

August 2001: Seasons of Change

by Aaron Greenway

It has already begun to dawn on me that I will be a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary in less than one year from now. Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel has made me realize that the end is in sight. I remember this “fork in the road” three years ago when the Lord led me to Dallas out of years of music ministry. The whole thought makes me wonder, “What’s next?” Will I go to the mission field? If so, when? It has caused me to turn to God all the more.

Believe it or not, the changes have already begun. It is like the growing pains starting to work on you before you grow an inch or a leaf falling to the ground before the official day of autumn. The thing is, no one likes change because a lot of it is downright painful. Change requires *a lot* of adjustment. The people who were once in our lives are no longer (for whatever reasons) and the people we never knew before are there now. All of this leaves you with a lump in your throat. There is a lot of loneliness involved and in these times, we often wonder if God has somehow forgotten about us. To be very honest, I have felt that many times and even in the past several months. This often includes disillusionment, as if God no longer cared about what we are going through...which could be further from the truth.

Perhaps, a tragedy has struck your home. Perhaps friends have spoken unkindly to you or about you. Perhaps the doctor just gave you or someone you know the “C” word. Or the financial security you had has fallen through the floor. Change is tough! And only those who are spiritually *buff* will survive it, and in the end, it will make us stronger. We say we want direction for our lives and we want God to give us wisdom, understanding, and faith, but we don’t want to pay the price. These things only come when the Refiner’s fire is turned up on our lives. This is what God’s design is for us, especially for the believers. There is a price for following the Lord.

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home of forty years and went to lead a people into a land promised to them generations ago, and *not even* getting to go in himself. Jeremiah, the prophet, never saw one convert his entire life. His mission was to pronounce judgment exclusively and nothing more. Paul, the apostle, was shifted around from one prison to the next while he waited for his big day before Caesar. And somehow, it was all the pain, all the suffering, and all the changes in the lives of these people who drove them to God. If our circumstances do nothing else for us, they ought to do just that, drive us to our only resource: Jesus.

Last night at my Spanish Bible study, a sister in the Lord, Sandra, eloquently told us that people in this country have a hard time receiving Jesus because they already have everything. I mean, if I am an unbeliever and an American, why do I need the Lord, when I have a big screen television, countless videos and CDs, two or three cars, a big house, plenty of food to eat, the latest fashion of clothes, and access to any church or any Bible anytime I want...just in case Christianity actually has something to offer that I don't have, even though I doubt such a thing. This makes you wonder if our biggest blessing of being in this country hasn't ended up being our greatest curse and damnation. If you are an unbeliever in this kind of predicament, Christianity then spells c-h-a-n-g-e and being in the security we are in, we can resist change a little bit easier. Unfortunately, *change* is what Christianity is all about and resisting it is counterproductive to God's eternal plan for our lives.

But even as Americans, there are still those things that can shake us. Somehow (and don't ask me to explain it), God is able to accomplish greater things when things look the worst. Out of seasons of change come pain. But out of those same seasons come victory. Out of seasons of change come adjustment. But out of those same seasons come greater sensitivity and love for God. I don't know about the readers out there, but the writer has the fire turned up in his own life. These days, I have been wondering what people will be entering my life and which ones will be exiting. I am also wondering about my life on the mission field and if God has something for me there. And for those of you who are single out there, we wonder if that special "someone" will one day grace our lives. The fears are overwhelming, aren't they? The loneliness is terrifying, isn't it? And the only one who is constant through all the mess is Jesus, Himself. Praise God!!!

The Lord Jesus Christ never promised smooth sailing and apple pie. There is a price in following Him. And if I have to go through the fires of Heaven to come out looking more like Him, then (gritting my teeth) bring it on! But believe it or not, deep down, I know that God is using this time to mold me, to chip away the hard edges of my life, to teach me humility and submission, and to know (that when it comes down to it), He alone is faithful even when others are not.

Today, we can either accept the changes in our lives as being from the Lord and looking at them as God's means of changing us or we can go and hide in our comfortable illusions. We say we want to follow Jesus, but if our lives are not totally surrendered to His will, then our words mean nothing. Hopefully, if we see someone going through change, we can try to be a support to them as well, because we know what trials are all about.