

June 2, 2013

STEPPING INTO A NEW SEASON

by Pastor Clarissa Martinelli

This morning I want you to look around you. Look over this building, and the faces of those sitting around you. You see, this is a different place than when you walked in this morning. And those of you who came into this place this morning are different, because you just stepped into a new season.

You thought you were just coming to church, but you didn't count on moving into a new level, a new dimension of God this morning.

I want you to look at the person on your right and tell them, "I just stepped into a new season."

God called David Livingston to do a great work for Him in Africa. On arriving there Livingston declared, "Anywhere, only forward." God has called us as His people to do a great work for His glory. We must go forward. We must be a people of vision and action. Someone has said that there are three kinds of people in the world: those who don't know what is happening, those who watch things happening, and those who make things happen.

We have those times in our lives when it seems we have stepped from sure footing onto shaky ground. Looking back, we find that everything seemed so certain. But in the present we feel like someone standing on a log in the middle of a river, frantically moving our feet this way and that, with our arms outstretched and trying to keep our balance.

I'm sure that's how Peter felt when he got out of the boat. Along with the other disciples, he was in a storm, but as a fisherman, he was used to that and the boat was a place of safety for him. It was familiar and required relatively little faith to stay in the boat. Despite his fear, if Peter was to go under while in the boat, he could use his own strength and do what he knew to do in order to save himself. But the minute he stepped over the side of the boat and placed his foot solidly on the top of that first wave, he was in foreign territory.

Walking on water isn't something you do halfway. In the same way, you either commit totally to the Lord, or you don't. That's where God separates the men and women from the boys and girls. However unnerving it may be to find yourself

standing in the most unlikely, unpredictable circumstances as Peter did, it's really a place of surety. When you put your trust in the Lord and commit to follow Him wherever He leads, you've actually stepped out of the boat and onto the solid rock. God will never allow you to utterly fall when you are living by faith.

Psalm 37:6 says, *"He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light."* Abraham was counted righteous because of his faith. He left his normal routine in order to follow God's voice. From that day on, his life was changed. When his enemies attacked him, they were destroyed. When people tried to curse him, God cursed them. His life was indelibly etched into the tablets of history. **Isaiah 30:15** says, *"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and confidence is your strength."*

If you are facing a time of uncertainty in your life right now, I beg you to return to the Lord. Orchestrate your schedule in such a way that you can have some time alone with the Lord. Come back to that place of rest, the place where you first met Jesus. You remember it, don't you? It was there, in your "Garden of Eden", as you walked with Jesus in the cool of the day, that you found your confidence in God. You knew in the deepest part of your soul the reason why you were created. You knew you would never be alone. You knew you could never fail. Your mind was quiet before the Lord, and He spoke without hindrance into your life.

IT'S TIME TO BREAK FREE FROM CYCLES, HABITS AND PATTERNS IN OUR LIVES THAT HAVE BEEN UNPRODUCTIVE AND UNHEALTHY. ("YOU'VE BEEN CIRCLING THIS MOUNTAIN LONG ENOUGH.")

We must never accept as permanent what is supposed to only be temporary – never give the 'temporary' permission to become 'permanent'.

I'm finding more every day how invaluable regular times with Jesus really are. It's bearing fruit in every area of your life. Your joy will increase, which enables you to more boldly share the Gospel. You're able to see past the temporal, frustrating circumstances that you often have to deal with and into God's plan for YOU. Your thoughts are more orderly. There is a peace in your heart that is not shaken by external things. It is wonderful. It's killing every bit of jealousy and strife in us. Worry is becoming less of an issue. Also, it is freeing us to serve others. I could go on and on, but I think you get the picture.

This is my prayer for each of us as we step into the next phase of our life, into our new season. And just because you are going through some stuff, or have gone

through a rough season, doesn't mean God is finished with you because "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." It's not just any old work, but a good work. You've just stepped into a new season.

Every time I hear the word "season" I think of the song "Turn, Turn, Turn." Pete Seeger and the Byrds recorded it in 1965. The majority of people who heard and liked this song had no idea it was based on the words found in the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes.

There are seasons you didn't want to go through. But through those seasons you learned some things. And you wouldn't have learned them if you hadn't gone through some things.

There are seasons you've gone through, that you don't know why you had to. But there is a reason for that season.

Change is inevitable. It's going to happen. We look outside at the world around us and notice things are different today than they were ten years ago, last year or even yesterday. But remember we serve a God of seasons.

One day Peter was just an ordinary fisherman until, I said until, Jesus came walking by. And when Jesus gave Peter the word, his life was changed.

Jesus said follow me and I will make you. Peter stepped into a new season, and was changed. He was made into, transformed, from a nobody to a somebody. In other words, Jesus was going to make something Peter wasn't before. There was more than just a change in vocation that occurred in Peter; an inward change took place.

The word "make" in the Greek can also be translated "sprout forth". There is a miracle in you. And the seasons in your life have served a purpose to nurture that seed, and now, today, you have stepped into a new season in which that miracle is about to sprout forth.

A new season always brings new challenges.

Peter's faith was challenged by stepping out of a storm battered boat to walk on the water.

But remember, there is purpose for every season. What Peter didn't know, and

many of us today fail to realize is, that Christ's love is greater than you're failures. When you fail to meet the challenge, there is a grace and a mercy that is far greater than your shortcomings.

Now Peter had a choice. He could have done what many of us do today, which is to use our failures as an excuse as to why we can't continue seeing our miracle lived out in our lives. But that was before he had his encounter with the risen Savior.

A new season can always transform lives.

To everything there is a season and a purpose under Heaven. God loved each of us before the world was created. He knows us by name. God will always guide and direct us through all the seasons of life.

May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7). And may you also find this beautiful place of rest in the Lord.

Can God change your life?

God has made it possible for each and every one of us to know Him and experience an amazing change in our own life. Discover how you can find peace with God.