work over the past few years, reached a significant milestone, and are now moving to that next stage of life. **All of you are amazing and honor us that we got to be included in on this part of your life journey.** Wherever you end up, we will always treasure the time we had, or still do, together.

We also began a new two part series on transitions and change. It's timely because of it being graduation Sunday, but we all can relate and connect to how change happens, and how we can transition these moments into great opportunities for us.

And this was a super meaty lots of content message. You may want to watch the message if you missed it, just to get the amount of info presented.

C. Understanding Change and Transitions.

Our life is filled with personal transitions. High school graduation, post high school, work, marriage, or other relationships, kids, new jobs, moving, no kids anymore, retirement, etc. We can't avoid these transitions. They're just a natural part of life. And we can either let them happen to us, and just float along with the change. Or we can build our understanding, assemble toolbox of skills, how change works and how to best prepare, position, ourselves for inevitable stages of life.

This is going to be a longer than normal devotional, and jam packed with a lot of information. You may want to spread this out over some time, and spend a little more effort into each one of the sections.

First, let's talk about change and navigating transitions briefly.

How do you handle change...transitions?

How do you understand change happens?

What has to happen for change to take place?

What does it take, what do we need to know and understand, to navigate these moments of change and transition...as well as we can?

We'll use these terms, change and transitions, interchangeably. There are some nuanced differences but for the most part they have a lot of overlap and we'll use them in that way.

The idea of navigating change and transitions is based on this larger premise and belief.

We have to decide if our faith is only built on studying the past Jesus, or finding the unfolding future work of Jesus.

We proposed a theory about how change happens. It came from Ernest Hemingway's 1926 novel "***The Sun Also Rises***". A dialogue in the book went like this.

"How did you go bankrupt?" Bill asked.

"Two ways," Mike said. *"Gradually and then suddenly."*

I think this is how change almost always happens...both good and bad. Real lasting, significant, change happens in small almost imperceptible movements. We miss it because we don't look for it or think of it in this way.

If you are aware of, and understand, the little incremental changes, you will be able to predict the bigger ones.

D. Truths about gradual change.

So we made some overarching claims about understanding how change happens.

1. We have to believe in change even when we can't see it.

Things are changing, often it's so imperceptible, we're unable to notice it.

2. We have to believe little things are cumulative.

Over time little things do add up. Your life is the sum of all the decisions you make.

3. Noticeable change actually happens in tipping points and thresholds.

We'll notice change when we cross a certain milestones. Seem to be natural, built in, moments of change, (TRANSITIONS), that mark when a certain number of smaller changes have happened.

4. We have to measure progress and movement differently than often what feels normal.

We love, and are drawn to, big stories. But we need to celebrate little victories and milestones.

5. Every little thing will move you in some direction.

Everything is continually changing/transitioning...all the time. You get to decide that direction.

React with these above truths about change.

Where do you struggle with these aspects of change?

What jumped out to you in a new way?

D. Scripture.

We divided up several chapters in Genesis covering the life of Abram/Abraham and Sarai/Sarah, and so we'll give you that larger passage so you can get the context of their lives and mix in the truths

about change we pulled from their story. Go ahead and read **Genesis 12-13:12, and 15:1-6**. And then we'll talk about the truths from those passages.

Ways Abram and Sarai deal with change.

1. Are you willing for 'movement', (literally or figuratively), ... without question?

This isn't about a one time obedience of being willing to move, but rather a long obedience towards continual movement over time. There is never a final destination. Always movement to the new thing God is doing...continually.

2. Surface and acknowledge fears.

The most foolish and unwise decisions we make will be from a place of fear. In order to diminish the effects of fear, you have to name and acknowledge those fears you have.

3. Separate from people and things that will hold you back.

There are some people in your life who may not be bad people, may be lifelong friends, but their life is not going in the same direction your life is. You may have to have some hard conversations, but to handle changes and transitions well, sometimes you have to break ties with certain people.

4. Commitment to 'end result' of changes.

We can easily lose heart by getting bogged down in the little day to day things. It's often not the big things that discourage us, but rather the continual assault of the little things of life. We HAVE to have a larger than life vision, understanding of where our life is headed to help us deal with the smaller, more tedious acts of obedience.

**Where do you find it hard to maintain the willingness to handle change and transitions well?
What has helped you practice some of these above truths in a successful way?**

E. Challenge.

This had been a dense and packed dive into how change happens, and how we can best position and prepare ourselves to handle these moments in life to the best of our ability. AND...it was only part 1 of a two part look into the life of who will become Abraham and Sarah, and all the transitions and changes that God lead them thru.

We ended with this final question before recognizing our graduates.

What ONE little thing can you do that will move your life in a different direction?

So... in all of the transitions and changes in your life, that will continually happen to the very end, **what are the specific things you can do to be the best you, and to be used by God, to own those pivotal moments in your life like a boss?**