



**November 18, 2024**

### **How We Deal With Change Matters**

Change is unavoidable. The weather, the climate, our aging bodies, technology, the culture, etc. are constantly changing. I find my self feeling unsettled and anxious at times. I don't like the sense that I'm out of control. I'd rather be secure in my own comfort zone.

Henri Nouwen put it like this: "One of the most radical demands for you and me is the discovery of our lives as a series of movements or passages. When we are born, we leave our mother's womb for the larger, brighter world of family. It changes everything, and there is no going back. When we go to school, we leave our homes and families and move to a larger community of people where our lives are forever larger and more expansive. Later when our children are grown and they ask us for more space and freedom than we can offer, our lives may seem less meaningful. It all keeps changing...It seems as though we are always passing from one phase to the next, gaining and losing someone, some place, something. You live all these passages in an environment where you are constantly tempted to be destroyed by resentment, by anger, and by a feeling of being put down."

Nouwen also points out that we have the choice to resist these destructive temptations. "Every time there are losses there are choices to be made. You choose to live your losses as passages to anger, blame, hatred, depression, and resentment, or you choose to let these losses be passages to something new, something wider, and deeper. The question is not how to avoid loss and make it not happen, but how to choose it as a passage, as an exodus to greater life and freedom."

This is the kind of change of thinking that is necessary for our good and for experiencing the life that God intends for us in the midst of turmoil and discomfort. I was greatly reassured by this verse from Lamentations 3:22-23

which was on the bulletin of the community worship service following the recent election:

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

Focusing on God’s sovereignty, unfailing love, power, constant presence and trustworthiness is one of the best ways to change my perception. I am also helped by seeing this life not as an out of control train ride that I can’t leave as it keeps going faster and faster but as a pilgrimage into the loving arms of God. The final destination is a new kingdom where all things will be made new and whole. Remembering that Jesus never changes; He is the solid rock on which we stand when all else is shifting sand strengthens my faith as well.

Taking this perspective gives me some thoughts about how to live in this world of shifting sand. Being humble, praying for our enemies and that God’s will will be done and his kingdom will come on earth, and looking for the ways that God can use all things, including your life and mine, for his purpose are a few ways. I want to see change as a challenge and to seek God’s purpose for placing me and you in this time and place in history. Being salt and light to the world are more important than ever.

This prayer by Carrie Marrs taken from Isaiah 54:10 expresses what is on my heart:

“Lord, I am disoriented and unsettled in the midst of change.  
Steady my heart and be my constant. I thank You for Your word to me:  
‘The mountains may move and the hills disappear,  
but even then my faithful love for you will remain.’  
Surround me now with Your unfailing love.  
You are my refuge, my strong tower, my foundation.  
You are my heart’s home forever,  
no matter where I am or what happens around me.  
Help me sense Your nearness, guidance, and love throughout this  
season of change,  
and may I grow closer to You as I depend on You more and more.”

~Written by Marilyn Whisner

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