

Change: It's Always a Possibility!

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During the Saturday afternoon general conference session, I was moved as I watched President Hinckley during one of the congregational hymns. He turned right around and looked at our BYU combined choir—for the longest time. It was not just a brief glance. He stood there gazing. It seemed that he was surveying and studying each student. President Hinckley is the prophet of the Lord. He knows who you as BYU students are. He knows your goodness. He knows your greatness. It struck me that the Lord's prophet is counting on you.

Teaching is a privilege anywhere, but to teach at BYU with you as students who are filled with light and the love of learning and of your fellowmen—well, it just doesn't get much better than that for me as a professor. So even though I want to offer you some ideas about change today, there are many things I hope you will never change. Let me tell you a few:

- Please don't change your goodness—your deep core goodness.
- Please don't change being a cut above any other student body in the land. I believe it. It's true. You are amazing—not perfect, but amazing.
- Please don't change that light in your eyes.
- Please don't change how much you want to help each other. Even when I hear distress

stories about roommates and family members, the distress flows from wanting to have connections with each other that just aren't happening.

- Please don't change your love of the Lord.
- Please don't change your courage to do so many seemingly impossible things.
- Please don't change your desire to keep improving.
- Please don't change your desire for change.

So, let's talk about change. I love change! I love it. I'll admit it. I'm passionate about it. Actually, I'm just plain wild about change! I'm professionally committed to it—and personally enamored by it. Professionally I try to facilitate it and study it, and I love to participate in it. Personally, I advocate it, seek after it, and, basically, am in awe of it.

Personally and professionally I am a detective of change. I want to discover change when everyone else says there is none present nor possible. I guess that's as close as I come to my Sherlock Holmes name of "Dr. Watson."

For 25 years I have had the privilege of working with other seekers of change—they go

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by the title of “clients”: individuals, couples, and families who want change. They want something to be different in their lives.

I’m not sure when my love of change commenced, but I still remember the thrill that accompanied one of the first big changes in my life: the change of advancing from riding a tricycle to riding a bicycle. The brief sinking feeling that accompanied my awareness that my Dad had let go of the back of my bike and was no longer running alongside and holding me up was quickly replaced by exhilaration. I was riding a two-wheeler—all by myself! A few wobbles on the heavily graveled road and I was off! I could go further, faster. My world suddenly got bigger.

I loved this change. And I loved the exhilaration that accompanied this change. A change in the number of wheels on my vehicle changed my speed, changed what I could explore, changed even my view of myself. I was all grown up now—or so I thought. And I loved those changes.

My progression to a bicycle was a change that involved much more than a decrease in wheels. It involved moving forward in my life—and realizing that my Dad believed I could move forward, even forward faster than I thought I could. I was embracing something new I’d never tried before. Riding a bicycle didn’t feel anything like riding a tricycle. It felt more like flying!

When I advanced from two-wheeling it on a bicycle to two-wheeling it on a brand-new blue Honda 50, I was in ecstasy. By paying for half of this marvelous flying machine, this change in mode of transportation brought increased responsibility into my life. This change also brought increased confidence, increased vulnerability, and increased possibilities—all part of the wonderful world of change.

My blue Honda 50 introduced me to another world: the world of men. I met a young man with a red Suzuki. Think of that: a red Suzuki and a blue Honda—now this was

true, everlasting love. Well, at least for a summer—and then all that changed.

There have been times when change seemed to push itself into my life—totally uninvited. When I was nine years old, my baby brother, David, was born on the first day of fall classes—September 1. After school I walked all over town with a Polaroid picture of David clasped in my hands, knocking on doors, asking neighbors if they wanted to see my brand-new baby brother. When I returned home I learned how quickly things can change. David had died, having lived only 8.5 hours. That was a change I never anticipated. But with that change, my understanding of life and death changed as my grandmother talked to me in my bedroom that afternoon about the reality of life after death. This new understanding of life, now situated in the reality of my baby brother’s death, and the increasing reality of eternal life, slowly loosened the grip that grief had on my nine-year-old heart—grief arising from this unanticipated change.

There have been times when I anticipated change and change did not happen—like the times when I was so certain about a change in my last name corresponding with a change in my marital status. I said “yes” to several young men—sequentially, I might add—who posed the question “Wilt thou?” And I wilted! Unfortunately, on those occasions I responded to those young men before I really sought the Lord’s opinion. However, upon hearing the Lord’s voice, I followed his counsel and ended those relationships. I’ve learned to seek the voice of the Lord a bit sooner since then.

What are the changes that you have experienced in your life? Which ones were invited and anticipated? Which were anticipated yet never materialized? Which were uninvited yet marvelous? Which were uninvited and soul-wrenching?

Change is always happening. Change requires much of us, and change changes us. How have you responded to the changes in

your life? Think of a change that came into your life, uninvited, that you did not want and that was soul-wrenching. How did you respond to it: by turning toward the Lord and drawing closer to him or by turning away?

I've had the privilege of observing the responses of many people to these difficult situations. Let's consider just a few:

A father commits suicide. His daughter is angry at God and turns away from him, believing that the Lord and her father have both deserted her.

A husband commits adultery. Both husband and wife turn toward the Lord for comfort and answers to agonizing questions.

A mother dies. Her son turns away from the restored gospel and back to old views of God and to his former religion.

A woman feels a change coming into her life. It doesn't come—at least not when she thought nor as she thought, and she turns to God for the reassurance that all is still well.

Your best friend marries your fiancé. That change brings about a whole new way of turning to the Lord.

What are the changes that have influenced your life? You've heard the old adage: "The only thing you can count on for sure is that things will change." Some of you may say that you can't handle one more change in your life right now. Perhaps you've experienced too much change in a very compressed period of time. Perhaps you are like the young man who returned home from his mission to find that his parents were divorcing, his father was excommunicated, his fiancée welcomed him home with the Dear John letter in hand, all the classes for his major were full, his prospective roommates were moving, and the company he was going to work for had gone bankrupt. When changes like that happen all at once, it can be very difficult to hold on, to go on, without sustaining help from the Lord and from those that the Lord raises up to assist you.

Such changes can even threaten your spiritual stability and sense of peace.

Others of you may be saying: "I could use *more* change in my life—let's start by adding to the few cents left in my bank account at this point in the semester."

"I also could use a change of scenery. I'm ready to be up *in* the mountains, not just looking up *at* them."

"Give me a change of activities—I'm tired of studying."

And maybe some of you are praying for a change of heart—not your own, but your professors'—as they make grade calculations during the next few weeks.

What change would make the biggest difference in your life at this time? A change in your thinking, your behavior, your feelings? Would you want a change in a relationship or a change that would allow you to *have* a relationship? A change in the way you see yourself or in the way you believe others see you? A change in your abilities, your qualities? Or do you most desire a change in your nature, or a change of heart?

Change—and beliefs about change—are all around us. Some people believe that change is not desirable at all or is a totally hopeless pursuit: "Only a wet baby likes change," teases the bumper sticker. "The more things change, the more they remain the same," protests a French saying (Alphonse Karr, *Les Guêpes* [January 1849]).

When we find ourselves complaining about the same thing to a friend year after year; when we make the same resolutions every New Year's Eve; when the bathroom scales obnoxiously declare you are still 10 pounds overweight—we may wonder if there is such a thing as change.

Or we may wonder if *real* change is truly possible. Yet my teaching, clinical, and research experiences tell me that people desire change, do indeed change, and—more important—change is always occurring.

Beliefs and Change

So, how does change occur?

Through my research with families, I have come to believe that therapeutic change occurs as the belief that is at the heart of the matter is identified, challenged, or solidified (see Lorraine M. Wright, Wendy L. Watson, and Janice M. Bell, *Beliefs: The Heart of Healing in Families and Illness* [New York: Basic Books, 1996]).

Ancient Hebrew tradition held that the heart could think. It is the heart-generated and heartfelt thoughts, those affectively saturated cognitions that influence feelings and actions, those beliefs of the heart—even those beliefs in one’s deepest heart of hearts—that I am interested in distinguishing, challenging, or solidifying.

These are the beliefs that matter: The beliefs of the heart that are at the heart of the matter. These are the beliefs that provide the greatest leverage for change. These are core beliefs and can either be constraining or facilitating of change. Facilitating beliefs increase options to finding solutions to problems. Constraining beliefs decrease solution options.

Let me share with you some constraining beliefs that inhibited change:

- One couple spent years building walls to protect their hearts, which had been hurt in the midst of an affair. They had walled each other out. They wondered why they felt so lonely and unfulfilled in their marriage. The constraining belief that held each of them captive and prevented them from reaching out to each other at the very time they most needed each other was “I am not loveable and am not worthy of love.”
- A man ruled by anger that oppressed his wife, his children, and himself held to the belief “I am the holder of all truth and light.” This constraining belief invited frustration, anger, and unrighteous dominion into his relationships.

- A young man seeking assistance with his almost lifelong battle with pornography believed “I am weak!”
- A couple struggled to find new ways of relating with each other after years of silence and suffering. Each felt misunderstood and underappreciated, and each believed “My spouse doesn’t care about my feelings and what life in our marriage has been like for me.”
- The widow of a man who won the million-dollar lottery one year and committed suicide the next New Year’s Eve believed “I am to blame for my husband’s death.”

Each of these constraining beliefs prevented solutions from being found and in most cases invited the belief that a solution was impossible. What beliefs about yourself, others, or life constrain you from taking the next step toward making the changes you desire in your life?

One belief that consistently constrains change is the belief that “there is only one correct view, and I have it!” Being passionate about your ideas is one thing—even a great thing. Offering your ideas to others and understanding that they may hold different ideas than you do can be the essence of a congenial discussion—even of a discussion that merges into a warm disputation. However, *insisting* that someone must change their ideas to comply with yours is more than demanding—it is demonic!

President Howard W. Hunter pointed out the Lord’s approach to influencing others:

*God’s chief way of acting is by persuasion and patience and long-suffering, not by coercion and stark confrontation. He acts by gentle solicitation and by sweet enticement. He always acts with unfailing respect for the freedom and independence that we possess. [“The Golden Thread of Choice,” *Ensign*, November 1989, p. 18]*

One of our hymns sets this same truth to music:

*He'll call, persuade, direct aright,
And bless with wisdom, love, and light,
In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind.*
["Know This, That Every Soul Is Free," *Hymns*,
1985, no. 240]

You cannot *make* someone change his/her mind. But you can invite and entice, offer and persuade, and then respect what he/she chooses to do.

Invitations to Reflection Facilitate Change

Through clinical research I have found that change is most likely to occur when we are invited to a reflection. Through the process of reflection we can become aware of ourselves and others in a whole new way.

When I read Alma, I experience him as a man who is passionate about change and a man expert in the art of inviting others to reflect—reflections that increase the likelihood that people will change.

Just how does Alma invite these change-inducing reflections? One way is through his use of questions. In Alma 5 alone, more than 40 questions are offered—questions like:

*Have ye received his image in your countenances?
Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? . . .*

. . . If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now? [Alma 5:14, 26]

Through the process of persistent questioning, Alma invites us to reflect over and over again: on our status with the Lord, on our spiritual growth and development, on things that need to change or have changed—and before we know it our desire for more change increases.

The next time you want an incredible experience with reflection—to see just what it feels like to be invited and enticed to change, to have your stance of “I’m just fine” or “I can’t

change” persistently chiseled away at—read Alma chapter 5—maybe several times. Notice how your thoughts about yourself and your possibilities for change are altered through Alma’s relentless questioning. I love Alma. I love his devotion to change and I love his use of questions that invite reflection.

Perhaps you have invited yourself to a reflection lately through the multitude of questions that are on your mind these days. What are the questions that you are asking yourself?

I am impressed that the questions my clients often ask themselves are variations on:

- Am I worthy?
- Have I been forgiven of my sins?
- Am I clean before the Lord?

They know that *no other change can compensate for failure in this area.*

What reflection would allow you to see yourself and perhaps someone else in a different way—a way that would add to your desire for change?

One husband was invited to reflection and experienced a major wake-up call when he listened to a portion of an audiotape of my therapy session with his wife. She had offered the tape to him because in the session she was able to articulate some of her core beliefs: The belief that he did not see her as equal to him. The belief that nothing she had contributed to their marriage had made a difference to him.

He telephoned me in deep grief—a deep grief born of a deeper understanding of his wife’s pain.

“I never knew,” he said. “I never knew I caused her this much pain.”

His voice is a voice of authority in her life. His words can heal her pain or induce more pain.

Voices of Authority

Who are the voices of authority in your life? Which voices really matter to you? Which voices constrain change in your life? Which voices support and sustain the changes you so

desire? Are the present voices of authority in your life voices that help you be who you really are? Voices that help you step up and speak right into the microphone about what's really in your heart? Voices attached to ears that really want to hear your voice, your ideas, and encourage you to listen to the voice of the Lord in your life?

Or are they chiding voices, mocking voices, strident voices? Voices that cleverly call "obedience" a far too simpleminded approach to life? Voices that are so sophisticated in their disparagement of others that you start to believe you are missing something in your own assessments? Voices that move you away from who you really are? Voices that silence your inner voice? Voices that make your voice a stilled, small voice?

And what if you are the voice of authority in someone else's life? It matters to that person what you think about them. Are you the keeper of some words that would make all the difference in someone else's life? Are you willing to speak the words of healing, comfort, and cheer? Have you already got clues about what someone is longing to hear from you? What would need to be different for you to offer those words—honestly, and from your heart?

As the voice of authority in someone else's life, have you unwittingly been silencing their voice—through your sermonettes, through your over-explanations and defenses of your actions, through inviting them to defend themselves by asking, "Why did you do that?" and yet never accepting their explanations or apologies? If you are the voice of authority in someone else's life, you are also the ears of authority. You need to listen.

Listen and ask: "Tell me about the pain you experienced because of what I did—or someone else did. Tell me. Tell me more."

Ask and listen: "Tell me about the joy you are experiencing these days because of the decision you made. Tell me. Tell me more."

There is an extra level of healing that occurs when ears of authority are able to hear the exquisiteness of a loved one's pain and joy. Change is accelerated!

As helpful as human voices of authority are, none can or should replace the ultimate voice of authority—the Word himself: the Savior Jesus Christ. What are you doing to hear his voice in your life? What are you doing to establish his voice as the voice of authority for you? His voice will strengthen yours and provide direction and courage—especially for those times when you need to speak "the unspeakable." And for some of us, the unspeakable that we have needed to say to others is: "I love you," "I really need you in my life," or "I am so sorry." As you learn to hear the voice of the Lord in your life, you will be increasingly drawn to hear who you really are.

Caterpillars and Change

A story is told of a caterpillar named Yellow who was trying to find out what she should be doing with her life. In her wanderings she discovered another caterpillar seemingly caught in some gauzy, hairy filament. Concerned, she asked if she could help. He explained that this was all part of the process of becoming a butterfly.

When she heard the word *butterfly*, her whole insides leapt. "But what is a butterfly?"

The cocooned caterpillar explained: "It's what you are meant to become."

Yellow was intrigued but a bit defiant. "How can I believe there's a butterfly inside you or me when all I see is a fuzzy worm?"

On further reflection she pensively asked, "How does one become a butterfly?"

And the answer? "You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar." (From Trina Paulus, *Hope for the Flowers* [New York: Paulist Press, 1972], pp. 67–75.)

I love that.

"How does one become a butterfly?"

“You must want to fly so much that you are willing to give up being a caterpillar.”

So, what are you willing to give up being so that you can fly? Your spirit wants to fly! Your spirit remembers your premortal assignments and aspirations. What are you willing to give up believing so that you can be all you really are—all that you committed you would be?

Perhaps the words of Lorenzo Snow will help. He said:

*Jesus was a god before he came into the world and yet his knowledge was taken from him. He did not know his former greatness, neither do we know what greatness we had attained to before we came here, but he had to pass through an ordeal, as we have to, without knowing or realizing at the time the greatness and importance of his mission and works. [Lorenzo Snow, in *First Presidency, President's Office Journals, 1899–1901*, 8 October 1900, pp. 181–82, Archives Division, Church Historical Department, Salt Lake City; cited in Truman G. Madsen, *The Highest in Us* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), p. 9]*

Like Yellow, the caterpillar, whose insides leapt at the very sound of the word *butterfly*, what marvelous words, recurring phrases, lofty thoughts, grand concepts, memorable people, and unforgettable places make your whole insides leap these days? Could these internal leapings be premortal stirrings? Brief glimpses of your premortal life?

What comes to your heart and your mind, what happens to your cells and your soul when you ask yourself: “If I were to remember that I was valiant before I came here—that I have to pass through an ordeal here on earth without remembering what I was like premortally, and without knowing or realizing the greatness and importance of my mission and works now—what would I give up being, doing, feeling, and believing in order to be all that I really am?”

Does that seem too grandiose a belief? Or do you feel truth embedded in those words? What are you willing to give up so that you can arise and shine forth as the valiant daughter or son of God that you really are?

Cocooning

Is it time to give up your caterpillar-like lifestyle? Is it time to give up living beneath yourself? Time to give up the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that keep you groveling on the ground when you could be flying—soaring even? Is it time to lift your sights and cocoon yourself away from the old caterpillar way of life so that your real self can emerge?

What are you willing to give up being so that you can fly? Are you willing to give up your sins, even your favorite ones, to really know yourself and—most important—to really know the Lord? To really come close to him? To rend the veil of unbelief? To access the healing power of the Atonement that is there for you—the power that can be applied to your disappointments, your temptations, your sorrows, and your suffering?

And what would help you? What would provide cocooning for you? Do you remember Alma and his life-changing cocooning process? His cocooning included harrowing reflections about his many sins and comforting memories of his father’s tutoring about the Atonement.

From the depths of his soul Alma cried out to the Lord: “O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death” (Alma 36:18).

Many of us here today appreciate the anguish that prompted Alma’s pleading. And happily many of us are no longer strangers to the joy Alma experienced and expressed: “And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!” (Alma 36:20).

Do you know that joy? Does it help you remember who you really are? You *are* a god or goddess in embryo!

Structural Coupling with the Lord

In whose presence do you really get to be your true self? Who is your closest companion? With whom do you spend the most time? And does your time with your closest companion enhance or diminish your ability to have the Holy Ghost as your constant companion? Whose views are influencing you the most these days? Through repeated interactions, whose image are you receiving in your countenance?

Structural coupling is a biological term that describes a process through which changes in living systems occur (see Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco Varela, *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*, rev. ed. [Boston: Shambhala, 1992]). Structural coupling involves two entities having interactions with each other over a period of time. Each interaction between the two triggers changes. Through this history of interactions, the two distinct entities become less different from each other—they become more alike and there is an increasingly better “fit” over time. Like feet and shoes, like two stones rubbed together, they change in concert with each other.

When you interact with someone or something repeatedly over time, it changes you. Even your interactions with an idea—with an image—changes you. That is why your environment is so important. That’s why what you watch on TV or read or see in magazines is so critical. So *watch* what you watch! Be careful with whom or with what you are interacting. Those recurrent interactions change your countenance. They change your cells. They change your soul.

Do congruent changes arising from recurrent interactions explain why friends begin dressing alike and talking alike? Could struc-

tural coupling explain why couples over time often look alike? Do we grow to look and act like those we love—those with whom we interact a lot? Is structural coupling the way we become more and more like those we admire and honor? Could we, in fact, through our repeated interactions with someone, not only start looking like them but also start seeing like them?

Our ever-changing bio-psychosocial-spiritual structures influence what we see and what is real for us. As Robert L. Millet, dean of Religious Education, said, “We do not see things as *they* really are; we see things as *we* really are” (*Alive in Christ: The Miracle of Spiritual Rebirth* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1997], p. 28; emphasis in original).

Our interactions with others trigger changes in our biological structures, our psychosocial structures, and our spiritual structures. Eyes change, hearts change, cells change, and souls change through structural coupling.

So, who would you most want to *be* like? Who would you most want to *see* like? Who would you most like to *think* like? Whose image would you like engraven upon your countenance?

A sociological principle states: Increased interaction leads to increased sentiment. The more we interact with someone the more feelings we have for them. The biological principle of structural coupling indicates that increased interaction leads to increasingly becoming like the person or thing that we have repeated interactions with.

Come unto Christ and Become More Like Him

The Savior entreats us to come unto him. He wants us to come close to him. He wants us to have increasingly repeated interactions with him and to really get to know him.

According to the sociological principle, our increased interactions with the Lord will lead to increased feelings for him—which will lead

us to want more interactions with him. And, according to the biological principle of structural coupling, our increased interactions with the Savior will lead to our increasingly becoming like him.

And because he never changes, *the changes that would occur through our interaction with the Savior would all be in us.*

As we increase our interactions with the Savior—as we really come unto him—we can become like him. But what does it really mean to come unto him? How can we do that? My interaction with a little three-year-old girl several years ago was a great example to me about the relentless, undaunted effort that can be put forth—that needs to be put forth—when we really want to be close to someone, when we really want to get to know them.

My experience with this little three-year-old gave me some new insights into coming unto Christ. I was attending sacrament meeting in Raymond, Alberta, Canada, in the ward in which I grew up. It was summertime, just a few years ago. As soon as I sat down in the row behind this little three-year-old girl and her family, she had her eye on me. (I think it was my earrings that initially caught her eye.) I asked her what her name was. It was the same as mine: Wendy. When I told her that was my name, too, she was thrilled! So was I.

The Savior wants us to take his name upon us. To have his name.

There was no hymnal near me, so I asked the older sister to hand me one from the row in front of their family. Little three-year-old Wendy heard my request and scurried to the end of her row, passing the knees of her four siblings and parents, and then up to the next row, where she secured the book and brought it back with joy to me.

Now I'm not saying that Wendy's efforts to retrieve that hymnal compared with what Nephi went through to secure the plates—but perhaps her willingness to "go and do" did! (See 1 Nephi 3:7.)

When we hear what the Lord needs us to do, do we respond willingly and quickly? Is that one way to come unto him—to do what he wants us to do and do it quickly? Little Wendy had heard my request and completed this loving act.

Wendy's desire to be close to me was evident when, as my dad and I sang the opening hymn, she leaned over the back of her bench and put her face right on our open hymnal and smiled up into our faces with her big brown eyes filled with light and love.

As the sacrament meeting continued, Wendy found every way she could to connect with me. She entreated me to talk to her, and I complied by softly whispering into her ear. She studied every aspect of my face and hands as much as she could from her position of leaning over the back of her bench. Finally, she could bear it no longer. She shimmied under the bench and up and onto my lap, where she happily, peacefully, joyfully stayed for the rest of the meeting.

Do we feel that same restlessness and urgency to come even closer to the Savior?

(I might add that little Wendy actually made *several* people happy with that move: her parents, who were happy they didn't have to tell her to turn around any more, and the surrounding people in the congregation, who didn't have to listen to her parents telling her to turn around. And I was delighted to have her right there on my lap!)

From Wendy's new vantage point of being up close and personal with me, she was curious about the other people in my family. Pointing to my father, she said: "What's his name?"

I said, "His name is Daddy."

And with a mix of joy, amazement, and awe she said, "I've got a boy named Daddy, too!"

When we are close to the Savior, when we come unto him, we come to understand that not only does he have a Heavenly Father, too—we come to know that his father is our father.

And we know that there was a time in the Garden of Gethsemane when the Savior, out of the depth and breadth of his suffering for us, called out to our Heavenly Father with the most familiar name of “Daddy” when he cried, “Abba!”

With little Wendy on my lap, I whispered into her ear telling her what a wonderful little girl she was, how much her mother and father loved her, and what she could do to show them how much she loved them. She was totally enraptured with hearing these things—totally silent and very reflective.

I believe that in moments of reflection and particularly as we listen to the still small voice, we will hear that we are wonderful and that we are loved. We will know how to show our love to the Lord, how to come even closer to him, and how to have more interactions with him. We will increase in our ability to see more like him, to love more like him, and to be more like him.

The Savior: The Ultimate and Only True and Living Change Agent

The ultimate and only true and living change agent is the Savior. He is the source of all change. He changed water into wine—bringing the very best liquid refreshment to the celebration. As you turn to him, he will bring the very best out of you. He will indeed rescue all that is finest down deep inside of you. And what a celebration that will be!

Ask him. Asking for the Savior’s help is another way to come closer unto him.

The Savior changed eyes. And he can give you the eyes to see what you need to see in order to change your life. He will open the eyes of your understanding. Just ask him.

The Savior changed ears. And he can help you hear his voice, and that will add strength to your own voice. Ask him.

He changed limbs that were weak. And he can change your mobility and direction to help you move to the next level of your life and help you in your efforts to shore up the feeble knees that are around you. Ask him.

He changed a few fishes and a couple of loaves of bread into enough to feed 5,000 people. And he will take your widow’s mite of time, energy, and ability and magnify them, multiply them, so that there is enough and to spare. You just need to ask him.

The Savior changed names: he turned Saul into Paul. And he can help you become his son or daughter. You can thus take upon you his name in a whole new way.

Although our Lord Jesus Christ never changes, he is the quintessential change agent—the only true change agent. Don’t you love that seeming irony: the only true change agent never changes! There is only one true and living change agent—and he changes not. And he loves you. And he loves your desire and your efforts to change.

His desire is for you to change, to have a change of heart, a change of nature, and to, over time, completely cast off the natural man. He did all that he did so that you could change! He is your Savior and my Savior!

We need to actively, persistently plead for the power of his infinite and atoning sacrifice to be applied in our lives. And as we do so, his ultimate healing will bring to each of our lives the ultimate change. I promise you this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.