

"I am a huge believer in God's ability to confirm things in our lives.

You know, I had three titles for this morning's message. The first two are marked out.

And the one I went with is Change. You got to just sing a song about change.

I'm going to close this message out with a line in another song that says Made for More.

And they sang both of these songs.

So, I'm going to talk about change this morning.

And the thing about it, we can just be real honest, nobody likes it.

And the more mature you get in life, the less you like change.

Okay?

But, all change is not that.

Okay?

Scripture reading, book of Deuteronomy, the second chapter, I'm going to read verses one, two, and three this morning. Children of Israel have been in the wilderness for about 38 years. And they have wandered.

And if you were to look at a map, they have literally wandered in a circle.

Okay?

They are in the area of Kadesh Barnea."

"And I'm going to talk about a mountain here in a minute, but it's really just kind of a big hill. You know, it's like the mountains we have here in Stowhill, no, we don't have any mountains.

We got kind of big hills, but we call them kind of mountains.

But Deuteronomy, chapter two, beginning in verse number one. Since then, we turned and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me, and we have come past Mount Stier many days.

When it says many days, it's roughly 38 years.

Okay?

And the Lord spake unto me, saying, You've come past this mountain long enough, turn you north.

Do I got it saying?

You've done what you're doing for long enough.

Time to change.

It's time to make a change.

You've wandered for 38 years.

It's time to make a change.”

“Now, they had wandered because of their unwillingness to accept God's promise and God's provision. God had promised them when He set the seal of the vision of Israel free to take them to a promised land, the land that's filled with milk and honey. And they went in and viewed it, and they came back with the report, and it says everything God said it was, but, and because of that, there are unwillingness to adapt to change.

There are unwillingness to take God at His word.

Now, we complain a lot about change. My big thing right now with change is the world is trying to fix those that ain't broken. It's working just fine.

It's our life in trouble.

They want to intrude, you know. I don't need a cell phone that does 50 things.

I don't know how to do it.

I need one that dials so that I can hear when they talk and make a machine call, and I am a happy human. I know that's not everybody, but that's me.

So, but what I've learned in my lifetime is change is one of the certainties of life.”

“You either fight against it or adapt to it. It's just the way it is.

Let's talk for a minute about change.

All of you go back to your childhood, before you ever had to start school. Do you remember those days? You know, I can remember those days, but I can remember last week.

The days where you got up whenever, and all you had to worry about was what you were going to play with that day or go outside and everything else, you know.

And that went on for four or five years, and then it got ruined by something called school.

Everything was good until school started.

And I can't speak for you, but I did not like having to go to school.

I hated it.

Didn't like it. Didn't want any part of it.

But for the next 12 years of my life, school consumed almost every moment of the day, it seemed like.

Man, that was a big change, and I didn't like it.

But it did.

And then when I got out of school, real life happened.

I had to go to work.

Got a job.

Got a paycheck.”

“A lot less than I thought I was going to get because something called the government took part of my money.

You know what I'm talking about?

That was a change.

But it's just the way it is.

And then, I flew around and fell in love. Married.

Got married.

That was a change.

And then we had kids, and oh my gosh, did life ever change?

I mean, and then they repeated the cycle, little kids. We made them go to school too, because somebody made us.

We're making our kids.

We're going to be sending them to school too.

They grew up through college and everything else.

Then we got grandkids.

Whoo!

I love my kids.

Man, I'm wearing them.

Yeah.

We got grandkids.

Chris and I have lived in our house for close to 26 years now.

I told her here a while back, the mirrors in our bathroom, we're gonna find them here.

She said, what's wrong with them?”

"I said, well, the guy looking back at me out of that mirror is not the guy that used to look at me out of that mirror.

I've changed.

Maybe it's the mirror.

She said, no, it's not the mirror.

Life is filled with changes, okay?

Everything.

This place, I have had the privilege and the honor of being here almost 24 years.

And this place has changed.

And in its 117, 118-year history, it has changed, okay?

From locations to size and different things.

When I came here, obviously, this building was not here.

We've only been in this building since 2017. So obviously, this building was not here. But neither was the Life Center, neither was the Church Closet building, neither was the Youth Building.

We did not have much of a paid parking lot when I came here years ago.

We did not have a band, musicians.

We had a piano player and occasionally an organist when I came.

We did not look up when we sang. We looked down at books when we sang.

And that's exactly why we started to put the words on the screen."

"It gets you from looking down to looking up, to looking up, to having your eyes toward heaven, perhaps.

I believe that's scriptural if we look at it.

But this place has changed over and over and over.

You know?

But when I came here, I didn't imagine what God was going to do or how it was going to change.

Before I came here, you all were downtown, and now you're in the suburbs of Pittsburgh. You're not in the greater metropolitan area anymore.

So, and I know I wasn't here, but I know that was a huge change because you'd been down there many, many years, and you came up here, and you had to wonder, will God move with us?

Well, yes, He did.

And if He has, and if He will continue to.

But it was a change, wasn't it? It was a big change.

So, even though we resist change, even though we really just change, change is not all that bad sometimes.

And there are times in our lives we need to make changes in ourselves.”

“In our attitude, in our actions, in all of these things. Do you remember when you got your first one of these?

My grandkids asked my wife not too long ago, Jimmy, what kind of cell phone did you have when you were our age?

And they couldn't believe her answer.

We didn't have cell phones.

They were flabbergasted.

But how did you survive?

Well, we didn't.

Do you remember the first one of these you got stuck in your car? It was in a bag, most likely.

Yeah, yeah.

Do you remember the first time you got a call driving down the road? I do. I do like it was yesterday.

I thought, whew, we have arrived.

I don't know where, but you know, you only saw that on television with people that had lots of money.

We want to know people.

But we've adapted to this. And now, now, if you leave this at home, I don't care how far you are from home, you turn around, go back and get something. Can't live without this thing.

And didn't really want to start with it.

But we have adapted.

We have changed.”

“We need to learn to change within ourselves. Change means we are moving forward. And life is moving forward very, very rapidly.

And we have to adapt that. The message of God has not changed, and will not change, but the way we share it has changed. We live in the most technologically-advanced age in the history of mankind.

We are able, right here in Pittsburg, Illinois, to send the gospel all over the world via the Internet and YouTube.

Who would have ever thought we could do something like that?

And yet we can. And I have had reports of people watching our church services and accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. But what we do matters, and it's all because we had a willingness to embrace change.

We've got to embrace change.

And I'm not telling you all change is good. You have to try the Spirit of the Bible says.

You got to know what you're doing.”

“But it all starts with a willingness to change within ourselves. We got to have that willingness to change the things. And one of our hindrances to moving forward is our tendency to hold on to what is behind us.

Because the things that are behind us, we're sure of, and we're certain of.

And, you know, we got to confidence in those.

But God is asking us to stretch out. God is asking us to expand.

God is asking us to trust in, to do the things that He wants to accomplish in our lives.

But we won't let go.

I don't deal in what is very often, but we're going to deal in one this morning.

What if we just stayed next door?

Now, if you were here at that point, when we were having church next door, that place over there told about 325, 330, if everybody's getting along and willing to step really close to God.

Okay?

We were dragging chairs out in the back and every place else. But what if, when it comes time, we just said, well, we don't want to do this.

We don't want to go.”

“We don't want to grow. Do you know the numbers we were experiencing before COVID?

Between 500 and 600 people were here.

What if we just stayed over there?

Do you know what happens?

Nobody likes to be crowded.

Nobody likes to sit all squished together and seat.

You know how I know that? Because you're always spread out over little buildings. You know, see?

Nobody likes it. But we had to adapt to change.

And this was a change.

That is a glorious facility over there.

But this is an even better facility that God has given us here.

Do you understand what I'm getting at?

We must be willing to adapt.

But what if we weren't willing to just, unwilling to, what if they never moved from downtown to up here?

They'd have never grown.

What if we never moved from there?

To do these other things God has led us into doing, folks."

"We built that youth building to invest in our young people, to put a foundation in our young people. And I'm going to tell you about two teenage girls this morning during the baptism who had that foundation put into them and the change that Jesus made in the church. I'm telling you, what we do on behalf of our young people is going to pay benefits for their lifetime if you're willing to put forth the effort to put Jesus into them.

All of our young people's programs are so vitally, so very important. And if we don't put forth the effort to work in those programs and to instill Jesus in those people, yeah, you're going to have to change some things.

You're going to have to change the schedule.

You're going to have to miss the service of 12.

I started with 12 and worked back.

Isaiah 43 verses 18 and 19 says, Remember ye not the former things. These are considerate things of old.

Behold, I will do a new thing.

I will do a new thing. You know a new thing is change."

"I don't care if you buy the same automobile, same makes, same model, but a different year every year.

It's a different vehicle.

They're similar in a lot of ways, but they're different in a lot of ways. You know, just when I were driving home last night in the dark, not our favorite thing, driving in the dark, but we were doing it anyway, like big people.

And we were talking about the bright and dim lights.

You know how they, on the newer cars, they change automatically?

Well, our car doesn't change fast enough to keep it.

So I'm trying to make it bright, then it won't go dim. I'm trying to make it dim, and it wants to stay bright, you know?

And we were talking about, you young people, you don't have a clue what I'm getting at today.

Back in the old days, on the left side of the floorboard, yeah, there was a little button. It was called the dimmer switch, and you tapped it with your left foot.

I remember that clip every time, and it always worked."

"It wasn't automatic, but we worked it boom boom, boom boom. So that same automobile, they still make it today, but it's got a little lever, it's got a little light on there, it says, we'll do it for you.

You know?

You've got to learn to advance with change, because everything you like changes. Everything is always a new and improved thing, church.

God says, I want to do something new in you. I want to improve in you. I want to make however good you are better, because that's what Jesus does.

As good as you are before Jesus, you are better after you know Jesus, and He will continue to make you better if you will allow Him to change you, if you will allow Him to move and work with you. But our problem is, we keep dragging our past into our present, and it hinders God from changing us from what we are to what He wants us to be.

What I'm talking about is saved and satisfied.

It's what's wrong with a lot of churches today.

Well, I'm saved. I'm going to heaven."

"I don't need anymore, but God has got so much more for me.

That song they sang, and I'm going to tell you about it.

You're made for more. You're made for more.

Salvation is glorious, and it's wonderful, but it's not the end.

It's the beginning.

It's the beginning of what God wants to do in you. He will take you further and farther and deeper if you will just allow Him to.

Well, preacher, I'm pretty good right now.

I'm saved and I'm satisfied, and I'm just going to sit here and wait on heaven.

Maybe you are missing the joy of life.

You're missing the joy of living for Jesus.

Because, and in some times, we won't go forward because we made a mistake.

Well, guess what?

There's not a person under the sound of my voice, here or at home, who hasn't made it for safe, and hasn't messed up.

You can let the devil beat you over the head with it from now on, or you can move on, put it under the blood and know that it's gone.

We must realize that things must change.”
“Let me talk about Elijah and Elisha for just a moment.

The story of Elijah and Elisha is in 2 Kings 2, when the ministry of Elijah was over. Elijah had been following him around and helping him with everything, but there came a time when Elijah was going to be taken away into heaven.

And Elijah asked Elisha, What do you want?

What can I do for you?

And Elijah said, I want a double portion of the Spirit that God has on you to be placed upon me.

I want what you've got only twice as much. I want to be you doubled. I want to do for God what you've got and then even more.

I want that.

And Elijah asked you, man, that's not a hard thing.

But if you see me when I'm taken up, it will happen.

It was when Elijah was taken up.

This is 2 Kings chapter 2.

I'm going to read it to you, beginning of the 10th verse.

He said, that's the hard thing. Nevertheless, if thou see me when I'm taken from you, it shall be so unto me.

But if not, it shall not be so.”

“And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both of thunder. And Elijah went up by whirlwind into heaven, and Elijah saw it. What did he say?

If you see it, it will happen.

And Elijah saw it, okay?

And he took hold of his own clothes and ripped them into pieces.

Why is that important?

Because you see it all over the Bible. It's a sign of distress all the time. It wasn't here.

It was Elijah acknowledging, I can't receive the new double portion if I'm still wearing the same old garb that I was wearing. I got to have something new. I've got to make a change within my life if I'm going to have this double portion.

So he took off the old to put on the new.

It's symbolic of what he's doing here, and we need to shed some of the old stuff so we can take on the new stuff. You can only have room for so much stuff.

Amen?

Amen. If you don't believe it, ask a man about his drawings.”

“We can only have room for so much stuff, and we have good stuff too.

And there's a company that's made two portions making room for your stuff.

Put it in a little building out there in the yard. I don't care how big the building you got, it ain't never big enough.

Because we accumulate stuff.

It's the same way spiritually. If you don't make room for the new stuff by getting rid of some of the old stuff, then, oh man, is that hard. Oh man, is that hard.

It's hard for a guy.

Tell us if you want your drawers cleaned out, tell your wife to go ahead.

No.

Only an honest man in here out there.

Only one.

Yeah, his wife's not in here, too.

And everybody watching on TV. You know someone saying, can you get rid of some of the old stuff?

Can you get some of the new things?

Can you let go of it? Can you just shut it?

Elijah realized, I got to get rid of these old clothes, because this is the clothes that I had. God has given me something new.”

“What did he give him? The mantle of Elijah.

It fell upon him. The mantle was the coat he wore around about him. All right.

And it fell upon him.

And he took that mantle and began to do the great things that God had for him. Church, you got to let go of some of the old stuff to get the new stuff.

That's the way God works. We miss the things God had for us.

Really, we were afraid of what we don't understand. Assuming in any version of your Bible that God says, you will understand everything I do. If you understood it, there's no faith involved in the creation.

You just shall live by faith, by faith.

Faith is trust.

Faith is trust, people, and that's what it's about. But we are afraid of what we don't know and what we don't understand.

We don't like change.

We just don't.

We don't want to embrace it.

We're good where we are.

Or maybe it's pride, or maybe it's past disappointments, or it could be a jillion different things.”

“We need to get rid of the old to make room for the new.

That's what I should show you.

All right, John chapter 5.

John chapter 5.

The man at the Pool of Bethesda.

Pool of Bethesda was known as the Place of Healing.

Place of Healing.

This is 5th chapter, John.

This man had been at the Pool of Healing 38 years ago.

How long did that take you?

Had been wandering in the wilderness?

38 years.

How long was the man at the Pool of Bethesda?

38 years.

There's something to it.

I don't know.

You did a little homework for him.

He had seen people healed over and over and over.

It never did.

And when Jesus walked into him, he said, Do you want to be made whole? And the man began to give excuses and reasons why he could not be made whole.

Sound familiar?

I want what they've got.

But I...

It's not gonna happen.

It's not gonna happen to me.

It's never happened, it's not gonna happen. And it began to be all these reasons why it couldn't happen. He didn't ask him for a reason."

"He said, Do you want to be made whole?

Do you want to be happy?

Do you want healed? Do you want to rejoice?

Do you want to enjoy this life?

He's asking some of y'all the exact same questions. What do you want in this life? And when you...

He says, Okay, you say, Well, I do, but I don't think this, and I don't think that, and I can't, and I can't, and I can't. Folks, you can if you're willing to change. This guy had to change his mindset.

Jesus said, Do you want to be made whole? And he said, David, oh, he's reading the way he couldn't be made whole. And Jesus healed him, told him to take up his bed and walk.

That's what we've got to do.

Let me give you one more example real quick.

God will change things that look impossible to change.

There's another chapter of Ezekiel, the story of the vision of the valley of driverless.

When God took Ezekiel there, said, He cured me out in the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of a valley which was full of bones."

"He caused me to pass by them round the valley, behold, there were very many in the open valley, and lo, they were very dry.

What a hopeless situation.

What a terrible place to be dropped off in.

A place of death, a place of dying, a place of many, many bones scattered.

There was nothing there.

But he asked him the oddest question.

Can these bones live? Can they be made alive?

And the King James Version says, that if you leave the ranks of the Lord, you know. You know what that translates to mean?

I didn't see that. I mean, it's a mess.

You got bones scattered all over.

He says, the Bible says there was very many. When it said that the children of Israel wandered around Mount Seir many days, 28 years.

That's a lot of days. Okay.

So when it says there were very many bones, there are bones every place.

What looked like an impossible task?

What looked like it could never, ever happen?

Never underestimate the power of the God we serve."

"Never sell our God short.

Never tell my God, your God, you can't do that. He can do that. He will do that if you're willing to trust him.

If you're willing to accept the change, then it brings along with it. We don't get the things we pray for and ask for because we're not willing to accept those changes. He said, can they live?

I mean, they are too far gone.

I've heard that said about people, too. Well, they're in an impossible situation, a hopeless situation.

They're too far gone, but they are still drawing breath.

They are not too far gone.

There's nobody God can't reach.

You know what happened for God to reach them? A change was in question.

So what did God tell His people to do?

He said, you tell this impossible situation, this hopeless situation, this situation that you say is too far gone, you tell it.

The Word of God.

Not your opinion, not what you think. Tell it.

The Word of God.

Tell it.

Just say it."

"The Word of God.

Well, what is the Word of God?

Luke 18 and 27, Jesus said this, the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Luke 1 and 37 says, but God, nothing shall be impossible. Nothing shall be impossible.

He puts no limit on it. He puts no limitations on it. If you can trust God for it, God said it'll happen, and He can make it so.

You speak the Word, not opinions, not ideas, not man-made anything, but speak the Word of God, and the Word of God will manifest itself into something glorious and what seems impossible. The Bible talks about the fact that every bone came together, that the muscles and the sinews and the flesh and the skin all covered up, and the breath of life came into that thing, and you rose up a great and mighty army equipped and ready to do battle against the enemy. What enemy?"

"Your enemy.

My enemy.

The enemy.

You won't have one.

You won't have one. Church.

What you see is impossible.

Most of this is what church is.

That's a lie.

I've told you this story before, but it's been a long time.

The church and his wife at the church on Sunday evening went to a local pizza restaurant.

They were doing, you know, having one pizza book there.

You know what I mean, that all different kinds of keepsakes, and that pasta, and that's dicks, I mean, and salad, oh, with everything in it.

Oh my gosh.

This is why we went in and sat down and said, you'll have two buffets.

I got out of the car, and we had a little bit too much.

What does it mean, this feeling? This feeling of somebody else, you see somebody getting a blessing, you see the Lord moving in somebody's life."

"I don't know what this picture was of it, but I know there were people who made it prior, but still eat the piece of it.

And sometimes you think, well, I can't do that, and I can't do it.

But this one.

It's going to have to be changed.

The things that we think are impossible, folks, God makes happen.

I'm closing your ear.

That song, they sing, but for science, you and I will make the moon, moon. Do what I like about the phrase pizza is all you want.

God makes you may have reserved pizza on this buffet, too.

Come on.

God has a buffet spread out before you, and you have all you want.

I was called by name, oh yeah, Jesus knows her name.

I was called by name, born and raised back to life, back to life, it's like those dry bones, back to life.

I was made for more.

So why would I make a bed in my same? It's in the past.

Put it under the blood, it's gone.

Don't let that be so red anymore.”

“Why would I make a bed in my same when a fountain of grace is running my way?

There is a river of grace running your way right now.

I know I'm yours, and I was made for you.

You're made for me, church.

You really are.

Do not be satisfied.

Yes, yes, it's going to involve some things in your life.

Yes, it's more than worth it.”