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ITS 2024 TIME FOR A CHANGE!

Dear Chosen One: **"To everything there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven."** (Ecclesiastes 3:1) It is time for a change! Not too many people like change and not too many will embrace change when it comes. Some people will go out of their way to stop, prevent, avoid, and even try to reverse change when it comes. How many of you believe that it is time for a change in your life? I know some people feel that it's not them who need to change, it's the church. However, when we as individuals start to change, the **"Body of Christ"** will reflect the change that many of you are looking for.

Changes come in many forms. Anything that remains stagnate is not changing. If you consider yourself to be a Christian, have a personal relationship with Jesus and you are living a God centered life—when changes come, you should accept them as something coming from God. No one or nothing can intercept your life without God's approval. Remember Job? The devil could not touch Job unless he got permission from God.

Humans are prone to resist change even though we know it is an essential part of our growth. Seasons come and go but we want to remain the same. From a Biblical perspective, let us look at some of the people whose lives were changed after they had an encounter with Jesus.

Mary the mother of Jesus, was an ordinary girl waiting to get married to Joseph when God interrupted her life. She was given the task to give birth to the Savior and care for Him until God was ready for Jesus to fulfill His divine purpose on the cross.

The sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet, her life was changed after she finished anointing

Jesus' feet. The Bible says, **"And behold a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wipe them with the hair on her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil."** Jesus told those who had invited Him that **"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven for she loved much."** (Read Luke 7:36-50). Her personal interaction with Jesus brought about a change in her life.

The woman at the well—she too had a personal encounter with Jesus and her life was changed. She came to draw water from a natural well and she met the Spiritual well—Jesus who contained **"Living Water."** This woman who was probably secretive about the many unsuccessful relationships she had, left the well a changed woman. She went back to her community proclaiming the Gospel and pointing others to the Messiah, the One who changed her life. (Read John 4:7-26).

They were ready to stone the woman who was caught in adultery, but when they brought her to Jesus, the **chief cornerstone**, the religious leaders dropped their stones and walked away. (Read John 8:3-11).

The lives of Mary and Martha were changed after Jesus raised Lazarus, their brother, from the dead. Throughout the Bible, we read about many people whose lives were changed after they met Jesus. No one can remain the same after they have an encounter with Jesus. Therefore, I often wonder what is happening in the lives of those individuals who profess that they are Christians and had various encounters with Christ but who remained unchanged. People, who sit under good Biblical teaching, listen to the Word of God, read the Bible, receive a Word, from the prophet or prophetess, and yet they are still

THIS IS MY SEASON FOR CHANGE AND FAVOR!

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behaving like the old sinner, the who was never saved by grace.

These individuals are still cussing people out, fornicating, stealing, fighting, polluting their temples with all kinds of toxic drugs, nicotine, and alcohol. These are the people who are comfortable in their mess, and really do not want to change their lives. They want to partake in all of God's blessing without Him changing them.

Some changes don't come easy, and changes can be comfortable or uncomfortable. In the winter, I feel uncomfortable because the place is cold, and I don't like the cold. In the summer, when I am enjoying the heat someone else is complaining that he or she is too hot. Seasons change, whether we like them or not since they are needed to enhance the environment. What looks dead in the winter comes alive in spring!

Let me demonstrate how difficult it would be for you right now to do a simple task. I am going to ask you to stop what you are doing right now! Lift your hands up—open your mouth and give God some Praise. Are you feeling uncomfortable? That is what change does to some people.

I just wanted to prove to you how difficult it is for some individuals to embrace or agree to change or do something different. Those who are **unwilling** to make simple or small changes will be very uncomfortable when the time comes for them to make a dramatic change. Some people are asking God to pour new wine into their old wineskin, and He is saying NO! (Matthew 9:17). A changed life is the result of **true repentance**. Repentance is changing your behavior that has produced sin.

When changes start to take place in your life others will tell you, but if you are the only person claiming that you have changed—guess what—you haven't; so, stop deceiving yourself. God often uses people who are willing to change to demonstrate His awesome power and display His glory for others to see. Change is a process that some people delay. Ask yourself, **"Is my life a reflection of God?"** David said, **"Search me O God and know my heart, test me O God, and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting."** (Ps. 139:23-24).

Often time people want to change their appearances, clothes, locations, eating habits, hairstyles, even their religion, but they do not want to change their old habits, ungodly behaviors, stinking thinking, and old mindsets. If we would embrace changes when they come, we would emerge from our season of change stronger, wiser, more loving, while reflecting the Christ Spirit within us.

People of God it is time for a change! I don't want you to change only your clothes and location; I want you to make a commitment to change your life so that it will reflect Jesus Christ our Savior. Often, when people are invited to come to church, when they show up, they are disappointed because some of the people they see ministering or serving *in* the church have been poorly reflecting Christ *outside* the church. They have been behaving as if the devil is their father.

The next time you invite someone to come to church, tell that person come and see Jesus. Come see how God is using some ordinary people who have decided to change their lives. Come see men/women whom God is working on. Come see people who are struggling, but they are still in the race. Come see some people who have a tainted past, but a bright future in Christ. Trust me. Jesus will not disappoint anyone. We are earthen vessels, who are seeking God to change us, but some people have been resisting, avoiding, and even rejecting the changes that God is making in their lives. Why? They have become comfortable in their own mess.

God wants to do something new in your life. Will you embrace and accept it? This is what the Lord says, **"Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I declare; before they spring forth, I will tell you of them."** (Isaiah 42:9).

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20)

CHANGE COMES WHEN YOU EMBRACE IT!