

SERMON NOTES

Sunday, September 1, 2024

Transitions: From Endings To New Beginnings

Change is a universal experience. It is what happens on the outside; it is visible to the outside world. *Transition* is what happens on the inside. It is the process of recognizing that the old way of doing things isn't working or viable and surrendering to change. It is not immediately visible to the outside world. Transition is different from change in that we can experience change and never come to terms with and internalize the change.

Three parts of change:

- **Ending:** This is the initiation of the transformation process. Something significant in life begins to shake and quake, eventually falling away. Initially, this may feel discouraging, sad, scary and unfamiliar, but ultimately it is the catalyst for growth and beauty.
- **Neutral Zone (Liminal space):** This is the inbetween stage where a person isn't in the old way of doing/thinking/seeing but has not yet reached the new way either. It is often a time of anxiety and disorientation.
- **Beginning:** This is the part of the process where a person begins to embrace the change and experience growth and renewal.

Every external change has the potential for internal transformation
(TRANSITION)

“Change is inevitable, growth is optional” - John C Maxwell



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5 Responses to Change

1. **Try to stop it** - Do everything in your power to prevent it from happening
2. **Just survive it** - merely survive through the transition and don't really embrace the new beginning
3. **Get stuck** - the pain of moving forward is just too much - and the fear of the new beginning prevents us from moving forward
4. **Merely Function** - You start in the new beginning but find no joy in it, no purpose, only regret
5. **Flourish** - You fully embrace your new beginning - having grieved your losses well - and having worked hard through the neutral zone - you take on your new identity and grow closer to God through the process

Joshua Chapter 1

1 After the death of Moses the Lord's servant, the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant. He said, 2 "Moses my servant is dead. Therefore, the time has come for you to lead these people, the Israelites, across the Jordan River into the land I am giving them. 3 I promise you what I promised Moses: 'Wherever you set foot, you will be on land I have given you—

5 No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. For I will be with you as I was with Moses. I will not fail you or abandon you.

6 "Be strong and courageous, for you are the one who will lead these people to possess all the land I swore to their ancestors I would give them. 7 Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the instructions Moses gave you. Do not deviate from them, turning either to the right or to the left. Then you will be successful in everything you do. 8 Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do. 9 This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

10 Joshua then commanded the officers of Israel, 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people to get their provisions ready. In three days you will cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you."



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16 They answered Joshua, "We will do whatever you command us, and we will go wherever you send us. 17 We will obey you just as we obeyed Moses. And may the Lord your God be with you as he was with Moses.

How do we have a successful new beginning

1. Remember - new beginnings are messy
2. New beginnings require courage
3. Set a date
4. Change your identity
5. Take incremental steps

Questions for thought and discussion:

1. Identify a Recent Transition: What is one significant change you're currently experiencing? How are you transitioning through it internally?
2. Understanding the Neutral Zone: Think about a time you felt stuck in a "neutral zone." What did you learn from that period? How did God use it to shape you?
3. Resistance vs. Embracing Change: Reflect on the different responses to change mentioned in the sermon. Which response do you most often find yourself taking, and why?
4. Biblical Courage: In Joshua 1, God repeatedly tells Joshua to be strong and courageous. What does courage look like in your current or upcoming new beginning?
5. Changing Your Identity: How can you begin to see yourself in a new role or identity that aligns with your new beginning? What affirmations or declarations can you make today?
6. Practical Steps: What is one small, actionable step you can take this week toward embracing your new beginning? Share this with your group and hold each other accountable.
7. Community and Communion: How does the act of communion remind us of unity and shared transformation? How can we support each other better as a church community in times of transition?

