

“Transformed to Transform”

Ezekiel 36:24-32; Romans 12:1-3

April 28, 2024

Transformed to Transform

- 35th High School reunion
 - o I’ve been to none of the previous ones.
 - o They posed a list.
 - Not ONE of my friends were on it.
 - Got some dear friends to go.
 - Had a blast.
- But, wow, what transformations.
 - o I got to tell you the coolest story.
 - Hardt Bing – GREAT STORY
- We were kind of a “notorious” class.
 - o Lots of intelligence
 - o Lots of rebellion
- But time had tamed us, we were transformed.
 - o Middle agers with mostly grow up kids and lives that are filled with people, places and things.
 - And a great many more of us became religious!

Transition to Text

- Paul talks about Transformation here in Romans too, doesn’t he?
- Chapter 12 represents a really important turning point in the work.
 - o He’s really traced through the theology of salvation in chapters 1-8.
 - o Then, in 9-11, he deals with the problem of the Jews.
 - Wild olive shoots grafted on to the tree of life.
 - We aren’t here by anything but faith which is a gift of Jesus Christ.
- So here, in 12, he turns the page and begins spelling out what’s next in the life of a Christian.
 - o TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SANCTIFICATION
 - Growing in Holiness
 - This is the theme of the remainder of the work.
 - o Traced us through the theology, now we’re into the lived-out portion of the gospel.
 - We’re transformed....to transform.

The Opposite of Transformation

- CONFORMITY
 - o I was reminded of conformity last night as I talked with Glen Sherill.
 - CB Jackets
 - They were all the rage among skiers.
- Sometimes we Christians return to the status quo.
 - o We conform to the world around us. This is a problem for a lot of reasons.
 - First – we’re not from here.
 - The world
 - o John 17 – The High Priestly Prayer
 - **Philippians 3:20-21** – *“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.”*
 - **John 17:14-19** – *“I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth. As You sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their*

sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."

- Conformity to the world

- **Individualism Over Community:** Western cultures often promote individual success and independence above communal well-being. Christians might subtly conform by prioritizing personal achievement or family exclusively, neglecting the biblical call to community, mutual support, and sharing of resources.
 1. We tend to undermine simplicity and generosity.
- **Busy Lives Ignoring Sabbath Rest:** The world values busyness and productivity, often at the cost of rest and reflection. Christians can conform by filling their schedules with activities and work, neglecting the biblical pattern of Sabbath that emphasizes rest, worship, and reliance on God.
 - Augustine joked about attendance in one of his sermons as the gladiatorial games were going on.

2. **Relativism and Tolerance as Ultimate Virtues:** While tolerance is crucial in a diverse society, Christians can subtly conform by adopting a stance where they are unwilling to speak truth about sin and the need for repentance out of a desire to not offend. This can lead to a dilution of the gospel message, which calls for transformation and renewal.

1. There are things we should be against in this world. Not that we're prudes but as we see gambling roar on to the national stage, I lament how far we've gone astray.

3. **Social Media Persona:** The curated images and lifestyles often presented on social media can pressure Christians to present a façade that focuses on appearances, success, and an idealized version of life, rather than authenticity, struggles, and spiritual growth.

1. Talking about going on vacations and posting photos.

4. **Seeking Approval from Others Rather Than God:** Christians might subtly seek the approval of their peers, family, or society at large rather than God. This could manifest in altering one's beliefs, actions, or speech to fit in or gain acceptance, rather than standing firm in one's faith and convictions.

1. Guilty as Charged

Transformed

- How do we get sanctified?
- It isn't hard.
 - Bible study
 - Personal devotion
 - Prayer and meditation
 - Participation in the work of Jesus Christ in the world.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.