

Begin Again
Week #6: Ready to be changed

We change culture through setting cultural boundaries that guide our behavior and attitudes; these are called **Core values**. The first one is to encourage each to be "**Real**." It's about revealing brokenness, but knowing I can be made new.

Problem: Culture eats vision/strategy for breakfast! If we have a culture that is about consuming then it will fight against "be a bridge, build a bridge" and it will win.

Ready to be changed. Real has to come first or change will be confusing.

So **how do we come here ready to be changed?** (worship, bridge group, rehearsal, youth ministry, kids ministry, serving or volunteering _____)

¹⁸ Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
Matthew 28:18

1

The main imperative or command is "make disciples". The others are about process, but since they are the parts of the larger command they are too imperatives. Make disciples by going, baptizing, and teaching to obey.

- A disciple is taught to obey.

- Context of Jesus' time, it was not unusual for a disciple to drop what they were doing and go off with a teacher or rabbi. The disciple would then learn to think, behave, and live like his master.

Understand what it means to be a disciple...Definition of a disciple/apprentice vs. consumer Christian.

Here's a definition that makes sense to me. It has been shared by a large group of churches and ministries that are focused on making disciples.

"A disciple is someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to Jesus' mission."

This is the picture of being totally in or giving one's allegiance to Jesus. It's head, heart, and hands.

- Head (changed their mind = repent) , heart and hands.
- Jesus wants to change the way you think (head), what you desire at your core (heart), and how you live or behave (hands).
- An apprentice or disciple cannot say to the master, "I want to do the job the way he thinks best. Just what is natural and more comfortable for me."

2

Growth mentality vs. a fixed mentality (I am what I am, or I can grow).

- This brings us back to our first core value, "real". There must be a next step after we stop faking, hiding, making excuses or pretense.
- This denies the power of God to transform and to bring new life.

So, how do we come ready to change? Understand that being a disciple means you are putting yourself under someone, allowing them to change you. Jesus saw you in your sin and denial, loved you right there, but now he wants to transform you into someone who looks more and more like Jesus.

The next step to coming ready to change is... **Transformation is expected**

not a bonus...the big thing is to have heaven settled. Any life change here is simply a bonus, but not to be expected. If your experience with Christ is about settling heaven and that is set, because God is forgiving, then discipleship, being an apprentice,

3

following is optional. Why go to the effort if the goal is heaven and that has been settled by praying a prayer.

- Transformation is about trusting God to meddle (illuminate what needs to change).
- You can't clean a dirty house if the light is off. But if Jesus goes into a dirty room and he turns the light on, (actually he is the light, so just walking in does it), then he can clean and transform.
- Swishing that stuff around in your mouth after brushing that shows you the places you missed.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

- God's word uses that word so that we know that you don't add a little Jesus to your life. He isn't here to tweak or adjust you. Transformation is like those shows where the person would start eating right, exercising, plastic surgery, new hair (or adding some hair), teaching them how to dress better and how to use make up and hair products more effectively.
- Then the person comes out from behind a curtain and everyone gasps. They are transformed...it's not

4

one thing, it's everything. But it's only on the exterior. Jesus wants to do that, starting with your mind so that your heart, which wants

to please him, knows how.

For a disciple who is an apprentice and is being taught Jesus' ways, it is natural to be transformed. It's almost like you couldn't stop it. If you could, then you would be more powerful than God.

- It is natural, so we have to resist it to stop it from happening. Plant growth, all the ingredients are there, we have to take away or block it's light, water or food.

⁵ "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. ⁷ But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!⁸ When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. John 15:5

Sow a seed in the forth soil and what does Jesus say will happen? 15 And the seeds that fell on the good soil represent honest, good-hearted people who hear God's

5

word, cling to it, and patiently produce a huge harvest. Luke 8:15

To come ready to change means I understand that if I am a disciple, I am learning to obey the one I follow. Then I must understand that Jesus saved me as I am, but his plan is to transform me into someone like Jesus. But that means I must...**Stop resisting God** (submit to the change agent).

Context is within God's people who had been through history the people of Israel. They were the people who were to follow God and be an example to all nations how to please God and be in relationship to him.

Steven is giving a speech before being stoned to death. He is demonstrating how God has spoken to his people, not simply from the places they were comfortable with. It wasn't always from their beloved temple, it wasn't

always from only their people and from their homeland. And they have consistently rejected God's messengers. Now that new place is Jesus and they rejected him.

Circle any words or phrases that speak of resisting God. ⁵¹ "You **stubborn** (stiff necked) **people! You are heathen**^[1] (Uncircumcised! These are fighting words to a Hebrew man.) **at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? That's what your ancestors did, and so do you!**⁵²
Name one prophet your

6

ancestors didn't persecute! They even killed the ones who predicted the coming of the Righteous One—the Messiah whom you betrayed and murdered. ⁵³ You **deliberately disobeyed** God's law, even though you received it from the hands of angels." Acts 7:51-53

He is speaking to insiders. Those who were supposed to know God. Those who had every advantage. Those who had a leg up, were set up for success in knowing and pleasing God. His people.

Who fits that category now? All the people who don't believe in Jesus nor want to live a life centered on God and focused on pleasing him? No it's people like me...and you. **Who are the insiders today who are cautioned by the words "stubborn", "forever resist the Holy Spirit" & "deliberately disobeyed"?** That's us.

"Stiff necked" means not wanting to turn your head. In my **vertigo** one of the issues that causes it is your neck gets stiff, the muscles tighten up keeping your head from turning in ways that make you dizzy. But trying not to do what makes you dizzy, actually is what is making it worse. Therapy was to loosen my neck up and train myself to look where my body was trying to resist looking. Get it?

Jesus is saying to us, "If you want to follow me, then you need to stop resisting turning your head and looking at

7

what I want you to look at. That may be a behavior for you. I'm not going to look at my...

- Set the Bible over there and act like I can't turn and look at it. Then strain to look at the cross.

To come ready to change it's not enough to just stop resisting God's transformational power. That's where it starts, but also by...**Choose life change over comfort** (opposes becoming a disciple).

These messengers came from a different angle or place that made them uncomfortable. God was moving in a new way and they were uncomfortable with where that would take them. Jesus made them uncomfortable. Resisting change, resisting the transformational power of the spirit in us is always about comfort and fear.

Is there something from the Holy Spirit that you are resisting? (still small voice from the Bible, mature disciples, and prayer).

Is there some way you are deliberately disobeying?

The voice isn't small, it's loud and clear, this is something you know. It's clearly in the Bible and your conscience is screaming it. But we are evolved modern people and those voices want to lessen our freedom, don't they?

Really without being ready to change is basically universalism, nothing is wrong and God is a grey haired grandpa who says about his son who just committed armed robbery, "But he's a good boy at heart. He's just misunderstood. He didn't really mean it when he said, 'put up your hands or I'll shoot'" 8

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! 2 Corinthians 5:17

- **The old is a "me centered" life is gone, so stop holding on to it**

and resisting what God wants to do in your life. Instead, dive into it.

Here's what I want for myself and for all of you. **My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, Galatians 4:19**

- Literally, until a mind and life in complete harmony with the mind and life of Christ shall have been formed in you,
- That's God's transformation plan for you...Christ's mind and life in complete harmony in you.

9

A challenge to get into a group when they start in January.

What do you need to do to position yourself for life change? (Tell my first step).

- Find someone to walk alongside you and share your life with him or her.
- Find a group to be real and learn together with them how to get ready to change.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2

God, what do you want to say to me through these words?

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world

but let God transform you into a new person

by changing the way you think

Then you will learn to know *God's will for you,*

which is good and pleasing and perfect

This is not the place for you if you simply want to enjoy great worship, preaching, and see people you really like and feel comfortable with.