

ICEBERGS: CHANGE

-This morning we're closing up our series called "Icebergs that will sink your family's ship!"

-And today we're talking about something that affects everyone and every family; it's the universal affliction called change.

-There are so many changes that we go through in life!

[Ecc 3:1 "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven."](#)

-Think about our **family changes!**

- Kid becomes adults.
- Adults often become a spouse.
- Spouses can become parents. Having your first children requires you to change...**diapers!**
- Parents become grandparents.

-All of those changes are HUGE life changes! Right?

-What about **job changes?**

- You start off mowing grass or working a paper route
- You might go to college and learn a trade
- Work your way up the ladder a ways w/promotions
- And then there's a day you hang it all up and retire!

-Those are all BIG life changes!

-Our whole life can change in an instant:

-What about financial changes? Health changes?

-How about kids changing roles with their parents as they age?

-Or becoming an empty nester? There are so many changes that we will face in life, and how we navigate those changes might just sink our family's ship, or keep us afloat!

-Let's talk about a couple of categories of change that are particularly tough.

WHAT KINDS OF CHANGE AFFECTS OUR FAMILIES?

Loss - Job (Job 1:1-3; 2:9)

[Job 1:1-3](#) There once was a man named Job who lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless—a man of complete integrity. He feared God and stayed away from evil. 2 He had seven sons and three daughters. 3 He owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 teams of oxen, and 500 female donkeys. He also had many servants. He was, in fact, the richest person in that entire area.

-Job was enjoying life. Things were going really well.

-He had a good family, he had his health, and he was rich.

-And he was a man who knew and served God.

- But through a series of events Job came to ruin.
- In one day his children were killed, his wealth was lost and even his health was lost.
- Everything in his life was taken away from him.
- All that was left was his faithful, devoted and loving wife.
- He may have thought, "Well, at least I've got you babe!"
- Until she said in [Job 2:9](#) His wife said to him, "Are you still trying to maintain your integrity? Curse God and die." (NOT NICE!)
- His whole life, in every facet, changed completely in a day.
- You may never experience such catastrophic loss, but you will experience loss in your life. Everyone does.
- And when you experience a great loss it changes things.

Death - Naomi (Ruth 1:20)

- In the book of Ruth we're introduced to a woman named Naomi.
- She was married to Elimelech and had two sons.
- There was a famine in Israel so the whole family moved to Moab. [Ruth 1:1-5](#) "3 Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. 4 The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, 5 both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband."
- There was a famine in the land that was a difficult change.
- They moved from Bethlehem to Moab...that was a change.
- Her husband and sons died...that's a devastating change.
- In a society with no retirement or social security, having your husband and sons taken from you signaled the beginning of a hard and meager existence for Naomi.
- This change struck her so hard that she said... [Ruth 1:20](#) "Don't call me Naomi," she responded. "Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me."
- Some changes hit us so hard that we feel like we'll never be the same. We feel like we'll never recover.
- She was so convinced that her life was ruined that she **changed** her name from Naomi which means "pleasant" to Mara which means "bitter." **Things were ugly for Naomi.**
- In her deep despair, Naomi could not believe that she'd ever recover from that change.

Relational - Paul & Mark (Ac 15:39)

[Acts 15:36-40](#) "Let's go back and visit each city where we previously preached the word of the Lord, to see how the new

believers are doing.” 37 Barnabas agreed and wanted to take along John Mark. 38 But Paul disagreed strongly, since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in their work.

- In an instant Paul was separated from both Barnabas and Mark
- Some of the most difficult changes we face are with people.
- We sometimes mistakenly believe that all the people in the early church got along perfectly and had no problems!

39 Their disagreement was so sharp that they separated.

Barnabas took John Mark with him and sailed for Cyprus. 40 Paul chose Silas, and as he left, the believers entrusted him to the Lord’s gracious care.

- A fight with a close friend. Tension between parents and children
- A separation of divorce with a spouse.
- Relationships can change in an instant and they can bring all kinds of changes with them.
- The loss of relationship can deeply affect people.
- And a change in your relationship can be life-changing!

Health - A Sick Woman (Mark 5:34)

25 A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding. 26 She had suffered a great deal from many doctors, and over the years she had spent everything she had to pay them, but she had gotten no better. In fact, she had gotten worse.

- This could easily be a description of a modern person.
- Terrible condition, visiting countless doctors and specialists, no answers, no cure, no hope.
- Some of you know about this all too well. You’ve been the sick person or the family member of a sick person.
- You’ve seen the doctors, tried different medicines, exhausted all medical resources and nothing worked.
- Otherwise healthy people can have their life changed w/sickness.
- As a pastor I have to wonder about the effect of these changes on these Bible characters and their families.
- Years ago I became familiar with the

***See the The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale**

www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_82.htm

- I’ve put the link in your message notes. Take it for free.
- This test gauges your stress, and the likelihood of you getting a stress related condition;
- You’ll never guess what the stress is measured with; *life changes!*

-They use this test to determine your risk for *illness* based on the stress from changes in your life.

- **11-150 You have only a low to moderate chance of having a stress related illness in the near future.**
- **150-299 You have a moderate to high chance of having a stress related illness in the near future.**
- **300-600 You have a high or very high risk of having a stress related illness in the near future.**

-So I took the test this last week and scored a **426** myself!

-I have had a lot of changes in my life these past few months.

-Our new building project brought a season of change at work.

-Our house has sold and now we're looking for a new house which bring a whole bunch of changes with it.

-In these past few months I went to China, tore my rotator cuff, buried my grandfather, ran a half-marathon, added two new interns, and I could go on...lots of changes in my life.

-As I was thinking about this I had a thought that hit me.

-If I've been feeling this kind of stress about the changes in my life, how has my family been feeling? How has it affected them?

-I had a conversation with my wife and kids about that.

-Of the major changes listed on the test there are things like:

-Job change. Mortgage payments. Moving.

-Change in recreation. Vacation. Death of family member.

-Getting in legal trouble. Changes in your church.

-Child leaving home for college. Sickness.

-We make these changes, experience these changes, but we often underestimate the impact of these changes on our health and the health of our families.

-Don't underestimate how much big changes can affect your spouse and children.

-Psychology students were in their class one day when their professor began a discussion ebb & flow of emotions.

-He asked a student from Oregon "What's the opposite emotion of joy?" "Sadness" the student answered.

-He asked a student from Idaho "What's the opposite emotion of depression?" "Elation," she replied.

-Turning to a young student from Texas he said "What's the opposite of woe?" "Well, now," the Texan replied "I suppose the opposite of woe, would be...*giddy up!*"

-When you're making big changes stop and consider what that's going to do to your family physically, spiritually & emotionally.

-The sea of change can be tough to navigate.

-And if you aren't paying attention, a series of big changes in an already leaky vessel....might just sink your family's ship.

TIPS FOR ENDURING CHANGE

-When you're in the middle of a change your emotions can be all over the place. You don't always think straight.

-Your perspective is skewed and it's hard to know what to do.

-Some of the most common emotions people experience in change is worry, anxiety and fear.

-What's going to happen? What are we going to do?

-What about my future? How will we survive this change!

[Php 4:6 "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything."](#)

Take your troubles to the Lord! (Php 4:6a)

-I've often told people who are overwhelmed by the changes in their lives, or consumed with worry to make a list.

-Get a piece of paper divide in half and put all the things you can't change on one side and all the things you can change on the other

-The things you can't change is your prayer list and the things you can change is the to-do list.

-Worrying doesn't change anything. It doesn't make problems go away. It doesn't help you sleep at night.

-Jesus said (and all the research agrees) that worry doesn't add hours to your life! It takes it away.

-Prayer is where you take the problems that you cannot change.

-When you're going through a big change in life pray about it.

-Tell God how you feel. Tell him you're scared or worried.

-Ask him for what you need, ask him to strengthen you.

-Pray for the wisdom to navigate the change in your life.

-Don't worry and fret; pray.

Remember that most changes don't last forever. (Ecc 3:1)

-In the middle of a season of change it seems like things will never get back to normal. But what does normal even look like?

-The ancient philosopher Heraclitus said, "[The only thing that is constant is change.](#)"

-Change is what is normal. It doesn't really matter who you are or what you do; change will come.

[Ecc 3:1 "For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven."](#)

- If you expect things to only go the way you want them to, you have unreasonable expectations.
- If you want things to always be how they are now, you're in for a life of heartache and disappointment.
- But on the other hand, if you don't like how things are...wait a while and they'll probably change!
- Change isn't always bad and it isn't always good, but it is always present.
- As people of faith we should be seeking to discern what God is doing when things in our lives are changing.

Watch for ways that God is working. (Pr 3:5-6)

- What is God trying to teach me in this season?
 - How is my relationship with God going to grow stronger through this change?
 - What does God's word say about my new season of change?
- Pr 3:5-6 "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.
- In the throes of change, people often walk away from God or stop seeking his will.
 - But in those times we should be focused on where God is leading us and who he wants to be for us in this new season.
 - Strong men, don't always rely on God for strength. Until their strength is gone. That's when God can become your strength.
 - Financially stable people don't rely on God to meet their needs, but when their finances go south, suddenly they are turning to God for provision.
 - I'm not one who thinks that God is afflicting people with hardship and tough circumstances just so he can teach us a lesson.
 - But I do think he allows things in our life that give us opportunities to grow in our faith.
 - Regardless of the change you are experiencing, trust in the Lord, see his will, and he'll show you which path to take.

Trust that God is working for your good. (Rom 8:28)

- We often feel like change is coming against us.
- When something in our life changes it's because I'm bad, or someone else is bad, or God is bad.
- Even people of faith can find themselves being incredibly pessimistic at the prospect of life changes.
- But what if really believed God's Word?

Rom 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

-We all know this verse but do we really believe it?

-When things are changing we cry out “why God?” instead of saying “what good thing is God doing for me here?”

-I know it’s hard to believe the best in the worst situations but, God is causing ***everything to work together for our good.***

-So instead of being disappointed, crushed and cynical, maybe we should be...excited!

-In the face of troubles and hardship maybe we should be asking, what good thing is God going to do through this change?

Matt 6:31-34 “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ 32 These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. 33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

-As you probably know the Chinese don’t use our alphabet they use characters instead of letters in their written language.

-The Chinese character for “change” is actually a combination of two characters.

-The character for change is a combination between “crisis and opportunity”.

-In the midst of some of our greatest and most challenging life changes, we may feel like a crisis has hit us.

-But if we have the eyes to see, we may find ourselves with opportunities that wouldn’t have come without the change.

-Remember poor Job whose whole life was ruined?

-Job 42:12 tells us that the second half of Job’s life was even better than the first half!

-The change in his life was painful, it threw him into crisis, but the second half presented him with even greater opportunities.

-And poor Naomi wanted everyone to call her Mara because of her bitterness and pain.

-But when her daughter in law Ruth gave her a grandson, her joy was restored and the Bible says she raised him as her own!

-And by the way Obed was the father of Jesse, the father of David

-She thought she’d never recover, but she did. She found joy again

-And when Paul parted ways with Barnabas and Mark it seemed like that friendship was dissolved.

-But when you read 2 Tim 4:11 you find a little verse that Paul wrote much later, near the end of his life.

“Bring Mark with you when you come, for he will be helpful to me in my ministry.”

-And remember that lady who’d gone to all the doctors and still couldn’t be healed?

-Well Jesus walked by her and she reached out her hand to touch him, and you’ll never guess what happened. She was healed.

Mark 5:34 “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. Your suffering is over.”

-Not all change is bad! Not all change is good!

-But most changes don’t last.

-Most changes are seasons that just take time to adjust to.

-Even some of our most challenging seasons of change can ultimately lead to something good....something better.

-Especially if those changes draw us closer to Jesus.