

You are a Process of Change

August 29, 2021

Part 8 of 9 in series, "Who God Says You Are"

God has a sense of humour.

Of all the pastors, of all the sermon topics. I, who preach only once in a while, got the topic, "You Are an Ongoing Process of Change."

If you meet me for one second, you would learn that I don't like change. I get 90% of my clothes from one store – Tommy Hilfiger. And not just one brand – one store – I go to the same location every few months and pick up a new item.

On my Instagram and Facebook pages I literally post a picture of me wearing Tommy Hilfiger and orange every day.

I eat chicken, chicken and more chicken.

I have a kale smoothie at 10, orange at 11, lunch at 12, 12 mixed nuts at 2, apple at 4, 12 more mixed nuts at 5 and dinner at 5:30.

I drink water every hour on the hour, I bike ride on the same path 3-4x a week, I shop at the same grocery store... I could go on.

I took the Strengths test and one of my top strengths is consistency.

LYS is a great course that we offer here BTW and if you haven't taken it I highly recommend it.

The link is on the screen and in the chat.

But life isn't consistent. Life is always changing.

Do you know how long it takes for you skin to completely replace itself? I thought it was around 7 years. It's about 28 days. A month.

I have a whole new skin. I guess you could say I'm – skinny ☺

In fact, in 7-10 years, most of your cells have replaced itself. You're literally a new you.

I don't know about you but when I think about why I don't like change it's because I like to be in control. To accept the fact that life is out of my control is very humbling. And scary.

Who here likes change? If you like change, and you're in the building today raise your hand – you should have no problems raising your hands cause that's a change from where your hand is now – see what I did there? ☺

If you're online – the question is, do you like change? Type yes or no

All the kids are getting ready to go back to school and parents are going crazy. Why? Cause of the pandemic – I know - but also because of change. How many parents have kids who need new shoes? New clothes. Kerri was saying it's like the summer air makes kids grow two sizes?

Change.

Change is inevitable.

These days we're in a series called, "Who God Says You are." It's all about identity. The series stems from a book with the same title. Listen to this quote in the book from the chapter on change,

"Change is the only constant."

Yikes.

What's going on my name is Kevin and I'm your friendly neighbourhood youth pastor here at Cornerstone.

So far, we've looked at topics such as your body, your history, your relationships, your mind, your commitments, your actions, your boundaries and today our topic is change. Specifically, "You are a process of change."

You are a process of change.

We work so hard at NOT changing. The pandemic forced a lot of people to change. We had to accept our age because we couldn't cover up grays or get ourselves beautified.

You can't NOT change.

Life forces us all to ask ourselves again and again – who am I? What do I believe? What do I stand for? What are my boundaries? For most of us, the last two years... this pandemic forced us to change. To look at our identity. To ask who am I in light of what is happening now? And who do I want to be? And as we answered these questions, we changed.

But I'm realizing that whatever age we are – we all struggle with identity. We all are changing or resisting change.

As we think about identity and change and what direction we want to move towards – let's look at what God has to say about change.

What does God have to say about change?

Lots. But today we're going to look at one particular passage. You may have heard it before.

Romans 12:2a (NIV)

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Christianity is about transformation

“The original New Testament Greek word here is metamorphosis – **a deep change in the actual form or nature of a person or thing**. Think of a caterpillar emerging from its cocoon as a butterfly. That’s transformation.

2 Corinthians 5:17. The old has gone, the new is here!

You are a process of change – You shouldn’t be like what you were.

How ridiculous would it be for a caterpillar to come out of the cocoon – still a caterpillar?

How is your life with Jesus transforming you? Are you the same as you’ve always been?

Is your reading of the Bible and your time worshipping with other Christians drawing you closer to God and remaking you into the image of Christ?” (Analog Scripture – pg. 166-166)

This word – transformed is written in the present tense – be continually transformed – You are a process of change – it keeps happening. You keep changing.

Theologian N.T. Wright puts it like this, “Don’t let yourselves be squeezed into the shape dictated by the present age. Instead, be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”

1. BE INTENTIONAL – Change!!!

You are a process of ***change*** – so change!

In the book “Who God Says You Are” it talks about the fact that we CAN be intentional about our identity. Even though we can’t control everything we can control some things. We can invest in learning and looking honestly at what happens in our lives.

We can practice disciplines that keep us in touch with God and help us to become more mature – we can plan and commit to things.

We have some incredible opportunities for you to do just that at Cornerstone.

1. Prayer retreat – September 11 -

<https://cornerstoneccc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/1011/responses/new/>

It’s a great way to celebrate God’s goodness in prayer and worship.

2. Freedom session – it’s an incredible healing-discipleship journey that uncovers the root of pain in your life and invites Jesus Christ to heal those areas of your heart. Our next one starts Thursday October 7th
3. Establish webpage – some great resources to help you Establish your identity in Jesus. I’ve gone through a few of them myself – I bought all the books recommended and have read 5 of them so far – very, very powerful. There’s also a Spotify playlist – I’ve used

that on my early morning walks. There are resources for you to do on your own, one on one and with others.

Lots of opportunities to be intentional about your process of change.

Is there one that could be your next step?

2. BE PATIENT (don't quit)

You are a process of change – be present in the process

Listen to this gem from the book, “Who God Says You Are”

“You are more than you presently are, and God wants you to be more than you presently are... All of us know sin, failure, and limitation, but you are more than your sin, your failures and your limitations.” Who God Says You are – Klyne R. Snodgrass

It also talked about being present in the moment. Normally, we live based on the past, but we can't live in the past. We live in anticipation of the future but we can't live in the future. We have to live in the present.

Pastor Steve has been sharing about Eagles that lived with turkey's and ugly ducklings that were actually Swans but he actually saved the best image (I think) for me. And it was right under his nose. Literally in the same house.

I went to visit Nicole and Jan Shaw. They cultivate butterflies.

Did you know that butterflies in the wild have 90% chance of not surviving?

But with human intervention, there's a 90% chance of survival?

Right off the bat, that made me think about Jesus.

Your chance of survival without God – is... you won't make it.

But with God's intervention – your chance of survival is 100%

The butterflies – Nicole takes the butterflies and cares for them and then releases them. I asked and learned a lot from seeing them and having Nicole explain the actual process.

There's an egg.

Then caterpillar

Then they hang in a J for 24 hours.

The skin splits down the middle and then they enter a chrysalis

They are on a leaf and somehow know to attach to the stem so that even if the stem falls off it's still attached – made me think of John 15:5 (NIV)

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

They spend a week in chrysalis – listen to this, depending on what they eat – they may have a gold “crown” going around their shell. Isn’t that cool?

Could we be like that too. If we are really connected to Jesus – could we “shine.”

StarKids gets its name from that – talk about Moses glowing...

In the shell they liquify – weird.

Come out as butterflies – wings are wet, vulnerable, after they dry off, they are butterflies.

They go on this incredible journey to Mexico and back but that’s another story.

What an awesome experience. Thanks to Nicole and Jan Shaw!

When I was talking to Nicole about the transformation (metamorphosis) of a caterpillar to a butterfly there were a few things that stood out as incredible:

The point in the journey where the caterpillar liquifies – it’s in the chrysalis stage, it liquifies for a week or so and then they come out as butterflies. I always thought that caterpillars worked their way out of their shell and that’s when they become butterflies – and they do – but before that. They are liquid. They are nothingness. They are doing nothing to change. They are just being.

Isn’t that incredible?

On the one hand, they do all this intentional work – they eat food, curl up in a J, spin a web thingy that connects to the stem, emerge out of the shell as a butterfly. There’s work that they have to do. And there’s work that has to be done in them.

Just like us.

For some of you, you need to be in the process of change – sign up for something, etc.

For some of you, you’ve done all that and now you have to wait. You have to wait. You have to trust.

DON’T QUIT ON YOUR LIQUIFIED DAY

Could you imagine if the caterpillar quit because it was in the liquified stage? It would be totally missing out on what’s on the other side? So close.

I don’t know what’s going on in your life. I’m going through the change of my life right now.

When you are tempted to give up. Don't.

Don't quit on your liquified day.

God is with you. Working in you and through you to change you.

The result of that change is something beautiful.

It's so important for you guys to get that you are intrinsically beautiful. Identity-wise the butterfly is a butterfly all along. Does it feel like a butterfly when it's a caterpillar? No. I showed the caterpillar to my friend's kids and they were like, "ewww."

I look at some of you guys and I'm like "ewww." But that's not how we should be looking at each other. We should be seeing the butterfly in our caterpillarness. That's the identity piece that is so key. If you get that your DNA is that of a son/daughter of God. A child of the king... it would totally change how you see yourself. How you see other people.

You are so beautiful – listen to this verse.

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” – Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)

That word masterpiece, literally means, “poem” or “work of art.” ...

Look at the end of the verse too... we can do the good things he planned for us long ago

God had a plan for us. We are not random. Each of us is beautiful.

Now, if we are following this butterfly example all the way, some of you will say, “Okay so then in the new heavens and earth, that’s when I’ll be a butterfly. For now, I’m a caterpillar or whatever.” Well yes. And no.

Yes. Absolutely. When Jesus comes back, we will all be part of the new creation, redeeming all that’s beautiful in this world and bringing it back to the way God intended it in the first place.

Baptism is the perfect example of this – we re-enact the death and resurrection of Jesus and we show the dying and rising that happens in our own lives

1. Baptism: www.cornerstonechurch.ca/baptism

If you're thinking of baptism, we'd love to celebrate with you. I just had the opportunity to meet up with two teenagers this week who are going to be baptized soon. It's so encouraging to witness God speaking to and through other people. Baptism says to everyone that you've trusted Jesus, joined God's family and made a commitment to follow Jesus with all your heart and soul. If you feel God is speaking to you about it, check out website, you'll see the link on the

screen – for those watching online it's also in the chat. There's a resource that Pastor Steve put together that really helps to explain why we believe in baptism and why it's the next step for you as a follower of Jesus.

The death of the evil in this world will give birth to new life in Jesus. So yes.

But there are little deaths and resurrections happening in us all the time.

Look at this picture of many caterpillars in the stage of chrysalis.

Different parts of you are different stages. Maybe your mind is a butterfly already, fully developed. But your relationships are still a caterpillar and parts of it need to die. Your actions could be in the chrysalis stage. Some parts of you are still growing, others parts are waiting some parts are fanning their wings before they are ready for the world.

This is what your life is like now.

You are a process of change.

Maybe there's a death that needs to happen in your boundaries. Or a death that needs to happen in your history – that's where something like Freedom Session can come in.

In the big picture, you are going to die and resurrect with Jesus

In the time leading up to that, you have parts of you that need to die.

You are a process of change.

Listen to this quote, "You cannot experience new life without being willing to let go of the old and being willing to change." (Klyne R. Snodgrass)

What if the Eagle saw it's reflection and after realizing that it wasn't turkey thought, "It's too **late**. I've lived so long as a turkey I might as well stay acting like a turkey."

It's not too late.

What if the ugly duckling after seeing it was a swan said, "It's too **hard** to start being different. I'm too used to being what I am now to be something new."

It's not too hard.

What if the caterpillar said, "It's too **risky** to go into a J position or to go into a chrysalis." I want to be a butterfly but I can't take that chance."

It's not too risky.

What is God calling you to let go of? What is God calling you to change?

"Sometimes changes come as a result of tragedy, sometimes because of sin in the world – people sin against you or you sin against others and experience consequences. This world isn't always getting better and better. Even when you walk faithfully with God, life is sometimes hard and frustrating, and it includes suffering and death." – Klyne Snodgrass

Don't give up.

Continue to be faithful to Jesus.

The goal is to be with Jesus. To walk with Jesus and walk like Jesus.

The caterpillar has a goal. All the changes and stages it's going through leads it to that goal.

It's the same for us.

My prayer is that your goal is to be faithful to Jesus.

You are a process of change.

Listen to this quote from David Brooks, "Many people don't come out healed; they come out different."

I don't know what you are going through. Well, I do know what you're going through – a global pandemic. Anxiety and depression. Pain and loss.

You can make it through.

You will not be the same.

You will be different.

But that's the goal. I saw a meme where a caterpillar says to a butterfly, "You've changed." The butterfly said, "That's the point."

If we are truly following Jesus. If our identity is in him. Then we have to change. But that change is beautiful.

The point is that you are a process of change. So be intentional. And be patient.

Benediction.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord turn his face towards you
and give you peace.

Keep on keeping on.

Thanks for being a part of our worship experience today.

You'll want to make sure you're here next week – we are baptizing two young people! I got to meet with them and do the baptism class and I'm really excited to celebrate with them and for them to share their stories with you.

If you feel God is calling you get baptized let us know, we'd love to celebrate with you. Our next one is scheduled for Thanksgiving

For those of you who are with us online, thanks for being here! If you are interested in attending in person, please be sure to pre-register online.

(Pause)

For those of you in the auditorium, I have a few instructions for you before you go. PLEASE HAVE A SEAT.

In order to avoid congestion at the exit, please wait patiently in your seats while the ushers dismiss each row at a time. Unfortunately, gathering in the cafe is not permitted at this time but you can socialize outside on the grass in a physically distanced manner. For those of you with children in the classrooms, only 1 parent should go to pick up the kids down the same hallway as you did for the drop off. Have a good week everyone!"