

Transitions and Expectations

“Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”~ Matthew 24:44

Life is a gift basket of things that happen which change our world. We are born, we grow up. There are tears and smiles, there is laughter and sadness. We say hello and goodbye, we see our world go through tremendous changes, and God is with us through every one.

Transition, which makes many people nervous, can be seen as a test of how close we are to God, or how far away we really are. Many people do not like change. They are comfortable in their sameness. But if we do not welcome it, and ask God’s help in finding the blessings in it, we may find ourselves left behind in pity and darkness.

Nikki Giovanni said that “A lot of people resist transition and therefore never allow themselves to enjoy who they are. Embrace the change, no matter what it is; once you do, you can learn about the new world you're in and take advantage of it.”

People go through many transitions in their lifetime. They are born, then they die. They are young, and get older. They are baptized, they become new Creatures in Christ when they find faith, they are married, they join and leave churches, they find a job and then another.

The transitions of this world are many. There are good ones and bad. The secret in walking in contentment and perspective is to embrace the good ones, and not let the bad ones bother us. The only way this can happen, is to trust in God who watches over all of them, generation after generation.

Daniel Radcliffe puts it this way. “I suppose whenever you go through periods of transition, or in a way, it's a very definite closing of a certain chapter of your life - I suppose those times are always going to be both very upsetting and also very exciting by the very nature because things are changing and you don't know what's going to happen.”

Where are you in your life, dear reader? What transitions have you already experienced? They are happening all around us, no matter our age or life situation. Sometime so fast we cannot keep up with them.

Life is indeed like a book, with various chapters, all different, some good, some bad, some in between. We are strengthened by the bad times and the good. Life's book is continuing to be written, and those who see it for what it can be in God's plan will be full of blessed moments.

The prophet Jeremiah likens us to the clay on a potter's wheel, being shaped by God into a vessel worthy of his work. If we begin to see ourselves as the created rather than the creator, it takes off tremendous pressure, and frees us to become the vessel God wants us to be.

"So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. Then the word of the LORD came to me: "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel." ~Jeremiah 18:3-6

Life is a series of entries and exits. We go out of our house and back in. We travel and return. We move from place to place, community to community, sometimes from country to country. In the moment of exit there is an opportunity of newness, certainly of faith growth. Tom Stoppard exhorts us to "Look on every exit as being an entrance somewhere else."

When we handle transition this way, there are no down sides. We can be like a puppy always ready for the adventure, or a donkey dead set against going anywhere. God gives us the choice of hope and grace every day.

The final transition for God's people is death. For non Christians it is scary and uncertain. For God's people it is just a passing through to another time, a change of address. "If we can understand," writes Max Lucado. "that death is not the end

but is really a transition into the next life, the great part of life, that frees us up into receiving God's courage and his help”

So the final transition, and God’s proper place in it, prepares us to live this life well. The eternal gives hope to the temporal. The next world gives light to the present one. Understanding that balance, and finding the blessings along the way, is a process of discovery all of God’s people can await.