

The Call to Change

by Francois Carr

This sermon emphasizes the importance of adjusting and changing in response to God's call for new things in our lives, drawing parallels from the life of Jesus and His disciples. It highlights how crises, like the imprisonment of John the Baptist or the current global pandemic, can lead to necessary changes in our thinking, behavior, and ministry. The message encourages reflection on how God is initiating change in our lives and ministries, prompting us to respond and adjust to His leading.

Scripture: Matthew 4:12, Mark 1:14, Mark 3:13, Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8, Proverbs 3:5, Romans 12:2, Philippians 4:6, James 1:22

Topics: "Embracing Change", "Responding to God's Call"

Description

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Transcript

I am once again François Garre from Heart Christ South Africa and from the Connected Life Ministries. You know, whenever God wants to do something new in His kingdom or in your life or my life, He always calls us to adjust and to change, He initiates something in your life and my life that brings about an adjustment and some changes. This is clearly visible in the life of the Lord Jesus Himself.

At one time in his life, he heard the news that John the Baptist, his nephew, was put into prison. Now, John was very popular, he was a speaker and a preacher that preached at a local place just outside of Jericho, next to the Jordan River, and people came from all over just to listen to his message. In fact, in Mark chapter 1, the Bible says in verse 1 that the whole Jewish land was there to listen to John the Baptist, he was very, very popular.

One of his messages offended King Herod's antipas because he spoke against the fact that he had a relationship and an affair with his brother's wife, so he was put into prison. In the Gospel of St. Matthew chapter 4, we read the story of Jesus' walk alongside the Sea of Galilee and how He calls His disciples to follow Him because He said, Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men. But it starts in verse 12, where the Bible says that when Jesus heard the news about John being put into prison, is that He

withdraws Himself back into the land of Galilee, He left His hometown Nazareth and lived at Capernaum next to the sea.

So there becomes a crisis in the life of the Lord Jesus that caused Him to change the way He was operating, He was living, even His ministry as well. And the first thing that we see from the life of Jesus is that Jesus, when He heard this news, He moved His home from Nazareth into Capernaum, He left Nazareth in the hills and lived next to the Sea of Galilee. The second thing is Jesus was preaching the same message as John the Baptist, repent because the kingdom of God is at hand.

We all know that the word repentance means metanoia, in the Greek language that means a change of mind, that brings a change of heart, that leads to a change of life, in other words, that brings change. So He preached the same message as John the Baptist. And having said that, Jesus started to step up as the new leader in the vacuum that was left by John because he was put into prison.

So when Jesus calls His disciples in Mark chapter 3 and until the death of John the Baptist in Mark chapter 6, Jesus was the leader of the movement and people came to listen to Him from all over Galilee and even Judea and Jerusalem as well because of His popularity in that time. And lastly, Jesus started to do something different than just normal ministry. He started to invest Himself and His time and His life in duplicating Himself in the twelve disciples that became the twelve apostles, through whom He will take the message of the kingdom of God into the other parts of the world.

So we see Jesus changing the base of His ministry. We see that Jesus stepped up into the vacuum of leadership. We see that Jesus started to preach the same message as John.

And we see that Jesus started to invest Himself also in disciples through whom and through them that they will take the message of Christ to the rest of the world. Now, we just celebrated the weekend, which is called Passover. In a sense, it was a crisis for the disciples as well because they find themselves also they have to change because of the death, the crucifixion and even the resurrection of Jesus, they had to rethink their own lives and ministry from this point onwards.

And as we look at their lives, how they waited upon the promise, the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit upon them to empower them and to send them out as witnesses and to tell the rest of the world about Jesus, they had to change the way they were thinking. And some moved their headquarters as well from Galilee into Jerusalem because that's where they find the main church in Jerusalem in that time. And from that, they reached the rest of the world.

And now the crisis of the coronavirus worldwide is causing many people's lives to be changed as well. The way you think about things, the way we plan our future, the way we, for instance, think about ministry and it will be changing as well. And somehow this crisis is causing many, many people just to take a moment to stop and to reflect upon their own lives and the way we're behaving and acting and relating with people around us and even how we speak and how we preach, in other words.

So a crisis in the life of Jesus because of John being put into prison caused him to change the way he was thinking and even his ministry as well. The same with the disciples, the same with us today. So God sometimes allows things to happen which is initiated in your life and my life because God wants us to adjust and to bring about a change in your life and my life.

And the question I want to leave you with today is just a simple question. When you look at the crisis worldwide at the moment, as a pastor or as a spiritual leader or even, you know, just as a husband or as a father of a wife and some children or just as a spiritual leader, what is God asking from you to do at the moment? How does God want you to respond to what's happening around us, not just in our own hometowns but also worldwide? And how can we adjust to that? And how can we relate to that as we adjust and respond to the change which is around us coming from the outside that we have no control over whatsoever? So when you look at the life of Jesus, the change caused something amazing to happen. The discipleship of the twelve that was walking with him and eventually to send them out as apostles to reach the rest of the world.

So when I look at the crisis at the moment, we anticipate that something might be changing in your life, in my life, but the question is how does God want you to respond to that? What is it that God is initiating at the moment in your life, in my life, and what is God calling you to do at the moment? What is God calling you to change and how is he calling you and how will that look in your life if you respond to that? And it is my prayer and my desire that somehow that even this time of isolation, not just the call to isolate ourselves, to become quiet, but at the same time to listen that we can understand what God wants us to see and to understand and how we can relate to that and how can we respond to that, to the change that God has initiated in your life and my life and even our ministry as well. And as we look at the future, not just in South Africa, but also in other parts of the world. So this thought today is about God's call for us to change and maybe change in the way we are thinking and we behaving and acting and relating to people.

And even as we relate to the Great Commission and as we think about how do we respond as a local church from this moment forward in reaching the masses of the people worldwide with the same message that Jesus sent his disciples in Matthew chapter 28. And may God lead you and guide you as you wait upon him in this time for his wisdom, for his guidance and just for the prompting of his spirit, revealing to your heart and my heart how we need to respond to this, to the call that God is just kind of extending to us, the call to change. May God bless you and may you experience just the wonder of his presence and his nearness in such a time as this.

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