



**KING'S
CHURCH** (<http://kingschurchedinburgh.org/>)
EDINBURGH

The Season of Change

As one hymn writer said, "*Drop Thy still dews of quietness, Till all our strivings cease; Take from our lives the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace*".

Some change is sudden and instant, for example in *2 Cor 2:30* it says that when we became Christians we became brand new creations before God, forgiven by Him. However, most change is a process. *2 Cor 3:18* says we're being transformed from one degree of glory to another in our walk with God. Salvation isn't a destination that we hope to arrive at one day, it's the gateway into a life of trusting God through constant change.

Luke 1 tells the story of a teenage virgin Mary who is suddenly plunged into a season of change through her encounter with the angel Gabriel. Her reaction to change teaches us valuable lessons as we face seasons of change in our lives:

1. Know that God's favour is not synonymous with favourable circumstances.

The angel announced she was clearly favoured by the Lord -- she was to carry the Son of God in her womb! But that was also "*deeply troubling*" (an unmarried pregnant teenager in Nazareth wasn't going to have an easy ride).

Knowing that God favours us, not because we're special, but because He is loving and forgiving and gracious is a powerful truth in a season of change. He invites us (like Mary) to step towards Him when circumstances work against us.

2. Be diligent to hear God's voice, even though it's hard.

All scripture is God-breathed and helpful for us in all of life (2 Tim 3:16). The discipline of reading the Bible and listening to preaching gives us the broad base of truth that enables us to make wise decisions when change comes our way.

The gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy, may give specific help and encouragement when we most need it. We need to be active in both giving prophecy (to help others) and receiving it (to help ourselves!).

3. Keep trusting God even when you're doubtful.

Many questions can diminish faith and increase cynicism. But Mary asked questions that led her to increased faith. We must do the same as Mary. Sometimes we will need to pray, *"God help me in my unbelief!"*

Questions:

- **Embracing or Avoiding Change.** People are different! Do you prefer to embrace change or avoid it in your life? What kinds of change do you pursue and what do you avoid?
- **God's favour.** Do you associate God's favour with circumstances in your life? Why is that an unhelpful connection?
- **Hearing God through changing seasons.** How can you keep yourself listening to God through seasons of change? How can we prepare ourselves ahead of time?
- **Processing.** When going through change do you bury your head or ask a dozen questions? What can be unhelpful about either approach?



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