

Good morning! How are you with change? Good? Not so good? Change usually makes me uncomfortable and it takes me some time to get used to. I remember Bob Mumford once telling about a time when God was dealing with him in several areas of his life. During prayer, he sensed God speaking with him saying, "Mumford, you and I are incompatible...and I never change!" This, by the way, is one of the ways you and I are *not* like God. We have to change often in our lives but God never changes (See Mal. 3). Have you ever had to change the way you approach God or the way you think about Him? This can be extraordinarily difficult. I have sometimes had to take a second look at what I have believed about God for years and when that happened, I found it very difficult. This morning, let's look together at a time when some people had to make some difficult changes:

"Your pattern of worship will change. Today all of you are doing as you please, because you have not yet arrived at the place of rest, the land the Lord your God is giving you as your special possession. But you will soon cross the Jordan River and live in the land the Lord your God is giving you. When he gives you rest from all your enemies and you're living safely in the land, you must bring everything I command you—your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, your sacred offerings, and your offerings to fulfill a vow—to the designated place of worship, the place the Lord your God chooses for his name to be honored."

Deut. 12:8-11

In this passage, God--- through Moses--- is preparing His people for some very significant changes. One of those changes is the way they offered worship to God. Even though they had some specific rules for worship, God says here that they have actually been "doing as they pleased", worshiping God any way they wanted. We might think that God is pretty loose about this but apparently, He isn't. There seem to be some things God likes and some things God doesn't like and He may not use the same criteria you and I might use for determining what those things are. This is spelled out in much greater detail in the Old Testament than in the New Testament, where we have very little recorded about how churches worshiped. I have often wondered why that was, since the OT is so specific. Interestingly, God chastised the Israelites for their lax approach but He didn't punish them for it; instead, He gave them another chance. Today, worship in Christian churches varies widely. There are some things I don't like but I expect that God does like. There are some other practices that I realized that I liked, but after examining scripture, concluded that God probably doesn't like. If you discovered that a practice in your church was unbiblical, would you still defend it? Would you ever be willing to change the way you worship?