

What? Me Change?

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[0 : 00] Please have a seat. Well, before I begin our main sermon, it's kind of the first time I get to kind of speak to you since being called here.

So I just wanted to say thank you. Daniela and I are loving our time getting to know you, and we hope and pray that we continue to get to know you more and more as we partner together in this ministry.

So thank you very much for the love, the generosity, and kindness that has been poured out on us. So thank you from the bottom of our hearts. For the next couple of weeks, I'm going to be preaching on a few different type of topics where I hope you will get to know me, and there's actually going to be a way for me to get to know you.

Just breaking down certain types of sermons, I usually do three types of sermons. My main bread and butter is an expository sermon, and that is this type of sermon where we take a book of the Bible, and we start at verse 1, and we go to the very end, right?

You guys are very familiar with that. The other type of sermon that I sometimes do are called textual sermons, where I'm pulling a text out of a book to deal with a specific issue, and it's usually generally digging into the one text.

[1 : 26] And the third type of sermon that I would usually preach is called a topical sermon. So we're finding a topic, and what I'm doing is I'm kind of coordinating through God's Word what He says on that topic that we would like to address here in the body.

So an example of the topical sermon will be today's sermon. It is a topical sermon. Now one of the things that we've kind of talked about is, I actually would like to hear some of your input, if you guys have any minds on issues that you would like addressed from the pulpit.

And the way you would do that is if you look on your bulletin, there's a comment card, and you could put, I know some people have kind of brought certain issues to me, so I'm kind of doing a survey, right?

So you guys can put together some of your different thoughts, and then we'll look at them. If there seems to be a correlation of a few different ideas coming back, we can blow open God's Word and what He says on that, and hopefully provide some answers to you on some of these issues.

Does that sound fair enough? Is that good? All right. Let's move to today's sermon. I've titled it, Me, Change.

[2 : 43] This is kind of going along with Dave's journey class that he spoke to us about this morning, and I wanted to give us a little bit of an overview on some of the issues of my prayer as being that you would hear this and ultimately motivated to come to the journey class to be blessed by some deeper, in-depth teaching on this subject.

So I've got a couple of questions for you, right? How many here like change? You can raise your hand, right? We like change. How many here like to change?

Right? We all know we kind of want change, but we don't want to know if we want to change. Right? Here's another question. Who here wants someone else to change?

Right? Change is kind of there, right? It could be your husband, your wife, your children, your boss. It could be your pastor. The reality is in the business world, to not change is death.

Did you know that? A company may stick with the same fundamentals, but it has to even give the appearance of change, whether it be with the logo. If the logo is slow to change, it is seen to be irrelevant.

[4 : 13] I remember talking to a director of a pretty major business out in Ontario when I was out there, and they had the same logo for 15 years. So they had done all these studies. They were losing people coming in.

They weren't getting as many customers. And I remember everything kind of changed around. I said, what did you do? He goes, we just changed the logo. We just had to give an appearance. We're doing the same thing. We've got the same fundamentals.

We're doing everything exactly the same. But people wanted to see some appearance of change. It is my conviction that there are two types of people.

I deal in the extremes, all right? People who love change and people who fear change. I bet you, you know one of these kind of people.

There's some people you go into their home. It changes every time you're over there, right? The couch is moved. The dining table's got a different direction. There's just a different sense to the house every time you go in.

[5 : 23] But there's other people's homes you go into, and it's a living museum, right? It hasn't changed since the day they got married, right? Things are just there. You know exactly you could walk into that house blindfolded and know exactly where everything is.

I think that is a reflection of us. But the everything, the reality is the issue of change, whether we believe it or not, affects every one of us.

At some point, you and I are going to be confronted with issues about ourselves, and we need to ask ourselves, are we going to change or not?

How do I define change? I define change by to transform, to undergo modification, to become different.

If you are here, and you are thinking, I don't need to change, let me tell you what the ultimate question is.

[6 : 31] The ultimate question is whether or not you need to change. The question is, what are you changing into? What are you changing into?

I am talking about the kind of change that you know needs to happen in your life if you are going to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

This is change that has to happen. Construction needs to go on. What am I talking about?

It's those moments when your frustration and anger boils over, perhaps, with your children or your spouse, and you say horribly wicked things.

It's when you are caught up in sexual, sinful fantasies, and you become addicted to porn. It's when you find yourself in tough situations of life, and you simply wish you were married to someone else.

[7 : 44] It's when you believe that you, as a respectable Christian, who doesn't swear, doesn't drink, doesn't commit any grave sins, that you believe doesn't affect your godliness, but somehow, when it comes to service, you do so with little joy, you're irritable, and often found to be complaining.

It's when you find yourself self-medicating, your frustrations and depression with food, perhaps it's gossip, perhaps it's shopping, or anything that you want to do to make you feel a little better about yourself.

It's when you find yourself addicted to perfection. Anything less than perfect, you are found to be overly anxious, frustrated, and desire to pull away from people.

It follows that you begin to feel that you somehow do not measure up, and consistently and constantly find yourself comparing to others, whether it be how they look, their work, their personality, and you feel you will not volunteer to minister alongside a church because you are not as good as so-and-so.

You need to change if you find yourself struggling to give forgiveness. And I mean you fight it, you justify it. You can go back 25 years and talk all about the people who have hurt you.

[9 : 27] And you need to change when you remember the time when you first believed, and now you feel your Christian life is the same old, same old. Can anybody relate to some of those situations?

Have you ever asked yourself, man, is it possible to change? Hey, I've tried, right? I'm aware of the call to holiness.

You ask for forgiveness consistently. You put, but you end up getting to a point where you put the issue to the back of your mind, and you somehow come up with this excuse that says, God loves me.

He made me this way, so this is the way I'm always going to be forever. The reality is, you've tried harder, you've implemented systems, you've made the rules, but you just can't seem to break out of these patterns, these thought processes, and victory seems, well, further away now than it did when you started.

why am I not changing? You recognize that you need new attitudes, you recognize you want new behaviors, you love God, you love the things of God, you want to overcome sin and temptation, you recognize that there is a desperate need for change, but yet you find yourself speaking Paul's words that he reads to us in Romans 7.15 which says, for I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate.

[11 : 16] Who can relate? We've all been there, right? We're all struggling. God, why is this consistently before me? Why can't I overcome this temptation? Why can't I overcome this attitude?

Why is this behavior inside of me? The only conclusion is, I need to change. You try to change, but this only leads to frustration because you're not changing.

This leads to depression, which ultimately leads to a lack of faith in God and his promises, and ultimately, sadly, some people walk away at the end of the day from their faith because they just give up.

We've tried moral effort, which means I'm going to do these things by the strength of my own will. We've tried that whole fear of judgment, you know, fear of getting caught by my wife or my kids or my boss, or I set up a set of do's and don'ts, and every time I experience a bit of change, but it seems to be short-lived.

Well, I want to give you guys some facts about change and ultimately a biblical response to change. First of all, change is not easy.

[12 : 35] I don't think I'm telling you guys anything new. It's always difficult, and sometimes it's costly, and it's painful.

Change, secondly, change is incredibly rewarding and fulfilling, but can be excruciating at times. First off, one, change is immediate.

You know that? Change is immediate. It's about becoming something different as soon as possible. Growth is about taking your strengths and increasing what you already are.

It is steady progression, but change happens right away. One pastor on the subject writes, change is radical. He says it's radical, but this is what he laments.

He says, we see too little personal growth and change compared with the greatness of God's power available to us through the Holy Spirit. Amen?

[13 : 38] That's a sad amen, right? We know God is greater than our needs, right? He's greater than our ability to change. Do we believe that God can help us overcome these things?

Growth is reformation, change is transformation. Change is not self-help. If this were true, we would all be doing it.

My friends, change is the elimination of character traits and patterns of behavior that not only damage you, but damage those around you and those you love.

Let me tell you here that real change relies on a real God. Amen? It's a real God. Why?

Because only God can change us. I first was confronted with thinking this way. I had just started my first year of seminary.

[14 : 38] So I'd left the secular workplace and I'm now in seminary and I get hired to be the college and university pastor at Caltech school.

Have you guys heard of Caltech? It's where Einstein was a professor. So the kids that I'm dealing with that are in my ministry are very smart cookies.

Very smart. Most of them came from Christian backgrounds. And what was interesting was the amount of pornography that I was dealing with with them.

And I began to understand that it was everywhere. They're all engineers. They're working on computers or something. And it'd be openly in their labs. People would put it on their screen savers.

It was just all around them. And you're talking to a guy and I'm going to date myself. When I went to computer I thought I was kind of ahead of the game because I had a typewriter with a little screen that would print one line at a time and you could correct it.

[15 : 38] Remember those? Right? We had typewriters. That's how we had to do. Computers didn't exist in my world. The internet didn't even really become fashionable until I graduated from university.

But to these kids, struggled with it. And what I noted is they really loved Jesus. They came diligently to my Bible studies.

They prayed. We'd pray together. We'd meet for lunch. They desperately wanted to quit. They were enduring much shame, guilt, and embarrassment.

They really wanted to be holy. But they still continued to struggle. And it's when I became familiar with the concept, it's a biblical concept, that we see Paul use in Colossians, Ephesians, is the concept, and you'll hear Dave say it very often as well in biblical counseling, it's called the put on, put off.

Right? If you're going to take something off or out of you that's negative, you have to put on something positive in its place. You get that? So what happens is they would create this system where they would get rid of all this stuff that they saw as unholy.

[16 : 53] They interpreted holiness as moving away from the things that are unholy. Alright? You with me? That's bad. I'm going to move away. And it's interesting because Paul uses this analogy about the put on, put off.

It's actually like putting on clothes. That you're consciously having to take off the old self and put on the new self. There's a conscious effort that's involved in this process.

So a lot of them would begin this, right? They would avoid all the things that might pollute them. They would stay away from certain people. They would desperately try to get to different labs even if it meant being under different TAs that they didn't want to be with.

But all of them that I knew were all fearful about falling back into that old pattern of sin. And then finally one kid came up and he started to flourish again.

And what was interesting is that he decided to keep his work in a closed out lab. But what he also did is he used his time to biblically be constructive with the other time that he would have used rather than pursuing that temptation.

[18 : 13] It couldn't be like an empty void. So he was the guy that constantly came to all the Bible studies. He'd have lunch with me and then he would help out in the youth. And he just knew that he had to replace that and what he understood is what this man Adrian Rogers says holiness is not the way to Jesus.

Jesus is the way to holiness. Can you get that? Holiness is not the way to Jesus. Jesus is the way to holiness.

And that's what he figured out. It was about replacing the sinful desires of the heart with godly desires of the heart. And the reality is if we're going to do that we need hope right?

We need hope in Jesus. We need to have hope in forgiveness and ultimately hope for change. So how does that happen?

I'm not sure if you guys are aware of this but you and I were made for so much more than this. God.

[19 : 31] You get that? We were created so much more than this. We all know that.

The Bible tells us that you and I were created in the image of God. The Bible tells us that you and I were made to reflect the glory of God.

Genesis 1 27 so God created man in his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them. Oh how far we have fallen.

We were made to be God's image on this earth that was meant to know him to share him and we were created to rule over this world in a way that would reflect his glory.

[20 : 49] we were created to display his likeness. Think about that for a second.

Maybe even a minute. That's what God created us for. something happened.

Something went terribly wrong. We rejected God. We rebelled and we tried to live our lives our way.

And now we struggle to be God's image even in our families with our spouses, our children, at work.

God's verdict to us after our rebelliousness is found in Paul's words in Romans 3 23.

[22 : 00] For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. That glory is he's talking about what happens in Genesis.

we were created for something so entirely different. We were made to be God's image, the glory holders.

We were called, we were created to reflect, express, and participate in the glory of God. So how does change happen from that?

Well, God's glory did come to this earth, did it not? 2,000 years ago, Colossians 1.15 says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Number one in importance, identical to God, walked here on earth in human flesh. Hebrews 1.3 says that Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

[23 : 20] In John 1.14, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, glory as of the son from the father, full of grace and truth.

faith. We forgot, so he came to remind us what that glory is. What he's communicating here is to know Jesus is to know God.

God is not wanting us to be more religious, more spiritual, or more self-absorbed. Jesus wants us to be holy, and by holy, I mean consecrated to God, not just from the world.

You get that? We're not just consecrated from something, we're consecrated to something. So it's not enough just to keep from the world, but we have to move closer to God.

You follow? That's that whole put on, put off type of thing that I'm talking about. It's to be a set apart for his God. It's a glory where God that his glory is all that he is, right?

[24 : 29] And what I mean that it's his love, his goodness, his beauty, his purity, his splendor, his power, his wisdom, his majesty. As Jesus reflected the glory of God his Father, Jesus is the perfect person, the true image of God, the glory of the Father, and guess what God's agenda is for us?

To become more like Jesus. Romans 8, 28 to 30, feel free to write this down.

Let me read it to you. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

And this is it. And those whom he predestined, he also called, and those whom he called, he also justified, and those whom he justified, he also glorified.

[25 : 39] See, we're not the ones that bring the change. It's God who brings the change in us. The reality is God uses everything that happens to us to make us more like Jesus.

Some of it's good and some of it's bad. And our commands, we read, and Paul writes in Ephesians 5, 1, 2, Therefore, be imitators of God.

As beloved children and walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. 1 John 2, 6 says, whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Walk, very important word, peripete in the Greek, you are actually known by how you walk. It is how your life looks like, right?

And it's used. We're going to be getting into Ephesians, Lord willing, in the fall, and we're going to see walk show up everywhere all over. It's a very common analogy that Paul uses.

[26 : 47] God's love. But what we're going to find is sometimes we need help because it's not about us just looking like God. We actually need the strength to be like him, right?

Now, this is the rub, and the book that you'll be learning about in the journey actually talks about, he says, when we try to imitate Jesus, it only leaves us feeling that we're more like a failure that we can't measure up, right?

See, that's what happens. When we go to the flesh, we go to that way. As you know, I'm a big baseball fan. I had the pleasure of playing in college, and one of my favorite players was Roger Clemens, and I could imitate his wind-up to perfection.

There's a reason I didn't make it to the show, right? I could look like him, I could wear the same number, but it just didn't really work out all that well for me. You see, before we get to the point of this change, we need rescuing.

We need forgiveness. We need to go from being an enemy of God to a child of God. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 5.17 that we must become what the Bible terms as new creation.

[28 : 12] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.

Do you believe this? Do you believe that you are a new creation?

You see, when God calls out to us, he calls out to us through our darkness, through our chaos, through our pain, our sorrow, our loneliness, and our completely sin-stained, rebellious life.

And he brings something new. He brings peace. He brings life, light, and forgiveness.

happiness. And at that point of being a new creation, we are, as Paul writes in Ephesians 4.24, we are to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

[29 : 44] You see, Jesus remakes us into his image. Do you get that? He's the one who does the work. It's not our effort.

It's not our morality. It's not my fear of judgment. But it's about seeing the glory of Jesus Christ and wanting it in our lives.

On our own, we are trapped by our own desires and emotions. But at that time, a new creation, he sets us free in the spirit. We receive hearts that delight in God's glory.

And we are no longer motivated by the fear of the law, but by the opportunity to experience his glory. Do you want to be set free?

Do you want to break these patterns, these attitudes? Are you wanting to change?

[30 : 48] And I'm not asking you to say, you know what, I'm going to go to the journey because my wife needs to go to the journey, or my husband, or my friend. I'm talking to you.

One of the things that I really love about coming to Squamish Baptist Church, I don't know if you guys appreciate it or not, but the elders and the leadership have been very diligent in preparing and protecting you by bringing in really great teaching.

You know that? Just some of the stuff when we showed up that was being offered. In the journey class just last week, they were, you're still doing this, or finishing up the St.

Clair Ferguson. St. Clair Ferguson happens to be one of my professors in my doctoral program. This guy's top notch. This book, I actually went through this book years ago, and I found it very transforming for me, both not only my ministry, but to me personally.

And I'll admit to you guys, I am really selfish. I'm a very selfish pastor. I want you to grow so desperately big and powerful that I have to do less pastoring.

[32 : 08] I want you to be self-feeding. I don't want to have to be the go-to guy with all these things. I want you to be the true Bereans who grow and understand that life is more than just positive thinking.

So, as you know, this sermon is really a huge promo for the journey class. One of the things that if you need be, we can arrange child care or whatever else I think it might already be offered.

I'm not sure, but it's one of the things that we can do to help free you. Some of you, I know that's the issue is what do I do with my children? You can come out.

You can help me. Help anybody who wants to volunteer for that. But my heart and my prayer for you this past week as I was preparing this and reading some more of the book was this stuff is really good and it's really rich and I believe it's ultimately transformative.

that there's a difference between knowing the Bible and thinking biblically. So, if you are really truly interested in growing and going, I hate saying this to the next level, but growing deeper in your faith with Jesus Christ with both an ability to transform yourself, I really believe God will bless you in the lives of others and use you to help them and the change that they need to have too.

[33 : 43] Next week, I'm going to preach on how to know the will of God. I know that's a question that a lot of people struggle with.

I figured I would deal with that right off the bat. But before I say any more, let's just pray. Go to the Lord Father. I'm going to give you guys a minute. And I want you to think about Genesis 1.

And I know it's a little bit sobering to think about this, but sometimes we need this to wake ourselves up, is to think about how far we have fallen from that glory.

And my prayer for you is to use this time to ask for his forgiveness and ask him that he would do a mighty work in your life. Let's go to the King of Kings.

Amen. Amen. Amen.