Keys to lasting change (Jim)
1. We can't change on our own
2. Permanent change always starts with a change in thinking
3. Being honest with yourself, others, and God

Position for change (Laurie)
1. The word
2. The woes
3. The wait

Revelation leads to a decision to change, leads to conflict, leads to growth.

We have to change! If we do, peace, favor, love, all the things God has waiting for us.

If we don't … Killer Kitty

Hmmm…
We live in a moment of history where change is so sped up that we begin to see the present only when it is already disappearing.
R. D. Laing

How many of you want to change?

Today is about winning the conflict that change will inevitably produce.

1. The year was 445 B.C. The Jews had already been in Jerusalem for some ninety years. A number had remained in Babylon and Persia.
2. One of the Jews still living in Persia was Nehemiah. This capable man had been elevated to the position of cup bearer (personal press secretary and valet) to King Artaxerxes, monarch of all Persia.
3. Upon being saddened and then challenged concerning the desperate need about Jerusalem's wall-less and defenseless city, Nehemiah goes to the Holy City and builds the necessary walls.
4. Nehemiah was a younger contemporary of Ezra.
   a. Ezra was a priest and Bible teacher. His main job concerned the purification of the people of Jerusalem.
   b. Nehemiah was a politician and builder. His main job concerned the protection of the people of Jerusalem.
5. King Artaxerxes had shown kindness to Ezra some ten years before, and would also honor Nehemiah's request to return to Jerusalem. This king was the son of Xerxes and therefore the stepson of Esther. His stepmother no doubt had much influence upon Artaxerxes' attitude toward Ezra and Nehemiah.
6. Nehemiah is the last historical book in the Old Testament.

7. The book of Nehemiah is the autobiography of his “call to the wall.”

1. Conflict is a natural by-product of change
   All through scripture, example after example.
   You want to know why government is so slow to change? Conflict.
   You want to know why churches are so slow to change? Conflict.
   You want to know why you are so slow to change? Conflict
   When Nehemiah decided to build the walls of Jerusalem, his enemies weren’t happy!
2. Be Prepared
   I’ve talked to new parents over and over and over and the one statement that they all have in common is invariably, “I wasn’t prepared for the change in my life that the baby made.”

Nehemiah 4:15-20
15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work.
16 From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains were behind the whole house of Judah.
17 Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took their load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon.
18 As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me.
19 I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another.
20 “At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

The enemy’s plan is the status quo. He wants you to stay the same.

3. Change will cost
   a. Us
      When Nehemiah made the decision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, he didn’t hire contractors to do it!
      But realize, that what he did he did under the direction of the Spirit of God.
      Change is going to require action on your part, but only the action that comes by obeying the Spirit of God.
   b. Our friends and family
      If the wall was going to be re-built, all of Israel had to get involved.
   c. The world around us
      When Nehemiah restored the Sabbath, it cost all of the merchants around Jerusalem

Change costs, and if we don’t understand that, we’ll lose the battle of the conflict and become the killer kitty.
This is why we have to disciple new believers.