

Changes

If we have lived long enough, we have had to embrace changes in our lives. From our beginnings we were faced with a changing world. We changed homes, we changed jobs, we changed schools. Just a few of the adjustments we make in life. Sometimes the changes are good and make us happy such as marriage, birth of a child, grandchildren, new jobs, new houses, even a new car can brighten our lives. Sometimes the changes are life altering such as death of a loved one, loss of a job, divorce, illness, or loss of a home, or moving and losing friends. We have been undergoing changes in our church. Some of us embrace change; others want things to never change. My daughter and son-in-law have moved several times. I asked my granddaughter Lauren, how she felt about having gone to school in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. She told me that she felt it had been a good thing, that she could walk into a room full of strangers and talk to people. She related that she knew kids that had never moved and that they were terrified of a room full of strangers. Change and her wonderful parents and the grace of God had given Lauren confidence in herself and her abilities. She had embraced change and grown from it.

In the bible, the disciples are at a loss after the death of Jesus. They have lost their leader, their teacher, their guide. This was the Messiah that they left their homes for, the one they dedicated their lives to, the one they were going to follow. Now he is gone and they don't know what they are to do. They have regrouped and are in disbelief at how their lives have crumbled. The women have gone to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus and have returned to tell them that he is not there. The disciples cannot believe it and even Peter when he sees the empty tomb and the strips of burial cloth wonders what could have happened. And then Jesus appears to two of them and walks with them on the road to Emmaus and so begins the greatest change ever. The disciples are soon emboldened, commissioned, and sent out to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. They receive the Holy Spirit and are given a strength they never dreamed of and Christ is with them and in them and he never leaves them.

Changes come into our lives and through them all, Christ is with us. We may not like the change and some are hard but He walks with us through our lives, the good and the bad. We need to grow from the changes into a deeper relationship with Christ, to rely on him and feel his presence. Some changes, like times, where we sit in church, what songs we sing, aren't really important when we consider why we are in church. We are here to worship the most holy God, the one who walks with us through the changes in our lives. Paul tells us in Philippians 3:12-14 "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do; forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Holy Lord, help us to trust in you, to rely only on you and to know that your love can take us through the storms and the changes in our lives. Amen.

Grace Epperson