

"Taking a Risk" -- Devotions

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Hebrews 13:8 – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

- What is the same about Jesus Christ yesterday, today, and forever?
- In this world of constant change, how does this verse speak comfort and encouragement to you?
- As we minister in our ever changing world, we must be attentive to the changing needs of people in our congregation. How is the world different now from 20-25 years ago?
- What changes in our congregation can you remember in the past 10-12 years? Perhaps some of these have changed tradition, but none of them were made in order to shake or change our faith foundations. Can you see any ways that these changes have been positive?

Change in our congregation involves a certain element of risk. And for some people risk is not so easy. How many of you are risk takers? Share a recent risk you have taken. How did it turn out?

You know the best way not to fall off a ladder, don't you? Don't get on it in the first place. But if you have some painting to do at home, you won't be able to complete the project unless you get up on the ladder. So sometimes taking a risk is essential.

Some would say, "I would be willing to take a risk, if only I knew what was at the other end." But then, that wouldn't be a risk, would it?

But let's go with that thought. Would you take a risk if you knew what was at the other end? Would you? Well, let's learn and claim what or rather who is at the other end of every risk.

Activity:

Option 1: Give a fortune cookie with scripture verses to each person. (These can be purchased online through Oriental Trading. Be sure to purchase the fortune cookies with scripture verses inside.) Have the people open their fortune cookie and take turns reading their fortune/verse to the group.

Option 2: Use the scripture verses at the end of this devotional. Print out the verses, cut them in strips, fold them and put them in a bowl or basket. Have each person take a verse. Take turns reading their verse to the group.

So then, who is at the other end of every risk that you take? God! God is there, not only at the end, but at the beginning, in the middle, and every step along the way.

And what if you do take a risk and you do happen to fail? If you fall, you fall right into the arms of God. And that is not such a bad place to be. God will let you rest in those arms for awhile, and then God will set you back up on your feet, and send you forth again, to do what? To risk.

Risk taking is a matter of faith. Trusting that the risk, the idea, the venture, the change has been inspired by the Holy Spirit. And then, it is about having faith that God will see me through this process that has been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Optional.....Let's dream a bit. If you could do anything in your congregation (money is not an object), what would it be? Dream big, there are no limits here. As a group let's see what we can come up with. Use this list as a visioning tool. Pray about these dreams and then listen to the Spirit and follow the Spirit's lead.

More Optional.....Pastors.....Think about 'dreaming big' with the whole congregation. Why not distribute paper/pens during a Sunday morning sermon time and invite all in the congregation to take some moments to 'dream big' and record their dreams on the paper and put it in the offering plate.

Let us pray: Gracious God, we give you thanks for this time of sharing and fellowship. We thank for this church family and the ministry which they do together. Thank you for being here with us right now. Guide our hearts and guide our conversations. Stir your Spirit among us. As we seek your will for the mission and ministry of this congregation make your will known to us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Bible Verses

Psalm 121:8.....The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in.

Psalm 9:10.....Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Mark 10:27.....Without God, it is utterly impossible. But with God everything is possible.

Philippians 4:13.....I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

1 Chronicles 16:34.....Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Psalm 26:3.....So I never lose sight of your love, but keep in step with you, never missing a beat. (The Message)

Psalm 27:1.....Light, space, zest – that's God! So with him on my side I'm fearless, afraid of no one and nothing. (The Message)

Matthew 19:26.....Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God **all things** are possible."

Psalm 121:1.....I lift my eyes to the Lord, from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who makes heaven and the earth.