

Coping with changes

Growing amidst the challenges—the theme.

Heraclitus (héraclaitus) of Ephesus: “No man ever steps in the same river twice. For it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man.”

The only constant is change. According to Heraclitus’ theory, nothing is permanent, except *change* – and one of the logical conclusions of this idea is: Our ability to influence the direction of our lives is very limited, next to impossible. Therefore, “Stop trying to steer the river”.

But i don’t agree with this statement—stop trying to steer the river,” not if we are allied with our Creator.

It is true that as changes and transitions come our way, we experience pain and difficulty as we adapt, but it is also true that,

- Dr. Karen Holford - Adding departments
- Nina – changes in enrollment, particularly at the secondary, changes in personnel—musical chairs.
- Stanborough Deputy Headteacher, changes in personnel
- Annita Arkko - Finnish Junior College--Toivonlinna Principal – change in her life from teaching to administration.
- Mrs de Waal. Former faculty at Avondale, now homemaking and travelling/supporting her husband... leaving behind their college-age children back in Australia.

So, transitions and changes cause us turmoil. So much so that in psychology and psychotherapy there are mental health professionals specialized in TRANSITIONS.

2 Pet. 3:18 - grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The Bible offers many examples:

Take for example, ABRAHAM

Gen 12:1 - The Lord had said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you”

- Going to the Philippines – books, publications, photos...

Many changes ahead: diff culture, diff climate, diff way of life...

Abraham began quite an adventure with his family to go to “a land God will show him”

Yet, at the end of the day, changes also bring about growth amidst the challenges.

As we know,

Outstanding blessing...

"I will make you into a great nation,

and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,

and you will be a blessing.^[a]

³I will bless those who bless you,

and whoever curses you I will curse;

and all peoples on earth

will be blessed through you."^[b] Gen. 12:2-3

God brought wealth, relationships, direct contact with God, health to death – Gen. 25:7, 8 –
"Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed [brizt] his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years."

Take for example, NAOMI

Ruth 1 – She, her husband, her two boys leaving Bethlehem in Juda because of a famine, [just like many immigrants across history and even today]. Moving to a different location with diff culture and diff religion. Death of her husband, marriage of her sons with women from the local religion, death of both sons. Then moving back to her land, alone, bitter, defeated...

Lots of change and and lots of pain.

Yet, at the end of the day, changes also bring about growth amidst the challenges.

Noemi was greatly blessed: Her daughter-in-law became a follower of the true God, remained faithful to her, married to Boaz, a good and prominent man... and their identity was fully restored. They had Obed as their son, the grandfather of King David, one of Jesus' ancestors in the genealogies recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke.

Take for example, MARY

Luke 1: 30-35 - the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called^[b] the Son of God.

This brief angelic message was remarkable in the life of an adolescent girl. This was quite a transition, enormous change for what today we would consider a minor.

1. Conceive a child without a man... something that had never happened before. >>> [Sra Inés]
2. Her reputation, the reputation of her future husband.
3. She would always be different, for the rest of her life. Nobody would be able to understand or experience something like this.

Yet, at the end of the day, changes also bring about growth amidst the challenges

Mary was granted the privilege of raising a little boy that was the Son of the Most High who would receive the throne of David, and would reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom would never end. And above all, her son Jesus would be the Lord and Saviour of this fallen HUMANITY.

Take for example, THE ISRAELITES

Joshua 5

5 Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the **Canaanite kings along** the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they^[a] had crossed over, **their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.**

Yesterday Kevin Petrie talked about the 600 Israelites observing the Philistines getting ready to attack with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 charioteers, soldiers as the sand on the seashore. That made the Israelites hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns... some of them even crossed to the other side of the Jordan.

>>> FEAR, that undesirable companion of ours, that decapacitating emotion that affects our lives in many ways.

INFANT – TODLER – PRESCHOOLER – SCHOOL-AGED – ADOLESCENT – YOUNG ADULT – MID-ADULT – LATE ADULT (ELDERLY).

Circumcision and Passover at Gilgal

²At that time the LORD said to Joshua, **"Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again."** ³So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.^[b]

⁴Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt—all the men of military age—died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. ⁵All the people that came out had been circumcised, but **all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not.** ⁶The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. ⁸And after **the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.**

⁹**Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.”** So the place has been called Gilgal^[c] to this day. **They were not like the Egyptians anymore. They did not have their identity wiped out. They return to be the chosen nation. This recover identity would bring about CHANGE, TRANSITION to their existence.**

¹⁰On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. ¹¹The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. ¹²The manna stopped the day after^[d] they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

Another CHANGE, another TRANSITION: A new diet after decades of manna. The manna stopped the day after Passover and that very day, they ate the produce of the Land.

Painful experiences during times of transition

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The Fall of Jericho

¹³ Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

¹⁴ "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

Taking sides is a typical human reaction. There is a dichotomy in many things of life: in politics, within ideological stands, in matters of lifestyle...

EITHER OR --- EITHER OR --- EITHER OR --- EITHER OR...

But the commander of the army of the LORD said: NEITHER

Then and only then (vs. 14-15) is when Joshua opened his heart to follow directions, to obey, to do what the Lord wanted him to do **Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord^(e) have for his servant?"**

Conclusion: Changing and adapting may bring some pain, but with pain, there come blessings everytime that we are open to his direction and ask, like Joshua: What message does my Lord have for his servant?

LET's pray