

Change

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Preacher: Tim Hoak

[0:00] I'm pleased to welcome to our pulpit to preach for us today my dad. Tim Hoke is one of the deacons of Heritage Baptist Church in Owensboro, Kentucky.

He's also the administrator of the Heritage Christian School there. And for years before that was a pastor, my pastor, all growing up.

And we're thankful to have him here today to preach for us. And he's asked that we read the 46th Psalm in preparation for that preaching. Please stand together with me for the reading of God's holy word.

Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength and ever-present help in trouble.

Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

[1:01] There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her. She will not fall. God will help her at break of day.

Nations are in uproar. Kingdoms fall. He lifts his voice. The earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire. Be still and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Well, it's a delight to be with you today.

And just for the record, I will stay out of the kitchen. And I'll try to see to it that my kids stay out of the kitchen. I have their responsibility.

[2:19] We bring you greetings from Heritage Baptist Church in Owensboro. We've enjoyed your fellowship together in the gospel for many, many, many years and rejoice in the faithfulness that God has given to your pastors here and to you as a congregation.

And we rejoice in your wonderful new facilities. This is really beautiful. And a testimony to the goodness of God to this assembly.

And we rejoice with you in that. And it's a particular personal pleasure for us to see what a blessing you have been to our son and his family.

They love you. And we can tell that you love them. And that's delight to any parent's heart. And we're grateful to the Lord for that particular blessing in their lives and in ours.

And what an honor it is to be able to open the Word of God with you together this morning. Whether you're 5 or 85 or maybe I should say 4 and 84, you have observed that life changes.

[3:37] Some of those changes are good ones. And some of those changes are difficult ones. Some we cope with well. Others nearly do us in.

Some changes are anticipated and expected. Others come so suddenly and unexpectedly that they blindsides us. Some changes we look forward to.

Others we dread. Changes come to us wrapped in all sorts of packages. They may be as normal as the changes in weather that affect and change our plans.

We wanted to play golf this week, but it's too cold up here. So I can't do that. Y'all need to get some warmth from the South.

I tried to bring some with me, but we had snow in Kentucky. I'm sorry. I did the best I could. Some are as normal as changes in weather and plans. They may be as life-altering as a medical diagnosis that changes absolutely everything about your life.

[4:46] They may be as delightful as the changes that come with a wedding. Y'all have a wedding coming soon. Relatively soon.

They may be as delightful as that. They may be as painful as the changes that came to a family this week in the death of a loved one.

They may be as painful as the changes that came to a family this week.

They may be as painful as a child. They may be as painful as a child. They may be hard like a miscarriage. They may be welcome like a vacation.

They may be bitter like a broken marriage. They may be corporate like the growth of a church that requires changes.

[6:04] They may be solitary and lonely like the loss of a spouse that nobody feels like you do.

They can come from without like the crash of the stock market.

They can come from within as the results of your own sin and folly. Changes can be temporary like the fortunes of Notre Dame football.

Well, you hope that's temporary. I don't really care, but you hope that's temporary. They can be lifelong like the amputation of a leg.

They can be as insignificant as a broken fingernail or so major that for women it is simply called the change. Changes.

Changes. They come to us all. It's part of life. And there's a way to respond to those changes and there's a way not to respond to those changes.

[7:09] And sometimes we respond well and sometimes we really blow it and we respond poorly.

And so this morning I'd like to set before you, with the Lord's help, a biblical perspective on change.

First, change is inevitable. Secondly, what we should not do when change comes. And thirdly, what we should do when change comes.

And now you know that in Kentucky we think very simply. Change is inevitable. What we should not do and what we should do when it comes. It's inevitable.

Change is a natural part of life as God designed it. This is not any deep and profound mystery. God created the world and life in it with some changes built in. There was to be day and night.

That's a change, isn't it? There was to be day and night in every light and darkness in every 24-hour period. God ordained that there should be children. Now that's a change, isn't it?

[8:16] It's a, it's, you know, there are major sanctifying epics in your life. One of them is when you get married and you discover what it is to live with somebody else for the rest of your life.

That's a change. And God designed that change. He designed marriage. And all of those changes comes when you have children. That's a huge sanctifying event. That's a big change.

Your life will never be the same after you have children. Those are changes God ordained. And He ordained that someday the children should leave the nest.

Leave father and mother and cleave to your spouse. That's a change. That's a change. When children leave. For some it's a... For others it's a...

But it's a change. When children leave the nest. And that's the way God designed it. He ordained the natural rhythm of the seasons. While the earth remains.

[9:11] Seed time and harvest. Cold and eat. Summer and winter. Day and night shall not cease.

Now that's nothing mind shattering. But it simply establishes the principle that change in and of itself is not wrong.

It's not an evil thing. It just happens. We should put a bumper sticker on the backs of our cars.

Change happens. It does. It's part of life.

But now we have to think about how sin has affected this whole process of change in our response to it. The entrance of sin into the world has caused many of these changes to be difficult and painful.

We have marriage but now we also have divorce. Our children come into the world but now they come into the world rebels. And their wills conflict with ours. The pain of childbirth is multiplied.

The pain of watching them leave the nest is increased and complicated by our sin. We still have summer and winter but now we have droughts and we have ice storms.

[10:10] We still have seed time and harvest but we have famines and crop destroying diseases.

The whole process of change has been affected by sin so that now it can be very, very painful and difficult, this whole business of change.

My point is simply that these things are inevitable. Change and often painful change is going to come.

And there is a time for it. For everything, the writer of Ecclesiastes tells us there is a season. And a time for every matter under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die. Those are changes. A time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted.

A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to break down and a time to build up. A time to weep and a time to laugh. A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together.

[11:16] A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. A time to seek and a time to lose. a time to keep and a time to cast away a time to tear and a time to sow a time to keep silence and a time to speak a time to love and a time to hate a time for war and a time for peace many of these things for which God has ordained a time are pleasant and delightful and we enjoy them until the time for change comes and when laughter turns to weeping and dancing to mourning and healing to dying and peace to war and keeping to losing we don't always do well with those kinds of changes the starting point to responding to change is first accept that change is part of life we should not be surprised when change comes we should not be surprised when painful difficult changes come it's part of life as God designed it but now what should we not do when change comes we could take time and go around the room and say how have you responded to change that's not been good and we we would all have stories to tell about how we've not done well with change but let me suggest three or four ways in which we ought not to respond to change and the first one is we should not become stoics and respond to change with an unfeeling grim sort of grit your teeth and bear it kind of stoicism as if we were machines

God did not make us to respond to change like rocks respond to weather you ever notice what rocks do when the weather changes what do they do what do they do nothing you guys are really bright that's God didn't make we're not rocks we don't respond to change with an unfeeling grim stoicism that is altogether unmoved by the changes that come into our lives there is not a scene anywhere in scripture I don't think more pregnant with pathos more contrary to unfeeling stoicism than the scene that unfolds in the garden of Gethsemane just before the crucifixion hear the words of the gospel of Mark and he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled that's not a rock he began to be greatly distressed and troubled and he said to them my soul is very sorrowful even to death remain here and watch and going a little farther he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass from him and Luke adds being in great agony he prayed more earnestly more earnestly and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground there's nothing unfeeling about that scene what gave rise to such agony of soul was it not the anticipation of the change that was about to take place in that relationship between father and son that had never had a ripple in all the eons of eternity and that relationship was now about to undergo earthquake dimension changes and in the anticipation of that change his soul was troubled and distressed and all without sin there is nothing spiritual in being unmoved by painful changes that's not the way

God made us to be unmoved by the things that happen all around us nor should we in the second place we don't respond like stoics nor in the second place should we respond to change especially difficult change with fear doubt or worry it's probably the most typical response to hard change we're afraid we doubt that this is good for us we worry about how it's all going to play out there's some changes that we're just playing fear job changes health changes we're afraid of cancer we're afraid of debilitating disease we're afraid of severe weather changes do y'all have tornado sirens here does it think when there's a tornado warning we've got them we've got one right out in the front of our church building and we have a very safe basement in our church building and when that thing goes off the doors are unlocked and people all we have 30 40 50 people in our church basement and sometimes the little ones are crying and they're they're afraid we sometimes fear family changes we fear sending our children off to college we fear they're leaving home sometimes we fear they're moving away we fear serious sickness for our children we sometimes fear death we fear financial uncertainty a volatile stock market and the things we fear we worry about and we wonder how this could possibly be for our good we cross the line from feeling the pain of a hard change into worry when we start acting like the disciples in the boat saying

Lord don't you care that we're about to go to the bottom of the sea here Lord you ever think about the brass it took for those guys to say Lord don't you care but haven't we said that when something really really difficult comes to us Lord don't you care Lord can't you see what this thing is doing to

me Lord in the language of Isaiah 40 Lord is my way hidden from you don't you know what I'm going through right now has the justice do me escaped your notice Lord hello do you know what this is doing to me don't you know that I'm at my limit I can't take one more change not now we sometimes think that way and it's so easy to respond to change with worry and doubt and fear the right response doesn't usually come automatically responding in faith and in trust is the result of reminding ourselves of the truth of God's sovereignty and providence we'll come to that in a moment the truth of our dependence upon him as we were reminded this morning in Sunday school we're the branch and we're attached to the vine and we have to remember that we need to remind ourselves on the one hand of the little specks we are and the

God he is and on the other hand of the children we are and the father he is well we should not respond with an unfeeling stoicism nor with worry doubt and fear but neither should we respond with grumbling and complaining and that's the next step down from responding with fear and doubt and worry we shouldn't respond with grumbling and complaining this is often our response to lesser changes changes that are not so much life-threatening or life-altering as they are irritating inconvenient uncomfortable unpleasant just a little bit difficult it's in my way this this change is just getting in my way it's messing with my plans and we grumble about getting older when I get up off the floor oh man ah boy grandpa how come you're getting up so slow because I'm grandpa we grumble about getting older we grumble about turning gray

[19:52] I don't grumble about that anymore it's already happened or turning loose we grumble about too much snow we grumble about not enough snow we grumble about too much snow the kids grow not enough snow to close school too much snow not enough snow too much rain not enough rain too long to wait at the doctor's office the construction mess in the kitchen I'll stay out the cost of gas it went up it went up almost 20 cents three days before we had to drive all the way up here but we came the cost of health insurance keeping the kids in clothes they change so fast you get the idea things change we have no control over and it's so easy to grumble and complain about those little irritations in life and we forget

Paul's exhortation in Philippians 2:14 to do all things without grumbling or complaining that's in the Bible yes yes it's in this book you can read it Philippians 2:14 do how many things all things you get up and you look out the window do all things without complaining you get up and you find out that that Frank do you have any Franks here I always try to pick a generic name that little Frankie doesn't have any clean underwear do all things do all things without complaining nor in the fourth place should we respond to change with independence that's a little different than grim stoicism responding to change with independence is saying

I can make it through this it's not really that bad I can handle this it's no big deal and we neglect to pray and the little irritations that come or sometimes even the bigger changes that come our first response is okay we can get through this we'll pull it together we'll get through this instead of Lord help me through this and we look more to our own resources than we do to God's and you know enough that to respond to change in that way is a recipe for disaster because pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall and it's not as though you're behaving like King Nebuchadnezzar who stood on the roof of his palace and boasted with such brazen arrogance that the sentence of insanity was pronounced immediately from heaven upon him and they led him away like a dumb beast while the words were still in his mouth this not this battle in the great that I myself have built by my wisdom he lost his mind no it's not that we're like

Nebuchadnezzar it's more that we just forget God and change comes and we take it on with scarcely a thought about how inadequate we are to handle the tiniest dribble on the surface of our lives without God instead of resorting first to prayer we resort to our management skills instead of resorting first to prayer and calling upon God we resort to our own resourcefulness and ingenuity and creativity we're not that good we are not that good to rely on our own resourcefulness we can't even manage the simple change listen we can't even manage the simple change from day to night or from night to day without God we can't then the psalmist say in peace I will both lie down and sleep for you alone oh Lord make me dwell in safety

I can't even manage waking up in the morning the change from night to day without God's sustaining and upholding grace change is inevitable it's part of life it's going to come we must not respond with stoicism we must not respond with fear or worry or doubt we must not respond with grumbling and complaining we must not respond with independence okay then what should we do when change comes what should we do when change comes well first we might need to change

our view of change I want to tell you something you already know you already know this what are the changes that come into our lives whether they're life altering earth shattering!

[25 : 15] or the little irritations that buzz around our heads like gnats what are the changes that come into our lives what category do all of those things fall fit into what are they they are nothing less than the good wise sometimes mysterious but nonetheless skillful outworkings of the providence of God it's what every change is that comes to us every single one it's not some it's not some impersonal random chance happening it is God's most holy wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions that's what change is it is the providence the outworking of the providence of God listen to the Bible I just gave you the short of catechism listen to the Bible Daniel answered and said blessed be the name of God forever and ever to whom belong wisdom and might he changes times and seasons he removes kings he sets up kings he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding he reveals deep and hidden things he knows what is in the darkness and the light dwells with him

Daniel 2 20 to 22 he changes times and seasons Amos 5 8 he who made the pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning who makes a change from day to night night today God does earth saw some incredible photographs taken from space of night changing in the day and you see this line across this magnificent globe called the earth and on one side of the line it's daylight and on the other side of light you see city lights beginning to twinkle who makes the change from day to night and from night to day He who made the!

east and Orion and changes deep darkness in the morning who also darkens day and tonight who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth the Lord is his name he makes all of those changes Psalm 103 19 the Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over what all all the snow the rain whether it's warm enough or too cold he rules over all also we've obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to his purpose who works all things after the council of his will there is an appointed time for everything and there's a time for every event under heaven what we mindlessly call change we should more thoughtfully call providence and the more we think of it as providence as the good and wise providence of God the more we'll be enabled and helped to respond well to those changes that come so maybe we need to change our view of change it's not just change it's God working out his designs in our lives and for our good and for his glory secondly we should make it a habit to study the examples of those in scripture who faced major changes with sweetness and submission study the examples of those in scripture who faced major changes with sweetness and submission you know the example of there's so many characters you know the example of Joseph and how he responded to life altering changes do we ever read in the pages of Genesis a word of complaint or objection arising from the lips of

Joseph I mean think about it from the comforts of home to slavery in Egypt to unjust imprisonment to being forgotten in jail over a span of something like 13 years his life took one difficult turn after another and his conclusion at the end of it all you meant this to me for evil but God meant it for good wow there's Daniel taken into captivity as a teenager huge change for him and his three friends huge and what do we see them doing serving God faithfully in a pagan city look at Mary pregnant before marriage what a change pregnant before marriage and what does she say behold the handmaid of the Lord be it done to me according to your word sweet submission

[30 : 23] Paul in the middle of remarkable missionary endeavors is imprisoned in Rome huge change he's imprisoned in Rome and what does he say Philippians 112 now I want you to know brethren that my circumstances have been an absolute pain in the neck and I don't know what I'm going to do and as soon as I'm done stewing about this I'll come up with something just sit tight we'll work our way out of this I want you to know brethren that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel where in the world did he learn how to think he's traveling all over the then known world spreading the gospel he gets thrown in jail and he says this is going to turn out for the greater progress of the gospel he learned to think in the school of

God and it did those prison years became some of the most fruitful years of his life he did not respond to major change with anger bitterness or despair he saw it for what it was and marvelous things came out of that but I want you to think especially of the example of the Lord Jesus we've seen him in the garden but I want you to think more broadly of how the Lord Jesus whose entire life was lived without sin of how he responded to literally indescribable changes think it through the Lord Jesus exchanged heaven for a sin cursed earth we don't know a whole lot about heaven but

we know it's a whole lot different than earth it's the absence of sin it's a place of glory and perfection and magnificence and

Jesus exchanged that for this what kind of change is that it's indescribable he exchanged the presence and company of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit for a bunch of thick headed disciples crowds of ungrateful sinners and mobs of enemies that was the change that was the exchange he made think it through he exchanged the throne of the universe for a virgin's womb and the one whose fingers whose creative fingers had woven together children in mother's wombs for eons and eons was now being woven together in a mother's womb what kind of a change is that he exchanged omnipresence for a dried out piece of

Judean real estate pure spirit for flesh and bones and blood the worship of angels for the derision of sinners the omnipotence of created power for the confinement of the cross perfect spotless righteousness he exchanged for all of the filthy sins of his people that's the change that came to Jesus the unlimited approval of the father in heaven for the unrestrained wrath of that same father change we cannot measure the magnitude of those changes they constituted among other things the will of

God for the Lord Jesus and what do we read about the Lord Jesus in the language of the psalmist I delight I delight to do your will oh my God he embraced the changes that God measured out for him with delight the changes the changes heaven for earth omnipotence for confinement and he said I delight to do your will Hebrews 12 2 tells us that he despised the shame of the cross so determined was the Lord Jesus to do and embrace the will of God that he counted the shame of the cross he counted the shame of all of those huge indescribable changes that he had to make he counted he counted he despised the shame of the cross counted as nothing not even worthy to be taken into account that's how

[36 : 19] Jesus responded to the immeasurable exchange of glory for shame and we grumble when the weather changes out and we argue with God when he changes my health and we find fault with the almighty when he takes away what we held dear dear people look at the Lord Jesus and how he embraced the will of God which was full of immeasurable changes for him but because it was the will of God for him he embraced it with delight and gave himself to those changes without reservation study his example but more than studying his example when changes come to you and you find yourself tempted to respond poorly or when you're having a hard time processing what has changed go to the Lord

Jesus when change comes go to him there's not a change you or I will ever have to face that Jesus has not already faced and overcome this text was quoted in Sunday school this morning for we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but one who has been tempted in all things like as we are yet without sin let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of change in time of need go to him you're having a hard time with change go to the one who face deeper changes than you will ever know and that's not to take away from the depths of the changes that come to you Jesus felt everything more deeply than we do our cup may be full his cup was full too it's just that his cup was infinitely bigger than our cup so our cup our cup may get full and it may really really really really hurt and when that change comes go to the one who embraced greater changes because they were the will of

God for him and he is able to come and to give you grace to help in time of need so think about your view of providence about change study examples of those in scripture who faced huge changes with sweetness and submission third drink deeply at the fountain of the character of God and never lose sight of who he is touched on this in talking about his good and wise providence or so much more about the character of God that is able to sustain us in the face of change Deuteronomy 32 4 the rock his work is perfect for all his ways are just a God of faithfulness and without injustice righteous and upright is he

Psalms 102 of old you founded the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands even they will perish but you endure and all of them will wear out like a garment like clothing you will change them and they will be changed but you are the same and your years will not come to an end God is our refuge and strength a very present help in trouble therefore we will not fear though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea though its waters roar and foam though the mountains quake at its swelling pride what do we want what do we want when life is so uncertain and it seems like it's shifting sand what do we want we want something firm we want

something solid we want something we can plant our feet on we want something that's not moving and changing all around us do you ever get really really really dizzy and everything is just what's the first thing you do what's the first thing you do man I gotta hang on to something that ain't moving and isn't that God he's not moving he's the same he is the rock his work is perfect all his ways are just jail dag in his manuals theology says the condition of life is perpetually changing we are in all our relations to earthly things as if we were on the surface of a restless ocean but

God is as a rock amidst the fluctuating waters and while we repose unshaken confidence in him our feet stand firmly and we can look without dismay on the troubled scene around us so get a side of God get a side of God he is the rock and cling to him and then forth learn to keep your affections set first and foremost upon that God who is a rock it's an easy principle to understand it's more difficult to practice if I set my affections primarily on the things that shift and change then I set myself up for heartache disillusionment disappointment and frustration but if I set them first on God and if I'm able to look past the things of earth many of which are very dear to me but all of which are changeable if [42 : 57] I look past those things to him who changes not if I can hold the things of earth loosely and cling to him tenaciously then I can learn to be content even when everything around me is changing God has given us so many wonderful things but they're all subject to change and I need to learn to hold them like this with an open hand now I can see that thing and I can use it but if this changes that didn't hurt now now that thing is really going to hurt if I'm hanging on to it like this and something about that changes it's really going to hurt to lose that but if I hold it like this and

I'm hanging on to God like this then I can weather the changes that come if I've learned to set my affections first upon him who changes not and hold everything else he gives me with a loose hand Colossians 3 1 keep seeking things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God set your affections on things above not on things on the earth and finally a perspective that helps us I trust with change the changes of this life should create in us a greater longing!

for the last great change of behold I tell you a mystery we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed it's coming we shall all be changed in a moment and the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet for the trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised and perishable and we shall be changed what makes change in this life such a painful thing sin will be completely done away with on that last great day faith will be sight and we'll see the Lord Jesus and we'll be like him for we shall see him as he is no more pain no more sorrow no heartache no more gut wrenching changes no more fear of the future no more disappointment or frustration God's gracious purposes for his people will be fulfilled and we'll see that the purposes behind all of those changes that God brought into our lives has now been fulfilled and realized when we are changed for the last time let every change that comes set a little set a little flag off in your mind there's a change coming that's going to be the last great change of all and there will be any more changes after that and that change will be the best of all now let me say a word about one more change that needs to be made in some of you and that's a change of heart some of you are not Christians and you need a huge change everything about you needs to change but the change you need to make if you're not a Christian the change you need to make is so radical that it's impossible for you to make it it is so radical that you can't make the change that you so desperately need to make it's impossible for you to suddenly stop loving yourself and start loving God it's impossible for you to give up your own agenda and adopt God's with delight it's impossible for you all on your own to change your self centered lifestyle and start worshiping God alone can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots!

[47 : 20] doing evil Jeremiah 13 can't do it you can't make the change that you so desperately need to make but God can and he does make that change he changes the heart of every sinner who in utter helplessness cries out to him and says Lord I need mercy I can't get rid of my sins I have tried I can't change the sinful heart of mine Lord you come and make me new come to the only one in the universe who can change you from the inside out come to the Lord Jesus and find out what it's like to be changed to be made new find out what it's like to stop wasting your energies on what will never satisfy you find out what it's like to not be thirsty anymore find out what it's like to be changed from the inside out and come come to the

Lord Jesus and ask him for mercy may God help us to change let's pray together Lord Jesus we come to you our merciful and faithful high priest and we pray that you would come to us and help us in the midst of all the changes that come in our lives big ones and little ones forgive us for the many ways in which you responded poorly to change and help us to embrace your will for us revealed not

only in your word but also in the pages of providence the changes that come may we not fear to see
because our feet are planted firmly on the rock that is the
Lord Jesus Christ and we're clinging with faith to him so Lord help us and grant to those who need
the greatest change of all a change of heart grant that change to them give them a heart to call
upon you even this day we pray in Jesus name amen