

Midweek Lenten Series: Making Change

Week of Lent 1: Change of Season

March 4, 2020

Call to Worship

Oh God, you are the source of our hope.
Guide us through change and chance.

When we grow weary and faint,
call our hearts to be your own.

When our plans fall to dust,
be our temple and our tower.

When the world lacks joy and beauty,
reveal your splendor, light, and life.

O God, we praise you for the gift of your Son.
Strengthen us to follow the way of the cross.

Opening Prayer

O God of the ages, your creation revolves through seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. When the seasons come and go and uncertainty looms ahead, we long for the constancy of your love. Give us courage, wisdom, and patience to be your agents of change in the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Hymn *To show by touch and word* **763**

Scripture Reading: Luke 13: 18-21

The Parable of the Mustard Seed/ The Parable of the Yeast

¹⁸He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it?
¹⁹It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches." ²⁰And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? ²¹It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

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Reflection

To everything turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose
Under heaven

You might recall this song recorded by The Byrds back in 1965. Now I was only three years old, but this song hung around for many years and so it is one that I know as well. It reflects the scripture from Ecclesiastes 3 (NIV)

A Time for Everything

- ¹ There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
- ² a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
- ³ a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
- ⁴ a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
- ⁵ a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
- ⁶ a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
- ⁷ a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
- ⁸ a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

Seasons in life means that change it on its way. Change also happens as a tiny mustard seed grows into a large bush and as yeast transforms batter into dough for bread. Change happens. They say the one constant in life is change.

Aging is a process of change. From the day we are born our body begin that process and it does not end until we pass from this life. Change can be exciting. Think of being young when you went for post secondary education or got your first job. For many marriage and babies were the next changes. Parent watch as children grow and mature. I enjoyed every stage of parenthood and that continues even now, but it has meant a change in the relationship with my children as they too have grown and matured.

When I meet with couples intending to marry, we always talk about the fact that the marriage relationship will change. If it doesn't change it means that it is not maturing and a stagnant relationship will not last.

For others, they have focused on careers, but no job stays exactly the same. Co-workers change, for some mechanization and the digital world have completely transformed their work environment. Over time there will always be something new to learn.

I often look to learn one new thing each day. Just by learning one more thing, I cannot stay the same.

Our world has changed, even for those who have grown up in Thunder Bay they do not experience the city as they did when they were young. For starters 50 years ago the two cities became one. When you were young you would not have imaged that could happen.

We change, we grow, we mature, we learn. If God has been important to us our faith must also grow and change. If you believe and understand God today as you did when you were even 25 years old, that is not a good thing. Your core understanding may be the same, though even that can change, but if your relationship with God is dynamic then you will have a deeper understanding of grief, loss, hope, forgiveness, love, and grace. This is one of the beautiful things about aging. Done well, there is wisdom, time to ponder, to think before one acts, to understand more readily why people are who they are even when they are not making the best choices.

To be a Christian means to desire change and to be willing to be a part of change. We are called to change the world, to let others know about God, to act for others in speaking out for justice, and getting past our fears to be able to share our God given gifts, show mercy, and love broadly.

As we head into Lent and this time looking at change, may you allow God to make needed changes in you in order to have a deeper relationship with God and live a life that more fully reflects Christ's example of forgiveness, love, and grace.

Closing Prayer

Lord, we give you thanks for the word that you hide like a treasure in our heart, for the leaven which is able to penetrate to every area of our life - for the seed that is able to grow into a mighty plant. Help us to value that which you have given us - to make following Christ the most important thing in our daily lives - to concentrate above all upon doing your will and sharing your love and the good news you have proclaimed through Jesus with one another and with the world.

We give you thanks for the wonders of our heritage and for the new things that you continue to do in our midst. We praise you for the teachings of the prophets, for the law you revealed unto Moses, for the grace and the love that you poured out and continue to pour out through Christ - and for the guidance, the strength, the wisdom, the peace, the joy, the patience, and the gentleness that you bestow upon us through your Spirit. Help us to value both the old and the new and to become worthy teachers of the lessons of your eternal kingdom.

We pray for the people around us this day - for those who are upon our hearts and minds because of a need that they have...

A TIME OF SILENCE

Bless each one according to the need that they have and bring all to a closer walk with you. We ask you to hear all our prayers, O God, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

posted on [Starters for Sunday](http://re-worship.blogspot.ca/2011/07/prayers-of-people-proper-12a.html) website of the Church of Scotland.
<http://re-worship.blogspot.ca/2011/07/prayers-of-people-proper-12a.html>

Hymn *Great is thy faithfulness* **324**

Blessing

The Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways.
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Service based from the resource, Sunday and Seasons 2014, Year A.
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