

Week One: Seasons of Change

Welcome: I am so glad to be home, with you, there is no place like home!

Intro: I am in a season of transition, a season of change, and change can be scary.

- I am not leaving ministry to be a Real Estate Agent. I did get my license but primarily so Tina and I can advertise together, but Tina is the one selling houses. So, if you need to buy or sell a house, give Tina a call.
- For Tina, after being home for 25 years, that has been a big change.
- In the next few weeks Tina and I are going to be empty nesters. When that happens, she may buy a house at the beach, just to have some space, I'm not sure, we will have to see. That is a big change.
- **Sabbatical:** God what do the next 5 years of ministry look like? What are you inviting me into? How is my role changing? What do I need to give away to our team and what are the things only I can do?

As I have thought about that question, for two months, I began to realize is this, throughout my life, just like you, I have been through dozens of transitional moments and every time I come to the realization, **"I've never done this before."**

- When Tina and I got married, had kids, and now parenting adult kids. **I've never done this before.**
- When we moved to Greensboro, began pastoring Definition, and during every season of ministry, I found myself saying, **I've never done this before.**
- When you start a new job, move to a new city, get married, have kids, lose a parent, face all kinds of challenges. We find ourselves, in moments of quiet reflection, thinking or even saying, **I've never done this before.**

Illustrate: I remember in October of 2000, Tina and I moved to Greensboro, we moved into Lake Brandt Apartments, I was the new, 27-year-old pastor of Definition Church. I did not know what I was doing. Shortly after arriving, I was invited to attend a Pastor's conference, a leadership conference that was designed to help Pastors create a vision for the church. I remember thinking, how do I create a vision for our little church. How am I supposed to figure out what God wants us to do? **I've never done this before! They taught me something very interesting that day that I have never forgotten;**

The Best Way to See Forward, often is to Look Back!

Illustrate: You guys know what season is right around the corner, right? (Football season) No, deer season. September 12 is opening day for bow season. I love to bow hunt because it is far more challenging. First, you are trying to get within 30 yards of a deer without getting busted. Second, even if a deer is 30 yards away, then you have to draw without being detected and make the shot which is far more difficult than with a rifle. Finally, if you do shoot a deer, with a bow, they do not fall down, they run away and often this happens just before dark. Often by the time you regain composure, climb down out of the tree, and find your arrow, it is completely dark. How do you find a deer in the dark? You follow the blood trail. This can literally take hours, in the dark, looking for one drop of blood, and then another drop of blood, and sometimes that deer runs 100 yards or more before dying,

which may not sound far, but when you are looking for tiny drops of blood in complete darkness, 100 yards is forever. I have done this dozens of times and the truth is, I enjoy it. I love the hunt. However, sometimes the trail goes dry. You cannot find any blood, what do you do? What you don't do, is just start wondering around in the dark. You will get turned around in circles, you could be walking on and destroying your blood trail. There is only one thing you can do. You must look back, usually only a few feet away, but you must find the trail, you must find your last drop of blood. When I look back, I can see the blood trail, I can see where the deer was running, and which direction should be looking. In other words:

The Best Way to See Forward, often is to Look Back! (repeat together)

Read: Joshua 1:1-9

Try to imagine what this moment was like for Joshua. (after the death of Moses/Dr. B)

- Joshua was never been the leader, he's an assistant
- Joshua has never been responsible for the vision
- Joshua has never crossed a flooded river
- Joshua has never faced a fortified city, giants, dozens of kings
- **God, "I've never done this before!" I cannot do this without Moses!**

How many of you would say, I'm in one of those moments right now. Job change, relationship change, health change, family change, a new church, new city, or new friends. I've never done this! What do we do when we find ourselves in the dark, facing a challenge we are unfamiliar with, how do we find our way forward.

The Best Way to See Forward, often is to Look Back!

- **Joshua 1:5, "For I will be with you, as I was with Moses."** Joshua, your future is in God's hands. God is the author of the story and he is writing His story through us. When we are trying to understand the next season of the journey, often it helps to look back.

Top Ten (ESPN, in the gym, my favorite)

1. The Burning Bush — The God who Invites. One day, Moses was minding his own business, when he notices a bush, it is on fire, but is not consumed and when he approaches this bush there is a voice, an invitation, to go to Egypt, to confront Pharaoh. God makes Moses the same promise, I will be with you. **Joshua, look back, I will keep my promise.**

2. The Ten Plagues — The God who Protects! I suspect when Moses walked into the palace of Pharaoh, with a stick, Pharaoh was uncertain if he should laugh or feel pity for Moses. What Pharaoh did not know, Moses was not alone. Moses demanded that Pharaoh let his people go. Pharaoh said no. God had the final word. **Joshua, look back, I will have the final word.**

3. The Passover — The God who Saves! The final plague was a plague of death. However, when the angel of the Lord went through Egypt, striking down the firstborn throughout the land, judgement passed over every home covered in the blood of the lamb. **Joshua, look back, I will show you grace.**

4. The Red Sea — The God who Makes a Way. After Israel left Egypt, Pharaoh changed his mind and they found themselves trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian Army. They began to cry out in fear but Moses said, “Don’t be afraid, just stand here and watch the Lord rescue you today. The Lord Himself will fight for you! God told Moses to stretch out his staff, the waters parted, Israel crossed over on dry land and once they reached the other side, the water came crashing down on the Egyptian army, more than 600 chariots destroyed. **Joshua, look back, I will make a way!**

5. Manna in the Wilderness — The God who Provides. Just imagine the responsibility of feeding millions of people in the wilderness, almost 3,500 years ago. However, for 40 years, God provided manna, every morning, for 40 years. Not only was God providing food, but he was teaching them to trust Him, to depend on Him, and turn to him every day. **Joshua, look back, I will be your daily bread.**

6. Water from the Rock — The God who satisfies. **Joshua, look back, I will be your satisfaction.**

7. The Bronze Serpent- The God who heals. **Joshua, look back, I will keep you strong and healthy.**

8. Mount Sinai- The God who orders my life. **Joshua, look back, I will teach you how to order your life.**

9. The Tabernacle- The God who is always with me. **Joshua, look back, you will never be alone.**

10. Moses served the Lord for 40 years. **Joshua, look back, I will be faithful to you.** “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.” Joshua is not reflecting on the greatness of Moses but on the greatness of God. It’s not the miracles that move us but God’s character, His heart, His presence and faithfulness.

In fact, in the NT, Jesus mentions these moments with Moses. Jesus tells the first century Jews, who are suffering under the tyranny of the Roman Empire, who are afraid and uncertain about their future, look back. Look at Moses, He was pointing to me.

Often the best way to see forward, is to look back!

Are you in a season of uncertainty, a season of transition, are you struggling to find your way? Look back!

Monthly Practice: Evangelism

- Where have you seen God's faithfulness?
- What do you know about the character of God, that anchors your soul in seasons of uncertainty.

"You may not be able to see the road ahead. But you can look back and remember the God who brought you this far." Look back- He has always been faithful

Invitation/Baptism-Resurrection