

# Managing Change

## Acts 15:1-35

A back drop: The church had begun to reach out beyond its Jewish roots into the known world.

Acts 2:47 'and the Lord added to the church.'

Acts 3- 5 Show what was happening in the church in Jerusalem

Acts 6 the church is growing so quickly that problems begin to arise with the way they were doing things

Acts 8 Phillip goes beyond Jerusalem into Samaria to take the gospel

Acts 10 Peter is challenged about giving salvation and the Holy Spirit to someone and something that wasn't normally associated with God, the Gentiles

Acts 12: 24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Acts 13 We have new leaders being set aside - Barnabas and Saul being prayed over and released to grow the church.

Then we come to Acts 15

**Whenever we have growth we have to manage change.**

Whenever we have new things we have to manage change

Whenever we have new people in our worlds, we have to manage change

Whenever we have new jobs, houses, more houses, more jobs we have to manage change.

**God desire is that we continue to grow and learn how to handle the change that comes into our worlds.**

This year is the year of enlargement. We are enlarging. Last Sunday we took up a huge Rise and Build offering. Three times the biggest rise and build offering ever taken before. And there is always more in God.

**There are always challenges people face** . There are always changes people faces. Growth, new things, new people, new jobs, new locations, new houses, more houses, more people all bring with them a call to manage the change. God is here is help us. Calling on Him is at the very essence of all we do as Christians in C3Marion.

Each of these things brings questions. **Questions are not in themselves bad, having no answer is the bad thing.**

Let me outline some of the questions I am hearing right now in people's lives this year of enlargement.

I wonder what is in this for me?

Why doesn't this feel like it use to?

Why is God allowing this to happen?

This must not be God because I am feeling lonely.

This must not be God because things have changed so much.

Where do I fit?

Where do I fit now?

Is there something for me to do?

Questions are okay, we just need answers to some of them. God has them for us.

**Every time I feel overwhelmed by my situation I run to God** . Every time someone has told me they don't like me, I run to God. Whenever I don't get an invite to something or someone tells me they can't come, I run to God. I want to thank the church for causing me to run to God. This is a vital key in holding on when things change. Want to manage change better, learn to run to God.

**In Acts 15 we have a picture of what should be done when we are feeling like 'where do I fit?** What should happen here? What is recommended by God to manage change successfully? Here is a glimpse of the wisdom of God for you right now.

Acts 15:1-2

1. **AWARENESS** – we must first and foremost recognize that there is a challenge in our lives and that that challenge has been caused by God bringing enlargement or change.

Acts 15:2

2. **APPROACH PROPER AUTHORITY** – we need to go to or send someone who we are willing listen to, we send them to the leaders who make the decisions.

Often when God brings enlargement on our worlds we talk about it to our friends, our generation but not to the proper authority. When we go through change or are contemplating change people talk about it with their friends but neglect to get the advice of people with authority in that area. **God has brought you under authority for your protection** .

Possible idea of the rope hear with two people then three. Then even adding a new rope in on the side, as if we are adding in another member of the church.

Acts 15:7-10

3. **CAPACITY TO EMBRACE** – don't attempt to compare the now with the past. If you do that you will hold yourself and others in connection with you back from what God has.

These people wanted them to get circumcised. **They were attempting to ask the enlargement to be in the same mold as before** . It won't be. When you get bigger, your strategies, thought processes, will change.

**What you did to get to this point will not necessarily be what you need to go further.**

God puts new wine in new wine skins. **Matthew 9:17**

**New wine skins are the new things God is doing in your world. God wants to put new wine in those new things he's doing in your world.**

Without a new wineskin, a new thing, the new wine is wasted. Its useless. Ever wondered why a new move of God hasn't lasted in the world. Maybe we are trying to put it into old wineskins.

Ever wonder why God does new things.... So the new wine does what it is supposed to do.

This year we have new wine skin called SOCA.

School of creative arts.

The Israelites had a way to show that they loved God. They got circumcised. But that was no longer needed, or wanted.

This is normally were the blockage can be. People in their lives don't want to enlarge. Its painful, it hurts but God wants us to do it. If you are feeling this way, run to God and ask Him to help you with your enlargement, and get ready because he will send people to you to help you.

How's your capacity for the unchurched? That is a change we have and desire more of.

Go into all the world – is a call to increase our capacity to embrace. God is giving us a window of opportunity in 2008. We will enlarge our capacity.

That window of opportunity is to enlarge. The reason God enlarges us is because He is making new wine skins. Then he can pour out the wine.

Right now the new wine is being poured out. Can you see it? Its so God.

Acts 15:13-21

4. **LISTEN TO LEADERSHIP** – leadership gives you protection. When you are managing change you need people who you listen to. Not just giving lip service to but actually hearing and responding positively.

That authority you approached is not there to just look pretty but to protect you, give you guidance and point you to God.

Acts 15:29

#### 5. RECOGNISE SOME OF THE PAST IS OK

There is always things that are different, but some things remain the same or similar. **God doesn't change everything** . It's ok to do some things the same in your world. This is where you need to be speaking to people who have been there done that. They will show you things to hold onto and things to let go of.

We still have wineskins. Church is still God's main priority. The concept of wineskin hasn't changed but the style has.

Some things are eternal in nature. I.e the word of God.

Acts 15:31

#### 6. REJOICE

Taking a positive position towards God. Trusting that He who begun a good work in you will complete it. We need to rejoice over the decision. God closes one door to one another.

What a great response to God. I love that decision, I love that person, I love that change, because I know that God did it.

Managing change in your world is not always easy and it is sometimes fraught with obstacles. But what a joy it is to stay the course and run the race to the end. God wants to help you in your life with change. Thinking of doing something new. Great. It is the year of enlargement.

God is for us. God is for us. God is for us.