

Navigating Life's transitions

I. The what, they why, the how and the where of transitions

- A. Life is full of transitions: seasons change, children grow up, careers shift, ministries evolve, and God moves us forward.
- B. I'm sure you have all been to a mall. If not, better put it on your bucket list before they are all extinct. When I was youth pastor and raising my children. The mall was a big deal..... When I grew up, get on you bike be home by supper. Now don't let those kids out of your sight!
- C. The biggest mall is the Mall of America in Minnesota. 5.6 million sq. feet. Over 500 stores, an indoor theme park and an aquarium.
- D. They always have a sign or a map in any mall. "You are here."
(photo)
- E. I want you to think. Where are you right now. You are here. Where is here. Where do you want to go. How do you get to there. Where is there.
- F. Let's pray.
- G. There are all these transitions that we experience in the natural. From birth to toddler, to a child, to a teenager, to an adult. From elementary school to jr. high to high school and possible college. Then on to career, marriage, and possible children. Then you help them make all these transitions in life until they leave home.
- H. Then there are also spiritual transitions. The biggest one is the transition from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light.
 - Colossians 1:13 NLT For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,
 - Acts 26:18 NLT to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.
- I. That spiritual transition is called "being born again." Remember Nicodemus in John 3 asking Jesus about this. Vs 5-7 "Truly, truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh is born of flesh, but spirit is born of the Spirit. Do not be amazed that I said, 'You must be born again.'
- J. The problem with most people in this western culture and modern Christianity is that they look at it as a one-time experience. I said a prayer, I came to the alter, I got baptized..... I come to church. YES, but you are still in spiritual diapers. You have not allowed God to transition you into a fully committed follower of Jesus Christ.

- Here is the reality of transition. Transitions can feel uncertain — like stepping into a river whose current we can't control.

K. Let's look in our bible (road map). **This Bible** The time the children of Israel were making a transition from slavery. That is like us. Then they spent 40 years in the wilderness to get to the promised land. God is leading them to a place they have never been and they will have to navigate across a stream during flood season.

Joshua 3:5-6 NLT Then Joshua told the people, "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you." In the morning Joshua said to the priests, "Lift up the Ark of the Covenant and lead the people across the river." And so they started out and went ahead of the people. **12-17** Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. The priests will carry the Ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth. As soon as their feet touch the water, the flow of water will be cut off upstream, and the river will stand up like a wall."

So the people left their camp to cross the Jordan, and the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant went ahead of them. It was the harvest season, and the Jordan was overflowing its banks. But as soon as the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark touched the water at the river's edge, the water above that point began backing up a great distance away at a town called Adam, which is near Zarethan. And the water below that point flowed on to the Dead Sea until the riverbed was dry. Then all the people crossed over near the town of Jericho. Meanwhile, the priests who were carrying the Ark of the LORD's Covenant stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed as the people passed by. They waited there until the whole nation of Israel had crossed the Jordan on dry ground.

L. Have you ever been rafting? Last year family went to Colorado on the Arkansas river. Salida. We had a guide and grandkids, they have been there before, they know the safe path. **(photo)**

M. When we navigate the streams of this life, we don't have to do it alone. There is someone who will go before us, someone who will lead and guide us and that is the Holy Spirit.

II. The Why of transitions—Life application: God uses change to move us forward

A. Transitions: test us, prepare us and purify us.

B. **#1. Transitions test our faith**

C. God doesn't always show us the whole path. Joshua 3:4 Since you have never traveled this way before, they will guide you.

- D. Your faith will grow when your sight is limited. God might not show you the whole path, but He will guide your steps. **Psalm 37:23 NLT** The LORD directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives.
- E. **Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV** Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.
- F. **#2 Transitions prepare us for promotion.**
- The Jordan stood between them and the Promised Land — a symbol of stepping from the old into the new. A new level.
 - Sometimes God must “unsettle” us to position us for blessing.
- G. The children of Israel had a 2-week journey from the Red Sea to the promised land. Yet they kept wandering around the same mountain for 40 years. (rat rod trip) (photo)
- H. There is a stage in childbirth called transition, when dilation takes place. Here are a couple key features of transition: **Intense contractions: Increased pressure: Increased emotional intensity:** (That’s just for the man). Hunger, stretched shirt. Sharon, c-section, natural--prophesy
- I. What about some of the Spiritual transitions, when God is trying to get you to the next level. Where His next promise is.
- J. To get from here to there, sometimes you just need to get sick and tired of being sick and tired.
- K. I’m sure Travis was not thrilled about someone cutting into his body and putting an organ from another person in his body. Kidney. There is a transplant list. I watched him work and keep up with anyone and then stop and hang a bag up to do his dialysis. How long?? He was ready for the change.
- L. Terry Anderson would drag around that oxygen bottle and had a hard time getting from point a to point b. He got so sick and tired of being sick and tired that he was willing to have a lung transplant. Travis’ surgery was scary but both lungs. Come on.
- M. We have a member of our safety team.
- N. These are big medical issues, but how many have a financial issue, a relationship issue, an emotional issue, a spiritual issue that you need to see some change. You need to Trust God and take some steps. That baby is not going to come unless you push.
- O. There is always resistance in the transition process. Our flesh will resist spiritual transitions. It takes sacrifice, it takes dying to our flesh. Then there will be spiritual opposition. The enemy does not

want you to go to the next level where you have more peace and more power. Jericho: expect opposition, expect help, expect victory

P. Transition is for the purpose of transformation. Romans, Being transformed by the renewing of the mind. That is the there. That is the goal. Becoming like Christ.

Q. **Transformation** is an external event, it is something that can be seen. (Like a makeover show). But **transition** is an internal spiritual process that God uses to transform us. **If you don't make the transition, you will never see the transformation.**

R. Sometimes God will make the nest uncomfortable to get us to move. The eagle will begin to take out the soft feathers and fluff out of the nest so the eaglets will be more willing to get out of the nest and fly.

S. Some of my life's transitions. The nest got uncomfortable several times in my life. My nest got uncomfortable a couple years after I came to Texarkana to be youth pastor. I came in under a pastor by the name of Tim Storey. (tell) right place at the right time. Not a transition to new scenery, but a transition in my heart to trust a new a new leader. Then after 16 years of youth...

T. **#3. Transitions purify our hearts.**

U. Joshua 3:5 "Purify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do great wonders among you."

V. You might not get through that transition to the next level or next blessing or promotion **until** you clean up your act. Until You get more disciplined in an area. Until You are more faithful. Until you follow through. Until you are a person of your word.

W. **Before God moves *through* us, He often works *in* us.**

X. Transitions; Test us, prepare us and purify us.

III. **The How of Transition — How to Navigate the Stream**

A. **#1. Keep your eyes on the presence of God.**

B. The Ark of the Covenant went ahead (v.3-4).

C. Don't move until God moves; **follow His presence, not your preference.**

D. When I say presence, I'm talking about the person of the Holy Spirit. If you have never felt the Spirit/presence, I'm not saying you don't have the Holy Spirit. But you definitely don't have a full understanding of the person of the Holy Spirit. The one who will fill you, be with you, lead you in all truth, comfort you. Be your guide as you navigate the streams of transition.

E. I began to cry. Juakin's wife. Testimony. Feelings aren't the engine of the train; facts are the engine and feelings the caboose.

- F. Every time in the book of Acts there was a manifestation of some
- G. **#2 Step out in faith even when the waters are high.**
- H. The priests' feet had to touch the water *before* it parted (v.15–16).
- I. We are often waiting for a sign, waiting for God to move when it is us that needs to take the first step.
- J. Obedience often precedes the miracle. Even a minor step of obedience is a step forward.
- K. Hinderances to spiritual transition or **the things that keep you from taking that step of faith.**
- L. 1. Fear of the unknown. 2. Comfort with the status quo (out of your comfort zone) 3. Worldliness. 4. Distractions of the world. 5. Unconfessed or unaddressed sin. 6. Spiritual laziness. 7. Pride and self-reliance (put all of this on one slide)
- M. **Things that help you step out in faith.** 1. Embrace discomfort for growth. 2. Seek honesty and repentance. 3. Anchor yourself in the unchanging God and His unchanging word. 4. Cultivate a hunger for God. 5. Rely on community. 6. Trust God's purpose.
- Eric Butterworth, "Don't go through life, grow through life." One slide
- N. **#3 Stand strong in the middle of the transition.**
- O. The priests stood in the river until everyone crossed (v.17).
- P. Sometimes we are called to "stand in the gap" for others during transition.
- Q. Sometimes we need to hold on to a word from God and stand your ground. Don't let fear and doubt move you, but the word and presence of God help you stand.
- R. The enemy has a way of working us over in our minds. Just look at the circumstances, this is taking too long, this is costing too much. That's when you shut down or give up. I'm just going back to the "you are here" spot where I started.
- S. In times of transition, you can be **vulnerable**. Jesus was in a time of transition in the garden. (not my will but your will be done)
- T. So important to renew your mind. The word will become part of your being. It changes the way we think about things. Therefore, it changes the way we respond. When this happens then Love replaces lust.
- U. Love will drive us, not lust. Love and selflessness, not lust and selfishness. Faith begins to rule over fear and unbelief. **We make decisions based on our relationship with God, His presence and His word; rather than emotions.**

- V. Sometimes God will give you a word during transition. Mine was not a transition to a new job or place, but a new leader. Right place, right thing at the right time. I needed to stand strong.
- W. How to navigate; Follow God, Step out in faith, Stand strong
- IV. Navigating tools and tips
- A. You are here. (sign in Mall)
- B. How did you get here and where is here? What is your current spiritual state? Evaluate it! I am here!
- C. Where do you go from here?
- D. Where do I want to go? Where does God want me to go?
- E. How to get from here to there? It's a journey. The only way to get to where God wants you to go, which is where you really want to go, but you just don't see a way to get there. Is by praying, not my will but your will be done. Pray; "Holy Spirit, I give you permission to lead me because I trust you."
- F. What There looks like.
- G. There is one goal: Spiritual maturity being like Christ. A life that pleases God, bearing fruit. Becoming like Christ. Growing in grace and knowledge.
- H. **This transition we are in; is A Call to Spiritual Growth**
- **Hebrews 5:11-14** is about growing up and start eating solid food not just milk. "Change is inevitable, but growth is optional."
- I. The Path from here to there. Where you are now and where God wants you to be. That is for all of us. No one has arrived.
- J. **Some navigation Tips:** A reminder that there will be a battle between His will and your will. Does anyone have a 3-year-old right now? Is there a battle? Maybe it's time to grow up and get out of your Spiritual diapers.
- K. Spiritual growth comes day by day, not a one-time event.
- L. I am here. This is where I am going. Knowing where you are going helps you to adjust your sails. You will never reach your destination or destiny by staying anchored to the shore.
- M. In modern ships there are several instruments that help them navigate.
- N. **Navigational tools** that God has for you. This is how He leads and directs. **#1 His word. #2 Holy Spirit** (Be filled) Romans 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. When led by the spirit you have the witness of the Spirit. (peace) **#3. Peace** When you are not sure, look for the peace. Colossians 3:15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. The peace of Christ is like an umpire. Which means that the peace of Christ

should act as the final authority in a believer's heart. Just as an umpire settles disputes and calls the plays in a game, Christ's peace should be the guiding force that helps believers make decisions, settle internal conflicts, and discern between right and wrong. #4 Godly counsel #5. Gifts of the H.S. word of wisdom, word of knowledge. One slide

Sometimes someone will give you a word in time of transition. My situation, I got a word; Right place, right time. My wife, the Lord will Close: **Treasures of transition.**

- How do you transfer the Power of heaven to earth? The Holy Spirit is our transmission?
- When you are in the will of God there is a spiritual transfer. Where heaven comes to earth.
- When you transition from kingdom of darkness to kingdom of light There is a transfer of power and authority.
- Transfer of wealth from the wicked. He will give us the heathen for our inheritance.
- There is a transfer of souls, finances, power, authority

There will not be a transfer without a transaction.

Do you want transformation? Transformation won't happen without a transition. Transition won't happen without a transfer. A transfer won't happen without a transaction.

- I want to be on fire for God. God, "you provide the sacrifice, I'll provide the fire."
- Present you bodies as a living sacrifice. Are you willing to die to self?
- Picture of tombstone
- We transition into this world, it's called birth. Then we transition out of this world, it's called death. The little dash on the tomb stone, born 1963-2025. The little dash is called life. One decision we make in that little dash of time, determines whether we spend eternity in heaven or hell. How we live out that little dash not only determines what we have in eternity but what we have in this life.

