

On the Move: Part Three – God’s Good Change
Luke Knight
May 21, 2017

Introduction

- June 4 we begin a five week series in Psalm 23.
- Today we’ll wrap up our *On the Move* series as we consider some of Paul’s words in his letter to the Philippians.
- We shared some news about our transition and Lead Pastor discernment process. Have a look at the LWC news articles online later this week for that update in written form or listen to the podcast today.

Philippians 2.1-2, 12-13

So far in *On the Move*

- Week One – New things.
- Week two – Unity / Harmony.
 - Stay, engage (prayer), be patient, be positive, be faithful, rejoice.
- Philippians 2.1-2

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

Humility and Change:

- When we think about Philippians a theme like church unity might come to mind. And that’s only possible because of humility.
- Of course we have that great poem about the humility of Jesus in the middle of the letter, and then Paul’s encouragement for the church to have that same attitude of Jesus.
- But another theme found in the letter, and in our faith in general, is change. Change, growth, adaptation is very much central to the church because it is central, like unity, to God’s good universe.

- Of course some things don't change – God's character, which we can trust, and the mission of the church, to let God's kingdom come into its fullness through our lives.
- But in this unchanging mission the church was never meant to stand still. When things stand still, or don't change or don't grow, they die. And the church is about life, not death, so it is inherently, in a way, always about change, not stagnation.
- This is why Doug has been reminding us: "Transition is not happening to us, but for us and through us."
- As followers of Jesus we should expect and welcome change and growth.
Living things are on the move.

Philippians 2.12-13

- Paul of course understands this, which is why as a good leader he says what he does following that great humility poem about Jesus and his attitude.
- Of course Paul was always moving on, always open to change, often helping the churches he planted remember that to be the church was to be full of life and therefore full of good change.
- But through his letter to the Philippians he gives us some insight into what happens in a healthy community when it experiences change or growth, particularly when a leader moves on.

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

3 Reminders when a good leader moves on

1. The work continues. Why?
 - The leader isn't there to do it. (Jesus and Paul)
 - If it doesn't, what's the point? ("make me truly happy", 2.1-2)
2. Obedience over instruction

- Paul's instruction is ultimately about in showing the Philippians how to obey God.
- Following a good leader is never ultimately about following the instructions, it is about obeying God.
- Just because the leader isn't present to bring instruction does not mean we stop obeying God. In fact, the instruction has been to show us how to obey God.

3. God does the heavy lifting

- Following Jesus is all about participation, doing the work of Jesus alongside others. But when a leader moves on it can be scary because we wonder who will help us to do the work in the future.
- But it's vital to remember that in the end, it is not the leader who does the heavy lifting, not the leader who does the transformation or empowers us to be human.
- The God of life, of change, of growth is working for us, in us and through us!