

Transformed

How God Changes Us



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March 1 - 29



TRANSFORMED

A STUDY

Through Romans 12:1-2

March 1 – 29

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TRANSFORMED

Gospel change is not something we accomplish by ourselves, but rather begins with the work of Jesus. What Jesus has done for us motivates us, changes our heart, to do the work of transformation. Without Jesus we have no desire for good or ability to bring about the change we know we so desperately need.

The Bible spends copious amounts of time addressing holiness. In Leviticus we are told, Be holy because God is holy. In other words, our purpose for holiness, and our ability to be holy is rooted in the fact that God is holy. We must never water down the gospel to some simple moral lessons, but neither should we assume the Bible doesn't demand morality (holiness) from us.

The beauty of the gospel is that it actually provides for us the very thing it demands from us. The gospel is the good news that Jesus has come and done for us what we could not do for ourselves. The Gospel is not something to get us saved only; it is not some elementary teachings of the Bible; it is not something we ever grow out of. The Gospel is to be preached to us daily, for only in the good news that Jesus has DONE something for us will we have the motivation to DO the work of sanctification.

Too often we try to do without being rooted in the Gospel...Paul has written the book of Romans to clearly explain what Jesus has done for us (Romans 1-11) and then shifts his thoughts (THEREFORE) to what we should, can, and WILL do in response to the finished work of Jesus (Romans 12-15).

It is my prayer that as you meditation on Romans 12:1-2 you will be conformed to His image and transformed by mercies.

Transforming with you,

Pastor TJ



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Motivational Mercies

Week 1

March 1, 2020





Prepare Your Heart

Frustrated over your inability to bring about the change in your life you so desperately desire? Do you feel a tinge of guilt each time you sing, “No Longer a Slave to Sin?” Have you wondered if change was even possible for you?

The Bible does MUCH more than tell us to stop sinning. It actually gets very practical on HOW transformation happens. God's mercies are meant to lead us to repentance (Romans 2:4). God's mercies are meant to keep us in repentance. In Romans 12:1 we find that Paul gives us a key insight into how change actually works: by meditating upon the mercies of God.

Granted, there is more to be done than meditation upon His mercies only, but this is the root from which all other works flow. We start with what is most important, the finished works of Jesus! We are able to DO the gospel because Jesus has already DONE it for us. Transformation comes by thinking on these things.

Meditating with you,

Pastor TJ



Under Mercy

Read Romans 12:1-2

- What are some ways you have been squeezed over the past several weeks?
- Have you noticed any sin pattern in yourself or others due to the change of routine? Give applicable examples.
- Can you think of other examples where God tells us what He has done for us (Indicative) THEREFORE do something (imperative).
- Give examples of when people try to reverse the gospel: imperatives before the indicatives. Have you ever been guilty of this?
- Discuss some of the false motivations (willpower, fear, etc) people use to bring about change in their life. Why do they always fail us?
- Can you think of a time that your gratitude towards another person motivated you to do something for them, not to repay them but simply because you were so moved by their act of kindness?
- Paul encourages us to present our bodies as living sacrifices by appealing to God's mercies. Give some specific examples of the mercies you have experienced from God.
- How do God's mercies motivate you to live a holy life?



Under Mercy

- Romans 1-11 give numerous examples of the mercies of God. What were some of the examples given in today's sermon?
- Choose one or more of the mercies of God and share with the group how you personally experienced that mercy.
- Are there any mercies that Christ has given you but you have failed to believe? For examples, No more condemnation, but you are constantly having condemning thoughts of yourself.
- Paul spends 11 chapters writing on the mercies of God which leads him to the very place it should lead us, to praise. Take some time to corporately express your praise to God.

-Elyse M. Fitzpatrick

"Unless we're very intentional about meditating on these truths [that show God's love], they slip from our thoughts like misty dreams that evaporate in the morning light. That's why Luther said we must "take heed then, to embrace...the love and kindness of God...[and to] daily exercise [our] faith therein, entertain no doubt of God's love and kindness."



Prayer & Praise

End your time together by reflecting on the goodness of God and praying for one another.

Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Transformed

A Living Sacrifice

Week 2

March 8, 2020





Prepare Your Heart

After all of the mercies and compassions that God has shown us in history and in Jesus, what should be our reasonable response? In the cross, He has justified us, given us peace, purified us, given us a new name and identity, and even glorified us! This week Chris will speak about our proper and reasonable response to God's mercies. In the words of Paul we are to be living sacrifices, fully surrendered to God's word, will, and ways.



Under Mercy

Read Romans 12:1-2

- “God, heal the gap between what it is I say I believe and how I actually live, until that gap no longer exists.” (Dr. Greathouse) Reflecting upon this quote, what specific gaps do we have? Be honest with yourself.
- Read James 1:22-25. Discuss what is being commanded by James and what would the outcome be?
- Romans 12 starts with the imperative ‘Therefore’. Share with the group one or two examples in your own life where this imperative caused you to make a life changing decision?
- Reflecting upon what we have read and know about God from the Bible and what He has done in our lives, what would a reasonable worship from ourselves look like?
- Looking at Romans 12:1a, why does Paul stress that we should offer our bodies as a sacrifice, and not our minds or our souls?
- Reflect upon the following verses: Mark 1:16-20; Matthew 10:37. What does it mean to be a ‘living sacrifice’? How are we supposed to respond as a ‘living sacrifice’?
- Reflecting upon the sermon, in which way do we ensure that we become a ‘living sacrifice’?
- In which way does God transform us through confession? Should we confess only to God? Reflect upon the following verses: Acts 19:18; 1 Tim 6:12; James 5:16.
- What is something that you find hard to surrender to God? Why is that?



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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



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Be Not Conformed

Week 3

March 15, 2020





Prepare Your Heart

When I was a child, I loved baking cookies with my mom. We would clear the cabinets, sprinkle it with flour, and get to work. Of course, the best part of baking cookies is eating them...but if I had to choose the second-best part to baking cookies I would most definitely be using the cookie cutters. My mom had an assortment of cookie cutters, some large, some small; some round, others square; some in the shapes of animals, others in the shapes of buildings. I was always amazed at the power I had over the cookies; they became whatever I chose them to be.

This week as we look at How God Changes People, we find that every age has its own mold that it fashions men and women into. The world is a cookie making factory, and we are the cookies, pressed and “conformed” into the image they stamp upon us. For true change to happen we must first be aware of what is happening to us. The world IS shaping us. None of us are as individual or independent as we think. Secondly, we must learn that there is a greater, more stable, more satisfying mold by which we should be shaped, into the image of Christ.

This is why Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world.” In other words, do not be shaped into the patterns of this present world. The first two weeks were positive commands:

Meditate upon His mercies.
Present your bodies as sacrifices.

This week we look at the negative command...STOP allowing the world to dictate your thoughts, feelings, actions, desires, and speech.

Breaking the mold with you,

Pastor TJ



Conformed

Read Romans 12:1-2

- Read 1 John 2:15 and John 4:1,4. What are the things of this world that we are tempted to love we should not love?
- How do we balance being in the world but not of the world? What are some personal struggles you have had with this balanced command?
- Dr. King once said, "every man either molds society or is molded by society." What opportunities do we currently have for molding society?
- Everything in life is seeking to move and mold your heart in some way. Give examples of life seeking to mold you into its image.
- How has culture and worldview changed in your lifetime?
- Read Romans 11:36 and discuss how Jesus transcends not just our "age," but all ages.
- Jesus talks a lot about the "age to come." In what ways does meditating upon the age to come impact how we live in this age?
- What are the (temporary) benefits of conforming to this world (why are we so easily tempted to conform)?
- Give some examples of Biblical characters who conformed to this world and what happened to them?
- What are the costs of us conforming to this world?
- Read Titus 2:11-14 and discuss how God's grace trains us to renounce worldliness?

16 • In what ways have you conformed to this world? Was there anything that came to your attention during the service or this time of study?



Prayer & Praise

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Prayer Requests

Praise Reports



Transformed

Battlefield of the Mind

Week 4

March 22, 2020





Prepare your heart

The life stages of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly has always astounded me. As a child, I was amazed over a creature's ability to be so radically transformed. As I grew, I discovered that transformation isn't limited to the caterpillar, but extends to the human who has come face to face with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. This is an even GREATER transformation. A caterpillar transforming into a butterfly, as amazing as that is, is a simple act of nature. A human whose heart and mind (and therefore all they think, feel, act, speak, and believe), moves from darkness to light takes much more than an act of nature...it takes the blood of Jesus, applied to us through the Holy Spirit, by grace through faith. What we were and what we are becoming is of GREATER transformation than the caterpillar. This is the promise given us in scripture...you ARE being transformed!

While I firmly believe salvation is monergistic, I, with equal fervency, believe sanctification (transformation) is synergistic. Transformation takes place as God's Spirit works with our spirit. The primary ways in which the Spirit works with our spirit is through means of grace. This Sunday we will discuss five of those graces that God uses to bring about transformation. None of these will be new to you. Nothing will be earth-shattering revelation. What you will find is that God uses the ordinary gifts to bring extraordinary change. While we are often looking for some secret formula to transformation, the answer is found in submitting to His ways and cooperating with the Spirit! As Ephesians says, we must learn to, "walk by the Spirit."

Submitting to the means of grace with you,

Pastor TJ



Transform your Mind

Think about your own job/work place. What tools do you need to do it well? Name them.

Read James 4:1,4. What will happen when we are 'Friends' with the world? Is the world your 'friend'?

If the world is not our 'friend', then it is our enemy. What did Jesus teach us to act towards our enemies? Referring to Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27, 35. How are we to show the world that we love it without being its 'friend'?

Thinking of your own walk with Christ, can you think of times when change seemed to take longer than you wanted it to? What was the outcome of this slow change?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:16

Think back to before you were saved in Christ. How does your thinking now differ from then? Was it a quick, sudden change or did it take time to change?

Read Romans 8:5-7

Why do some people react differently to seeing the stars in the sky, when singing worship songs or when they read the same Bible verses? Read 1 Corinthians 2:16 for comparison.

If we are then to change, how would we do it? Do we have the power to change ourselves? Read 2 Corinthians 3:18, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 4:23 and Romans 8:16 and discuss in the group.



What, then, would be the first step towards renewing your mind? Read John 16:8, Psalms 51:1-4, James 5:16 and discuss in the group.

Thinking on James 5:16, why is it important to confess our sins to one-another?

Colossians 3:2, 10, 16 shows us the second tool. Discuss what this tool is and how it will change our lives.

In the 6th century, Christians in Arabia were called 'People of the Book'. Discuss why this is. Why is the Bible so important to us?

The Gospels record Jesus constantly using the 4th tool, the best example of when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane before He was crucified. Discuss what Jesus did and why it should be important to you.

Discuss what Ephesians 5:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 14:15 tells us. How do you praise God? Please think of how you do it, or of how you could do it.



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