

GOD'S CHANGE AGENTS

Introduction

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God's Agents For A Changed Society.... Tonight, I want us spend some time looking the passion, the vision, the attitude and character of a Change Agent. If you want to be a doctor, you would find out what a doctor needs to learn, what he does everyday.

I have been drawn to **Isaiah 61** in the last few days and if there ever was a vision for God's Change Agents this will be it.

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

Mohandas Gandhi

You are the Salt of the Earth, you are the light of the world.

Jesus of Nazareth

God is calling the would-be change agents to stand up, step out in faith and make an impact in their world. Our faith is useless unless it makes a significant difference in the way we interact and shape our world.

Matthew 14: 25-32

Early in the morning Jesus came walking towards them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

If there was a book for Change Agents it is called "If you want to walk on water you've got to step out of the boat" by John Ortberg. It's a great book and its message is timely for God's Change Agents.

When we see the turmoil and the Crisis that our world is in there is a temptation to ask where is God.

I want to make one thing clear, God is always at work, doing amazing things that shape and impact our world. God is a water-walker, he walks on water; able to do more than we can imagine or even think of. But God is looking for ordinary people who will step out of the boat and walk on water with Him.

2Chronicles 16:9 “for the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.”

God is waiting for someone to put their faith in him so they can do extraordinary things through Him.

So what I am saying to you here is that God is in the business of changing and impacting this world and he’s looking for people who are to become Change Agents.

You might be sitting there saying yes I know that God wants me to be a Change Agent but how does a Change Agent look like and how can I become one?

The Description of World Changers:

1. Change Agents are ordinary people with faith to attempt extraordinary through Christ.

When we look at the bible and the people that God uses to accomplish his will on earth we see that God uses ordinary, often imperfect people, the kind of people that most of us will pass by.

God used people like ...

Jacob, a deceiver and a runaway to father a nation of Israel

Moses, a murderer turned shepherd- a man so timid he told God to look elsewhere – to lead Israel out of bondage.

Rahab, a prostitute, to play a vital role in helping Israelites take the Promised Land. Her name even appears in the genealogy of Jesus (Mathew 1:5)

David, a humble shepherd boy and youngest in his family, who later committed adultery – to be Israel’s greatest King and wrote most of the psalms in bible.

Do I need to say more? Change Agents are ordinary people, people like Peter a fisherman who stepped out of the boat and walked on water. What Peter did that night was an ultimate act of faith. Faith is not the same as Foolishness! Faith is quite different; it is based on who you put your trust in! Peter didn't just jump out of the water like a fool would but he did something very important. We read in verse 28 "*Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus*" Peter asked for a command from God to step out of the boat. He sought God's approval, because if God said it, a man of faith says I believe it if God said it, a man of faith says it can be done. He stepped out of the boat in faith that Jesus was there for him and would enable him to do an extraordinary thing. Where is your faith? Is it your ability, in your past success, in the people you know or the wealth and education you have accumulated over the years? Psalm 20:7 "Some trust in Chariots and some in horses but we trust in the name of the Lord our God." Change Agents attempt extraordinary things only through faith in Christ. Change Agents attempt tasks that are too big for them and that is why they need God's help in achieving them. If you can do it by yourself it is not big enough to make a difference.

2. Change Agents step out of the boat of comfort and the familiar.

Most of us want to walk on water; we desire to make a significant impact in this world. There is something in us – someone in us telling us there is so much more to life than sitting in the boat. Something in us that tell us "You were made for more than merely avoiding failure, to abandon yourself to the great adventures of following God.

If you look at all the examples of the world changers in the Bible: Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Esther, Jesus, Peter and Paul they all had to leave what was comfortable and familiar behind to attempt what God called them to do. You can't change your world inside the boat; you have got to go to where the storm is.

Our boat today is comfort and ease; we do not want to leave the comfort zone. Your boat can be anything that is keeping you from attempting great things for God: Your boat of comfort is whatever you are afraid of leaving behind. What are you afraid of leaving behind? It can be your Career, your Job, a Relationship, Secrecy, your Parents Approval, and Success. If you are going to be a Change Agent you have got to step out of the boat of comfort and familiar.

3. Change Agents see opportunities in a crisis. People of Vision.

When Jesus came to the disciples walking on water, it was the early hours of the morning and that the wind was so strong that the disciples were doing all in their might to keep the boat afloat. The disciples were in a middle of a CRISIS when Jesus came to them walking on water. It was within this Crisis that Peter stepped out of the boat and walked on water. There is a Crisis going on around us in this world and most of us are found trying with all our might to keep the 'Boat' the 'Church' afloat. We have found comfort within the walls of our churches that we are not involved in the Crisis out there! In the Chinese language 'Crisis' stands for danger or opportunity. While there is danger out there Change Agents are people that see the opportunity to make a difference in the midst of that danger. Esther saw an opportunity to save the whole nation of Israel in the midst of Crisis. While there was a clear and a present danger, she could have lost her life, but she also saw the opportunity to make a difference. "Seize the opportunity of a life-time in the life time of that opportunity." Will you seize that opportunity, to bring young people into a saving knowledge of Christ while it is still available? Or will you be intimidated by the danger that is also present?

4. Change Agents sometimes fail but refuse to be failures.

Peter did walk on water that night, he attempted what no other ordinary man had ever done before and he walked on water. Peter also failed that night for a split second, he looked at the danger that surrounded him and he doubted. For a moment Peter allowed fear to replace faith and as he did he started to sink. It's easy for us to focus on Peter's failure and forget that there were 11 others that never walked on water, 11 others who would never share in that experience. Change Agents don't get it right all the time, Goodness No! As a matter of fact Change Agents often make the biggest mistakes and fail greatly because they attempt great things. Before Jonas Salk developed a vaccine for Polio that finally worked, he tried two hundred unsuccessful ones. Somebody asked him, "How did it feel like to fail 200 times?" "I never failed 200 times in my life," Salk replied. "I was taught not to use the word 'failure'. I just discovered 200 ways how not to vaccinate for polio."

Did Peter fail? Yes! Was Peter a Failure? No! Peter went on to do more great things for God. Failure does not shape you; the way you respond to failure shapes you. Change Agents sometimes fail but they refuse to be failures.

5. Change Agents are confronted by fear but are never controlled by it.

Every time you attempt to do something much greater than anything you have done you are confronted with fear. I am sure that Peter was afraid and rightly so, he was leaving the safety of the boat in the middle of the storm. What was he thinking? Was he crazy? I am sure all of these questions were running through his mind. The most annoying thing about fear is that it never goes away. Every time you attempt something new, something big it comes up all over again. World changers deal with fear all the time they attempt something for God but they never allow fear to control them. They conquer fear through faith, which is the only way to conquer fear. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of love power and a sound mind." Each time you want to grow you must step into a new territory and leave the comfort of what you are used to. *"The wealthiest place on earth is not gold mines, diamond mines, oil wells or silver mines of the world, but it is the cemetery. Because buried in the graveyard are dreams and visions that were never fulfilled, books that were never written, paintings that were never painted, songs that were never sung and ideas that died as ideas. What a tragedy, the wealth of the cemetery."* Dr Myles Munroe

You can't run away from fear if you want to attempt great things. Everything is risky, if you are looking for absolute safety and also want to be used by God to make a difference in this world you have chosen a wrong path.

6. Change Agents are men and women of Character.

Finally, Change Agents are men and women of Character. Character is who you are when no one is watching. Character is developed over time, it is developed by constantly making the right choices and being true to what you believe.

Charles Swindoll said: The World Needs Men

- Who cannot be bought;**
- Whose word is their bond;**
- Who put character above wealth;**
- Who are larger than their vocations;**
- Who do not hesitate to take chances;**
- Who will not lose their individuality in a crowd;**
- Who will be as honest in small things as in great things;**
- Who will make no compromise with wrong;**

**Whose ambitions are not just their own selfish desires;
Who will not agree just because everybody else does it;
Who are true to their friends through good and evil;
Who are not afraid to stand for the truth when it is unpopular;
Who say “no” with emphasis, although the rest of the world says “yes.”**

Change Agents say like Daniel, “I will serve only God even though you throw me into the Lion’s Den”, like Shadrack, Meshach and Abednigo they say “I will not bow to any other even though you throw me in a fiery furnace.” Change Agents have a Character that cannot be shaken. They have Faith to attempt great things leaving their comfort Zones. Their attitude defies Fear and refuse to be failures. They have vision to see opportunities in the midst of a crisis.