

Happy Mother's Day

Sacrifice

May 10, 2020

Romans 12:1-2; 9-18

Not long ago I watched a documentary on the transformation that takes place inside a cocoon. With less than scientific language, let me explain it: a caterpillar is enveloped by a cocoon. While in that state the caterpillar literally dissolves into a pile of goo, then miraculously is rebuilt into a lifeform utterly different from what it was. It goes in as an ugly little worm and comes out a beautiful flying butterfly. The scientist's explanation was longer, but not clearer. Quite simply, they don't know how the transformation takes place.

When a person comes to a saving faith in Christ a similar transformation takes place. We enter Christ as an ugly, self-centered sinner, and come out as a loving, sacrificial servant to God. This is not mere theory. In Christ we are a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). In our text today, Paul is appealing to that reality to encourage the church to live as a new creation.

In order for a believer to live out of their new nature in Christ, however, they must learn to present their life to God as a sacrificial offering. Paul lists several areas of life where transformation should be seen. Because of our new nature, we can think differently, we can now live within God's will.

The life transformed by the power of Christ through the gospel is utterly different than it was before Christ. We are transformed from a little worm into a beautiful flying wonder. All we have to do is spread our wings. God has given you wings. Put them to good use and show the world the beauty of a life transformed by Christ. [Travis Biller Pastor, Immanuel Baptist, Elizabethton]

Offer Yourself (Romans 12:1-2)

- Paul addresses ways God's mercy and grace should be expressed in the believer's life.
 - **"a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God"**
 - Both Jews and Greeks were familiar with the concept of sacrifice in religion.
 - Holy means to be separated from the world and set apart for God's unique use.
 - **"do not be conformed to this world (this age)"**
 - Jesus has rescued believers from 'this present evil world' Gal. 1:4
 - In every generation, the church is to be countercultural in an age dominated by Satan.
 - **"be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind"** – instead for conforming be transformed
 - Believers adjust their thinking in accordance with the renewing power of the Holy Spirit.
 - **"that ye may prove what is good, acceptable, and perfect, will of God."**
 - Prove means to discern (draw conclusions) about the worth of something based on testing.
 - The Holy Spirit enables Christians to understand what God would have done in a particular situation.
- **Do we sometimes allow this sin dominated world to shape our values, thoughts, and actions? How can we change?**
- **When have you sacrifice something important to you?**

"Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her." Proverbs 31:28



Genuine Love (vs. 9)
 Hatred of Evil (vs. 9)
 Desire for Goodness (vs. 9)
 Spirit of Humility (vs. 10)
 Desire to Serve (vs. 11)
 Different Perspective on Suffering (vs. 12)
 Generous Heart (vs. 13)
 Love for your Enemies (vs. 14)
 Deep Empathy for Others (vs. 15)
 Spirit of Unity (vs. 16)
 Spirit of Grace (vs)

Live Authentically (Romans 12:9-14)

- After discussing the use of gifts in verses 3-8 of this chapter, Paul turned his attention to the topic of love.
 - Remember Jesus ranked love of God and love of neighbor as the most important commandments (Mark 12:30-31)
- **"Let love be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good."**
 - Love must be authentic and genuine (more than a pretense)
 - The Cristian faith must emphasize the value of genuineness over hypocrisy.
 - We demonstrate authentic love by consistently choosing good over evil.
- The list of qualities Paul gives here parallels his list of the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)
 - Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters – devoted to one another
 - Outdo one another in showing honor - genuine respect and encouragement
 - Serve the Lord – with diligence and being fervent in the Spirit
 - Rejoice in Hope – hope of Christ's return and daily hope empowered by the Spirit.
 - Patient in affliction – endure in faith
 - Persistent in prayer – dependent on Christ
 - Share with believers in their need – assist needy people, many experience hardship
 - Pursue hospitality – invite brothers and sisters into your home

Our new life in Christ changes the way we look at the world including how we use our resources.

➤ How can you tell if love is genuine or hypocritical?

Be At Peace (Romans 12:14-18)

- Paul addresses how we are to relate to outsiders – including those that persecute Christians.
- **"bless them that persecute you; bless, and curse not"**
 - To bless someone is to call down God's gracious action in that person's live.
 - Paul's advice echoes Jesus teaching to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44)
- Paul calls on believers to live peacefully. **"same mind one toward another"**
 - The biggest obstacle to this type of mindset is pride.
 - Paul's antidote for pride was association with the needy, the outcast and the less fortunate.
- Instead of retaliating for a wrong, Christians are to do everything to live at peace with others.
 - Paul warns believers not to use tension as an excuse to create more tension.

➤ How can show humility, love, and peacefulness to those who mistreat you?

Biblical Truth:

Believers are to demonstrate Christlike character, living as sacrifices in all they do.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. Romans 12:3-8

