



Tim Talk April 2010

Change.

About the only time any of us like that word is if it describes the metal coins we get back when we make a purchase, and even then we often don't appreciate it.

Things have been changing at New Hope for the past two years, sometimes too slowly, and sometimes too quickly (depending on whom you ask). I want to address the implications of this word and dispel any fears that may be clamoring for a chance to be heard in our collective hearts and minds. Fear is the breeding ground for all the enemy's pernicious lies, and I am so sick of buying into ANYTHING that ol' serpent has to say...he is the father of lies!

Change: making or becoming different; alteration or modification; new experience; variety; give up or get rid of in exchange for something new and different. These definitions for "change" can sound exhilarating to those who feel things are boring or stale. On the other hand, the same definitions can bring extreme feelings of anxiety in those who are comfortable with the way things currently are. Before we get any further into this discussion, I need to set the framework for how I think and operate when it comes to change:

1. When God called me to lead this Family, He did not call me to maintain the status quo...He told me He was going to use me as an ice-breaker, one of those big ships that breaks up the ice to rescue stranded ships. An ice-breaker is absolutely ineffective if it sits in the ice, idling its engine. In order to function in the purpose it was designed for, this ship must press forward with little regard for the frozen obstacles in its path *with all the power it has been given*.
2. In light of this calling, I promise to never change things for the sake of bringing change. The team of leaders that God has assembled together is involved with me in praying and seeking God's will when it comes to potential changes to be made. We don't move forward with good ideas until we sense that they are **GOD ideas**. Do we do this perfectly? Not a chance...but we learn and grow in our sensitivity to the Spirit's voice.
3. So, we do not change for change's sake. However, the church, in general, has been a powerful ice-breaker that either does not realize its full potential and purpose, or is out of fuel, or is too damaged to make progress in the dangerous and icy waters of this world. To fail at figuring this thing out would be a complete travesty; the eternal souls of countless thousands hang in the balance! When God says "change," I want to respond with, "how much?" (see Numbers 9:15-23).

For this month's discussion, I want to focus on this definition for "change": To give up...in exchange for something new or different

Change is about surrendering—giving something up—in order to receive something new. At times it can mean letting go of a good thing in order to be able to grasp something better. Do we let go of Christ? NEVER! Hebrews 13:8 says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." It is not Jesus who must change; it is His bride that may need some alteration or modification. Are we all that Jesus dreamed of and hoped for when He secured our freedom and exchanged wedding vows with us? I believe in His unfathomable love for us, but I also believe that there is SO MUCH MORE, if we will only allow His Spirit to change us from the inside out.

Change involves risk, and risk can lead to failure. The fear of failure can be downright paralyzing...trust me, I know. But how I see it, to freeze up and make no attempt to follow God—through any changes He may request of us— would be the ultimate failure. There is too much riding on our obedience to simply bow to the gods of Preference and Comfort.

God Himself was willing to experience unimaginable levels of discomfort in order to make a way for us to be with Him. The uncontainable Creator of the universe stuck in the humble body of a human, with all of its limitations...are you kidding me? That same Creator stretching Himself out on the very wood He created in order to breathe His last breath? (see Philippians 2:5-8)

As for me, wretched and weak human that I am, I can do no less than allow myself to be stretched on the cross God has given me to bear. Or did you think we were to carry it only?

Jesus was a change-agent. When He touched someone's life, they were impacted eternally. When things on earth become as they are in heaven, there will be no more need for change.

