

Talks – Change – myfishbites.com

Intro

Change? Who has seen 'Changing Rooms' on TV? (A programme on UK TV where people change houses with friends and with the help of experts, redecorate a room in each other's homes) Sometimes in church (God's house), he makes a few changes. Who has seen 'Changing Rooms' when people don't like their rooms? Well, when change comes along, we have a choice..

READING: Numbers 13:26-33

"They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the Desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan."

Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land for we can certainly do it." But the men who'd gone up with him said, "We can't attack these people, they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim. We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes and we looked the same to them."

Then, in Numbers 14 we find that the spies who gave the bad report were struck down by God. Only Caleb and Joshua survived. Then Moses warned the people they would lose in battle because of their sin. The people refused to listen, went to battle and lost to the Amalekites and Canaanites.

The people didn't want to move on and go into the Promised Land. Instead, they wanted to stay where they were. In Number 14.1-3, the people started grumbling:

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?"

The people didn't like the change coming out of Egypt after things started to get a little bit hard. Instead, they wanted to return to Egypt – a place where they had been enslaved and

were desperate to get out of. Crazy really, but the people had the wrong thinking, the wrong attitude.

What is our attitude to change? Sometimes we fight against something and end up getting bitter and our actions become wrong. How will you react? God asks his people to be obedient and to follow him. When Peter followed Jesus he didn't even know where he was going or not even what he would be doing.

READING: Joshua 1:5-9

"As I was with Moses so I will be with you. I will never leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you. Do not turn from it to the right or to the left that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified. Do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

This was a time of change for Israel. Moses was dead and the reins of power were being handed over to Joshua. Joshua received a commissioning now that Moses had gone. This was a time of change. Joshua was to lead the people, instead of Moses. He had already proven himself when himself and Caleb had been the only ones to believe God when they spied out the land of Canaan.

Now God was speaking to Joshua and giving him encouragement directly. God's Word does exactly the same for us today. It encourages, guides and strengthens us. When change happens, we need to ask God for courage and his help, believe what he says and obey him. Why? Let's look at what the Bible says:

John 17:17 says '..Your Word is truth..'

Psalms 119:160 says, "All you say can be trusted; your teachings are true and will last for ever.

Asaph the Psalmist writes (Ps 76:23), "My flesh and my heart may fail but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

Most of us rarely feel ready and prepared for change, especially when it's sudden, dramatic or involves a real step of faith. You know, this can actually be good. This is what the Lord said to Paul who felt weak and inadequate: 2 Cor 12:9, Paul pleaded with God to take away a thorn in his flesh. 'But he said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Sometimes it's actually in a place of weakness and feeling vulnerable that God uses us more than ever. We have to trust what God says, even when it feels a bit strange! It's an upside down world Jesus calls us to isn't it?!

Response

Acts 13:3, 'So after they had prayed and fasted, they placed their hands on Paul and Barnabas and sent them off.'

If someone is leaving, you can use this moment as a time of prayer by getting young people to lay hands on the person who is leaving (sensitively!!) We used this session and idea when our youth pastor left the church to move elsewhere.