

CREW Bible Study

Message – Subject To Change

- **BOTTOM LINE:** Life changes. God doesn't.
- **GOAL:** To help students realize that their changing circumstances are not a reflection of God's character.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
 - *Hebrews 13:5 - Don't love money, be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."*
 - *Hebrews 13:8 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

MESSAGE

Think back to last year at this time. Or even 6 months ago? Where were you? What plans were you making?

Last summer, we had no idea that this summer would be like it is. And now, so much has changed. The plans you made 6 months ago have probably been cancelled or severely altered.

One thing the coronavirus has taught us is this: Life is subject to change.

It's one of those life lessons that we learn by actually living it. We all have dreams and expectations for what we want to do and what we want our days and our life to look like. And then one day, things happen that break the rules of what we anticipated and what we planned for. And when that happens, life gets completely rearranged on us. And it's hard to take.

If you struggle with change, especially the changes we've seen in the past 6 months, you are not alone! I think we all struggle with change – related to the coronavirus or not - for a couple of reasons.....

1. **Change forces us into the unknown.** Changes don't come with a list of terms and conditions that spell out exactly what to expect and how to proceed. And until we know how things will turn out, it can be pretty stressful.
2. **Change can make us lose perspective.** Change can be emotional. All of the unknowns can be overwhelming. And it can cause us to give up hope on our future.
3. **Change causes us to realize we're not in control.** If you think about it, you probably spend a lot of time and energy trying to control the outcomes of things. You study to make good grades. You practice your sport or your instrument to improve your skills. You take the right electives and classes in order to get into the right academy or college. For a lot of situations, there are things you can do to control the outcome. So, when something bigger and unexpected - something out of your personal control - comes along and

changes things up, it's hard to accept. It makes you realize that you are not in complete control like you thought you were.

Given all of this, the question we really need to ask ourselves isn't "How do I *avoid* change?", it's "How can I make it *through* change, *accept* change, and *live well* with the change?"

Fortunately, the Bible has some things to say about this very question. And what the Bible says can actually comfort us and carry us through anything life throws our way. But before we get there, let's get some backstory.

Thousands of years ago, God looked out on His people, the Israelites, and He was disappointed in their behavior. Although God is perfect, He saw that His people were not. God saw that His people couldn't behave perfectly, so He gave them a set of laws to help them. These were rules on how to live great lives. It started with ten laws - the 10 Commandments - but eventually the list grew to over 600! There were laws and rules for just about every part of life:

- What to eat and what not eat.
- What to wear and what not wear.
- How to worship in the temple and how not to worship in the temple.

And if the people messed up, there were laws on what they should do to redeem themselves. The rules – the terms and conditions – on how to live and how to have a relationship with God were rigid. They were tightly controlled.

But then, things changed. God noticed that even with the laws in place, His people were still not behaving well. He realized that He couldn't just *tell* His people how to live. He needed to *show* them how to live. And so, He sent His Son Jesus into the world. Jesus gave the people a new perspective on what it looked like to be a follower of God. He shared the amazing truth that God's love wasn't just for a certain group of people behaving a certain way. He taught them that God's love was for the whole world, available to all people to accept and receive. Following Jesus changed everything for them because they learned how to apply what they learned to their own lives. And it was good!

But then, things changed again. Jesus was arrested and He died on the cross. Then, another change - Jesus was resurrected. Then, more change - Jesus left this world to be with His father in heaven. That's a lot of changes for these people to endure!

But before He left, Jesus told His followers that now, things would be different. Now, those 600 laws on how to live came down to one commandment that would be easy to remember – Love God and love others.

Imagine how the people must have felt. The lives they were living, the ways they did things, the rules they were following, the religion they had practiced and the

way they had practiced it for so long was completely changed in such a short amount of time. And they probably asked themselves, "what will change next?" Have you ever felt that way? Especially recently?

And that brings us to the book of Hebrews, where we find a letter written to the Jewish people who followed Jesus. It's not clear who wrote this letter, but the author clearly had a deep understanding of God's plan for His people. At the end of the letter, we hear this in Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 5:

Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you."

The author knew that being a follower of Jesus wasn't easy. But he wanted them to know that even with lots of changes going on, they should remember something that they had been taught as truth - that God would never abandon them or fail them.

The author tags on this in verse 8....*Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.*

In other words, even though Jesus had sparked change that would last forever, Jesus himself had not changed. He was the same representation of God they had been following since they first encountered Him.

The author of this letter tries to make one point very clear, and it's a point that is just as important for you and me to hear today as it was thousands of years ago: Life changes. God does not.

God was good thousands of years ago, and God is good today. God offered His love thousands of years ago, and God offers you His love today. God offered His grace and forgiveness thousands of years ago, and God offers you His grace and forgiveness today. God was there to guide His people thousands of years ago, and God is there to guide you today.

Things in your life and in the world around you may change, but God does not. No matter what changes you face in your life, God remains with you, working in you and through you to get you to the other side. You may not feel in control, but know that God *is* in control. Keep this in your focus so you can make it *through* change, *accept* change, live well *with* change, and have hope for your future.

How can you do that?

1. **Think back to a time when God did come through for you.** Maybe that came in the form of a friend and what they said or did for you. Maybe you needed something and it was provided for you. Compile a list of stories and circumstances where God was there in your life or the lives of others to provide what was needed. Ask your friends and family how God has come

through for them too. The more stories you hear and remember, the more you see God at work.

2. **Tell God how you need Him to come through for you now.** Remember the words of Hebrews 13:5: "I will never fail you. I will never abandon you." Believe these words to be true and tell God how you need Him to help you.

Whether we like it or not, change is going to happen. We're all going to face times where we go into the unknown of change. Sometimes it will be good, and sometimes it won't. But even though life is unpredictable, we can always put our trust in God who *is* predictable. He never changes.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Good or bad, what's one way your plans have changed due to the coronavirus?
2. What changes related to the coronavirus have been the hardest for you?
3. Think back to a year ago. Good or bad, what's one way your life has changed over the past year?
4. How does it make you feel to know that even when your circumstances change, God doesn't change? What does this mean to you?
5. Describe a time of change when God came through for you or someone you know.
6. Have you experienced a change that turned out to be good? Why do you think we're tempted to avoid change, even when it's potentially good?
7. When facing change, how is it helpful to remember that God is the same today as He was thousands of years ago?
8. Hebrews 13:5 ends with these words: "*I will not fail you. I will not abandon you.*" What do these words mean to you? Do they apply to a situation you currently face?