Change You Can Believe In!
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Intro:
- popular 2008 presidential campaign slogan, “Change You Can Believe In”
- but politics usually don’t bring change you can believe in, because politicians don’t keep all their promises (proposals)
- illus.: Allan, when it comes to your salvation, don’t count on me, because I’m a man, and I’ll let you down at some point

- lesson: Change You Can Believe In – real change you can believe in – word of God

The gospel is a message of change!
- Lk. 5:36-39 Jesus’ kingdom a kingdom of change
  - vs. 36-38 Christ’s kingdom is new, and would be different
    - have to change to be in the kingdom
  - vs. 39 many not willing to change, but satisfied with the old
    - if not want to change, not want to be in Christ’s kingdom

- Lk. 24:46-47 repentance for the forgiveness of sins – change of heart, outward change - turn
  - Lk. 13:3, 5 repent or perish
    - must change to be forgiven, not perish – an unchanging person is a lost person
  - saying: “Resistance to change is a dead-end street . . . .” (Donald Clark, 1997)

- illus.: prodigal son – change, not to sin, live righteously
  - took his inheritance early, spent in on sinful living, broke, ate with swine, returned to his father, repented, confessed sin
  - change (repentance): turn from sin, confess faults, live righteously
  - application: like the prodigal son, we must change our lives, turn from sin to obey righteousness

When you became a Christian, you underwent change!
- overview: process of becoming Christian is a process of change
  - believe (Heb. 11:6), repented (Acts 2:38), confessed (Acts 8:38), baptized (Mk. 16:16)

- Col. 2:11-12 change that occurs – faith in the working of God (change God works in your life)
  - circumcised, old cut off – change
  - buried with Christ, in baptism – change
  - raised up with Christ, through faith in the working of God – change
    - 2 Cor. 5:17 “new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come”
    - illus.: baby’s birth v. being born again spiritually

- application: must have a desire to change, obey God, submit, be changed by God, live a different life
  - saying: “It’s not that some people have willpower and some don’t. It's that some people are ready to change and others are not” (James Gordon, M.D.)
  - most people reject change, but Christians welcome it, to better conform to God’s word
As a Christian, you constantly undergo change!
- Phil. 2:12 Christians: “work out your salvation with fear and trembling”
  - constantly change, guided by God’s word, to be a better Christians today, than yesterday

- out with the old, in with the new - Julissa, popular phrase we hear and read - e.g., new years
  - Eph. 4:17, 20, 23-24 renewed in spirit of mind, put on the new self – change

- Col. 3:1, 3, 5, 9, 10 put on new self, renewed, knowledge – change, word

- illus.: disciples change to live by teacher’s teachings – Jesus, Teacher, change
  - boss, teacher: job is to modify behavior - bring about change in the lives of others
  - student: if unwilling to change, never learn, never grow, never become a better person
  - application:
    - Jesus is our Teacher (Matt. 26:18), the purpose of His teachings is change
    - as His disciples we must change to live according to His teaching

- illus.: rich young ruler – continual change as God’s child to improve in our service
  - ruler: had kept the commandments from youth, asked Jesus what to do to inherit eternal life
  - Jesus: one thing lack, “sell all that you possess and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me”
  - ruler: became very sad, for he was extremely rich
  - Jesus: hard for wealthy to enter the kingdom of God, “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”
  - application:
    - rich young ruler was not willing to change to become more fruitful in his service to God, probably lost his soul unless he finally repented
    - we must continually change to improve in our service to God
    - when we stop changing, we will begin to slide backwards to perdition, and fall away unless we repent

At the resurrection, you’ll be changed for eternity! – ultimate and final change, as we know it
- 1 Cor. 15:50-53 resurrection, changed, immortality – 2 Cor. 5

- Phil. 3:20-21 Jesus transform your body, into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of His power upon you – 1 Th. 4:14-17

- application:
  - if you change in this life, to be the best Christian you can be, Jesus will change you at the resurrection, immortality – gospel of change, become Christian, live as a Christian

- inv.: change today, if you need to be baptized into Christ, or return to the truth as God’s child. . .
  - Change You Can Believe In – stake your soul on – word of God (1 Th. 2:13)

- inv. song