

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

October 1, 2018

A Second Transformation

Some of the believers the apostle Paul wrote to were in spiritual “limbo.” They were not like the world, but neither were they like Christ. These were not sinners. They had been washed from their sins in the blood of Jesus. Their old man was crucified with Christ Romans 6:6 and they were alive unto God. Romans 6:11. Yet these believers were in a place of spiritual indecision. God had a work and purpose for them, but without another transformation they would never know his purpose and would go no further in the Lord.

To such believers as these, Paul writes, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* Romans 12:1. These who had in times past been ungodly and walked according to their fleshly lusts, had now been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:10. They had in fact been made holy and acceptable unto God. Along with all saints, they were invited to draw close into God’s presence *“having (their) hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and (their) bodies washed with pure water.”* Hebrews 10:22. It does not take a lifetime or a process for a person to become holy and acceptable to God. It takes only the power of the shed blood of Jesus Christ!

When anyone is truly born again, they become a misfit in this world. One proof of this is Paul's admonition to them to "*...be not conformed to this world.*" Romans 12:2. The glorious work of salvation had completely changed these believers, and it would take a "change" in the wrong direction for them to be conformed back to the world. They were in the world, but they were not "*of the world.*" Yet without a second "transformation" they would never know the grace of ministry that was prepared for them and they would be in danger of being conformed back to the world around them.

This "conforming to the world" is what happened to the church at Corinth. Paul asked them "*...whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*" I Corinthians 3:3. Where there is sin, envy, strife, or divisions among those who have known the Lord, you can know they have been conformed to this world. The reality of Christ has been traded for a carnal religious walk. They no longer walk as children of God, but they are walking as other carnal men.

The belief that people are transformed from a sinful lifestyle into a lifestyle acceptable unto God through the "*renewing of the mind*" is a "case study" in carnality. It is the blood of Christ that delivers from sin, both in heart and in manner of life. Peter tells us we were "*redeemed ...from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers ...with the precious blood of Christ.*" I Peter 1:18-19. Christianity is not a lifestyle change. A true Christian is a new creation! Galatians 6:15. The process of cleansing a life through "*renewing your mind*" never produces what it promises. There is

always another principle or precept for you to learn and keep. It is born in carnality, and that is where it will forever be. There is, however, a *“renewing of the mind”* by the Spirit of God that brings with it a needed *“second transformation.”*

Paul implored the saints at Rome to be *“...transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* Romans 12:2. This transformation by the renewing of their mind would be a direct result of them presenting their bodies to God as a living sacrifice. This *“presenting the body”* begins daily in the altar of prayer and continues in every step a believer takes. If these believers would present their bodies to God, he would transform them into living, breathing, ambassadors of Christ. Their bodies would become the outstretched hand of God in this present evil world.

A child of God who comes daily into the presence of God, fully offering and surrendering themselves unto him for his service and glory, finds everything about their manner of thinking changes. Salvation ceases to be about themselves and becomes about others. Their lives cease to be their own as they begin to feel the heartbeat of God that causes them to lay down their lives for the gospel's sake. Something happens inside and in every fiber of their being they know they *“must be about their Father's business.”* It is this renewing of their mind by the Spirit of God that transforms them into ministers of Christ. Paul called this *“...the renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* Titus 3:5. The Spirit of God becomes their breath, and the word of God becomes their conversation.

As we are “*transformed by the renewing of our mind*” through the effectual working of God’s Spirit, God begins to set his work before us. As we give ourselves to that work we discover “*what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” Romans 12:2. We come to recognize how God will work through us and at times we find out how he will not. If this transformation is complete, our members become anointed instruments in the hand of God that he can stretch forth at his will.

I am convinced, based upon the scripture, that every child of God has a portion of the ministry of Christ committed unto them. Paul said, “*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*” Ephesians 4:7. I am equally convinced that many Christians never even begin to walk in that holy calling. They never begin to daily present their bodies to God, therefore their mind is never renewed by his Spirit, and thus they are never transformed into ministers of Christ. They are in spiritual “limbo,” hanging between a “holy calling” and being “conformed unto this world.” Very often, if they linger in this “limbo” for too long, the world reclaims them as its own.