

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 6TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

TRANSFORMATION (ROMANS 12:1-2)

PAUL TAKES A TURN TO PRACTICAL THINGS.

All theology is practical. What we believe has implications for how we live. **We can't say we love Jesus and His gifts and live as though Jesus didn't die on the cross and rise from the dead.**

- **Christianity isn't a game, it's truly (eternal) life & (eternal) death and should affect every area of our lives.**

IN LIGHT OF ROMANS 1-11...

Therefore tells us that Paul is making a shift. He wants the Romans to be so amazed by all God has done for them in Christ that they think differently and live differently than they did before they were saved. Their bodies belong to Jesus, not to the world. Their minds are guided by the Holy Spirit and the Word with a joyful desire to know and do God's will.

WHAT DOES TRUE WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

True worship leads to transformed lives. It's not only what we do on the weekend (although that's very important), **it's also about being out of step with the things of this world.** Satan, through the world system, is hurling all manner of lies against the teachings of the Bible. We must start new ways of thinking & living as overcomers.

WHO WILL WE SERVE?

Everyone worships. To be pleasing to God, we must totally surrender to Him. He's our Lord (confess Jesus as Lord [Romans 10:9]) which means He sets the terms for how we relate to Him and the world.

- In many ways it all comes down to authority. **Will we let our good God or this deadly culture be our Lord?**

GIFTS (ROMANS 12:3-8)

COMMUNITY CURES PRIDE.

Pride is the essence of sin and is present in all of us in some way. We can even use God's giftings as an opportunity to make much of us and not Him. Paul reminds us that when we see the community of faith as a body, we realize that all of us **need each other and that each member is incredibly important to the health of the entire body.**

YOU'RE NEEDED FOR THIS BODY TO FUNCTION!

Every gift is needed if the faith community is to be fully functioning. When something in our physical bodies has a deficiency, the whole body can be affected negatively.

- One reason so many churches seem to be sick is because their congregants want to be consumers rather than contributors to the church.

RENEWED MINDS SEE ALL GIFTS AS IMPORTANT.

While there are some gifts that are more visible than others, and some carry more responsibility than others, all gifts, properly used, bring glory to God and are for the good of others.

- **A mind renewed by the Spirit and Word recognizes spiritual gifts as grace gifts from the Spirit.**

WHAT ARE THE GIFTS?

This isn't an exhaustive list as other gifts are listed in other places in the NT (1 Corinthians 12; Ephesians 3; 1 Peter 4).

- **Prophecy:** Foretelling or forth-telling according to the faith (Christian truths)
- **Service:** Meeting the needs of others
- **Teaching:** Explaining God's Word
- **Exhorting:** Motivating and encouraging
- **Giving:** Not necessarily an amount but an attitude that shows generosity and not stinginess
- **Leading:** Much of leadership is an example, so don't be lazy but diligent, a hard worker
- **Mercy:** God is merciful to us so we should show mercy to others, but those with this gift should cheerfully practice this gift

HOW SHALL WE LIVE? (ROMANS 12:9-21)

PAUL NOW WORKS OUT THE ETHICS OF BEING A CHRIST-FOLLOWER.

God is love and Jesus roots the Great Commandment in love, so we shouldn't be surprised that when Paul describes what a Christ-follower looks like he starts with love.

- **Love should be sincere which must at least include a commitment to goodness, not evil, in expressing love.**

LOVE SHOWS THE WORLD THAT WE ARE HIS.

In John 13:34-35 Jesus sets Himself as the standard for what love looks like. He then calls the disciples to love each other like He loves them.

- We explain to the world what the gospel looks like by loving one another deeply and by outdoing one another in showing honor to others.

OTHER ETHICAL COMMANDS

We shouldn't just say we follow Christ. Our actions empowered by the Spirit should demonstrate that we don't tire in following Jesus. Even when things don't go our way, we are patient as we rejoice in hope knowing that God hears our prayers. And when others are needy, we share what we have, even to the point of opening our home to them.

- Jesus (and Stephen) prayed for their executioners (for Stephen this included Paul), so we follow their examples when we bless our persecutors, not curse them. When people we love have good things happening we join them humbly, not with jealousy. And when bad things are happening we don't pridefully look down but join with them.
- Humble people live at peace with others because they don't seek their own way but others. The more we hang out with humble people, the more we'll learn humility. When we're humble we don't seek our way but do what's right just because it's right, not to impress others but to make Jesus look appealing to others.
- Most people can live at peace with others by de-escalating, not pouring gasoline on, ten situations. But when things go bad, especially when we're wrongfully treated, nothing escapes God and we trust He will make things right as we show love to our haters. When we do this we show that love is more powerful than hate, which is evil.

GOD'S KINGDOM IS BIZARRO WORLD TO MANY.

When we fully surrender to God and are able to discern the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God, we won't look anything like our culture. We live in a hedonistic (pleasure-seeking) and narcissistic (me-seeking) culture.

- Christians can't conform to this world if we have any hope of winning it to Jesus!

WHAT DOES SACRIFICE MEAN?

- Is Christianity only about heaven or is it about living for Jesus here and now?
- What has a greater influence in our lives: the things of God or of the world?
- Are we attending church, praying, reading God's Word, involved in community, and serving others?

WE NEED EACH OTHER

- Do we allow distractions to keep us from church, thinking it's no big deal?
- Are we serving the church, whether we know our spiritual gifting or not?
- Do we value the contributions of others to the mission of the church?

DOES OUR FRUIT POINT TO JESUS?

- Do the people in our city see the love we have for each other and for them?
- How well do we share life together?
- Are we patient towards those who aren't yet believers?
- How do we handle adversity?