

SEASONS OF CHANGE

When the Apostles Lost Their Leader



THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JOHN

- In John 13-17, Jesus speaks to His chosen 12.
 - Their hearts are troubled by what is soon to happen - 14.1
 - Jesus had just reaffirmed the reality of His approaching death - 13.33-38
 - This change would leave the apostles in an unfamiliar and uncomfortable place – how would they cope with the absence of Jesus? How could they cope with His absence?

THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JOHN

- The Leader visibly took the role of a servant - 13.5ff
 - Jesus washed their feet to show them the kind of leadership that was required of them – 13.12-16
- Jesus directed their hearts and minds to the Source of comfort, peace, and hope - 14.1
 - The confusion and anxiety of Jesus' impending death (13.36) could be assuaged by God.
- They were reminded that obedience was the ultimate way to express their love - 14.15

THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JOHN

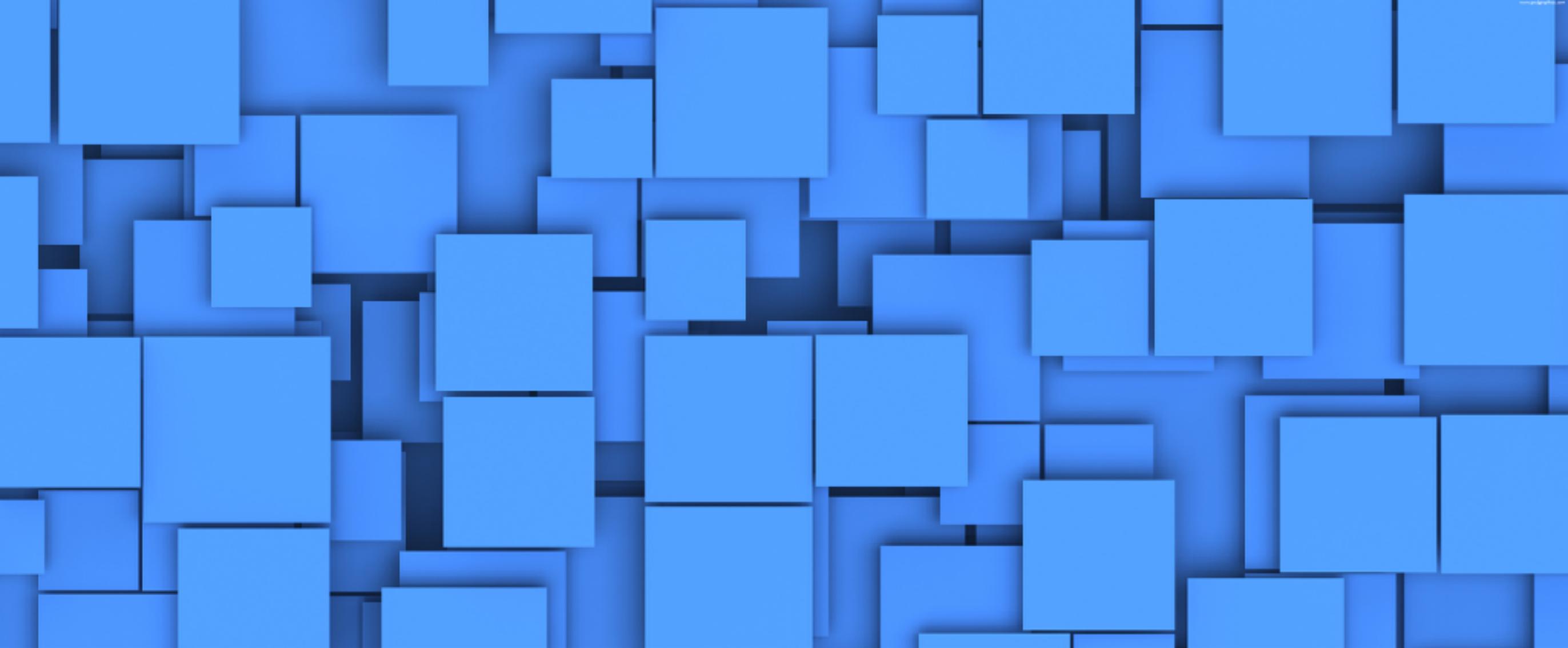
- The Savior ensured help was on its way - 14.16
 - Jesus knew they would need help in the difficulty to follow.
 - Jesus would send the Holy Spirit (15.26) to help the apostles carry on in the absence of Jesus' physical presence.
 - Particularly, the Helper would be reminding the apostles of the powerful words of Jesus – 14.26
- The issue was addressed before it arose - 14.29
 - Problems can often be negated by foresight and communication; thus, Jesus dealt with what would happen.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JOHN

- The apostles were shown that feelings of loss and emptiness could precede something greater - 15.2
 - As a vine must be pruned to allow more fruit to come, so the apostles were pruned (15.3) to bear more fruit.
 - God can bring greatness through difficulty!
- Their fulness would only come through Christ - 15.4
- Love is the weight that would enable them to survive the ferocious winds of change - 15.12f
- That moment was not the right moment to discuss absolutely everything; some questions would be unanswered - 16.12

THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN JOHN

- Their hope was to be founded in Jesus - 16.33
 - In overcoming the world, He had overcome their most staunch opponent – 15.18-23
- The Leader led through prayer - 17.1
 - No storm can be withstood without prayer.
- As they would battle a common enemy in the world, unity amongst themselves was crucial - 17.13ff
 - As their attachment to Jesus preceded all else, their unity was to be firm and enduring, a witness to the world.



SEASONS OF CHANGE

The Challenge of Growth in a Local Church



WHEN THINGS CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

- Leadership is crucially important.
 - Remember what Jesus did:
 - He washed the feet of His apostles (John 13).
 - He ensured help was on the way (John 14.16ff).
 - He looked ahead and communicated early (John 14.29).
 - If we are to follow the example of Jesus:
 - Leaders need to remember their role as servants.
 - Leaders need to foresee and provide for the needs of the church.
 - Leaders need to be thoughtful communicators.

WHEN THINGS CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

- We must not leave the source of our hope and peace.
 - The apostles would be stilled by believing in God and Christ, in spite of the difficulties ahead (John 14.1).
 - The answers to church problems are never found apart from the Father and the Son of God.
 - The apostles' love for Jesus, and indeed our love for Jesus, is seen in our obedience to Him (John 14.15; 15.14).
 - The difficulties we endure can lead to blessing when we rely on Christ (John 15.1-3).
 - The apostles were repeatedly challenged as to their view of Christ.
 - Their pruning allowed them to bear much fruit.

WHEN THINGS CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

- We must clearly understand the enemy.
 - Jesus revealed it was the ruler of the world (14.30) and his dominion (15.18f) that would bring hardship.
 - When change comes, especially in the church, too often the battle turns inward instead of toward the true enemy.
 - We must love each other as Christ loved (15.12).
 - We should seek the best for others instead of self (15.13).
 - We should be friendly to each other (15.14).
 - We should seek the unity that comes through Christ (17.20f).
 - Our prayer life should be active (17.1).

WHEN THINGS CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

- Growth will come when we stay on the vine (15.4-5).
 - The apostles would be challenged repeatedly; but, through their dedication to Christ, growth occurred.
 - Look at the church in the New Testament:
 - They grew in number (Acts 2.41,47).
 - They grew in spirit (Acts 2.42-45).
 - They grew in times of peace (Acts 9.31).
 - They grew in times of strife and difficulty (Acts 12.1,24).
 - Their growth came from their connection with Jesus and His Word; our growth will come from the same!