

## Romans 12:1-2 “Be Transformed” 7/28/24

The story is told of a young man who had a summer job at the local fast-food restaurant - One day he was working the drive through window when a customer complained that the speaker was not working right, that there was so much crackling that he couldn't hear

The young man went to assemble the customer's order as his female coworker looked at the console - She found a loose wire, and when she clicked it into place, she asked the customer if it was working better now

The customer replied, “Well, not exactly. Now you sound like a girl”<sup>1</sup>

Today our focus is on transformation - And while our Scriptures never mention transforming a boy into a girl - The transformation in today's passage from Romans may be just as drastic of a change

It is more like the experience described by “Gipsy” Smith<sup>2</sup> - He was a British evangelist who conducted evangelistic campaigns in the United States and Great Britain for over 70 years during the 19th and 20th centuries

He was an early member of the Salvation Army and a contemporary of Fanny Crosby and G. Campbell Morgan<sup>3</sup>

Gipsy Smith told of trying to push his way through a great crowd in the North of Scotland and feeling a tug at his coat sleeve

At first, he thought it was only someone else trying to get into the revival meeting with him and paid little or no attention, but as the tugging increased and became more and more insistent, he turned as best he could in the crowd to find out what was wanted

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<sup>1</sup> Joke from “The Fishwrapper,” Myerstown, PA

<sup>2</sup> March 31, 1860-August 4, 1947

<sup>3</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gipsy\\_Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gipsy_Smith)

Imagine his astonishment to find close beside him was an adorable little girl - She was dressed in rags, and wanted him to bend down so she could talk to him

“What is it my dear?” he asked, and she answered him, “I want to thank you so very much!” - “Why?” he asked

“Oh sir!” she cried, “Cause we’ve got a brand new daddy at our house! He has been sober since Saturday! We’ve never known him to be sober; but he was in your revival meeting last Saturday, and oh, it’s so wonderful at home because he is a brand-new person”<sup>4</sup>

While the transformation of a New Life in Christ Jesus may be more noticeable in someone who has hit bottom, like that little girl’s daddy - It is a transformation that is available to all of us

And it is a transformation that is freely offered to all of us as well - We just need to pursue having Jesus as our Savior - Opening our hearts - Believing in Jesus’ power to forgive - And inviting Him into our lives

Romans 12:1-2 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”<sup>5</sup>

Do any of you remember Donald Grey Barnhouse? - He was pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia for more than three decades in the 20th century - His radio show, “Dr Barnhouse and the Bible” is available for free on the Internet and is still broadcast on some Christian stations

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<sup>4</sup> Knight's Sermon Illustrations, as quoted by [www.e-steeple.com](http://www.e-steeple.com)

<sup>5</sup> Scripture quoted has been taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version,

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He was a prolific writer - And it would be hard to find a pastor, who still uses books, without at least one of Dr Barnhouse's books in his or her library - I have his commentary on Romans, a two volume set

In that commentary, he pointed out that today's passage begins with the word "therefore" and said that whenever we see the word therefore in the Scriptures, that it is important for us to know what it is there for

He writes, "The "therefore" (in our passage today) builds on all the truth that has been presented in the 315 verses of the first eleven chapters (of Romans). Without this foundation, the ethics of the end chapters float in the sky like a roof without support.

With this foundation, the life that is demanded from those who have believed in Christ is seen to be the logical development of the work of redemption"<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the exhortation that we hear in today's passage to present our bodies as living sacrifices, to not be conformed to the world, and to be transformed by the renewal of our minds, is in response to receiving the free gift of salvation so eloquently detailed in the first eleven chapters

A key passage in those eleven chapters is Romans 3:25-26 "(Jesus Christ,) whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

Propitiation, the sacrifice of atonement, is an act of God, motivated by His immense love for humankind, where God accepts the blood of Christ as the complete and satisfying sacrifice for all human sin, thus establishing a means of reconciliation between God and humankind - Otherwise, our sins would separate us from God

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<sup>6</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God's Discipline*, © 1964 (The Evangelical Foundation, Philadelphia, PA)

This offering of the blood of Christ is a sufficient sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the whole world; past, present, and future - However, the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice are available only to those who accept this provision for the forgiveness of sin by faith

So the "therefore" in today's passage is the transition point between the accepting of the free gift of salvation by faith - And how God's Word instructs us to use this brand new transformation

John Ellerthorpe was a remarkable saver of lives in the days before knowing how to swim was common - From 1820, when John was fourteen, until the 1860s he was rescuing unfortunate men, women, children and even animals from the waters across the world

He is recorded as having rescued thirty-nine people from the waters of the rivers of England, the Atlantic Ocean, and even as far away as Quebec and Toronto in Canada - And there are almost certainly several more rescues that were not recorded<sup>7</sup>

Ellerthorpe was once on a ship crossing the Atlantic when a cry was raised, "A child is overboard!" - In an instant he was in the sea, and soon both he and the little girl were again on the deck of the ship

The next day, the mother took the child up to the brave man and told her, "This is the gentleman who saved you from the sea; what are you going to say to him?" For a moment the child was speechless, not knowing what to answer

But suddenly she put out her hands and said, "If you please, I would like to give you a kiss" - Ellerthorpe had received many valuable presents, but he declared that this child's kiss was a bigger blessing to him than all the others - Because she had given him her love<sup>8</sup>

That is to be our response to God for pulling us out of the watery grave of sin and depravation that all fall into in this world

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<sup>7</sup> John Ellerthorpe Hero of the Humber, <https://sites.google.com/site/johnellerthorpeheroofthehumber/home>

<sup>8</sup> The Biblical Illustrator, Joseph S. Excell, editor, originally published 1887 in London, England, © public domain

Giving the Lord all that we have - Giving the Lord our love - Offering our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God

We have invited Jesus into our lives to be our Savior - We have been transformed into a New Creation - And now, like that little girl saved from drowning, offering a kiss and her love - We want to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice

We are not just to avoid evil - But we are to embrace good - What God loves, we are to love - What breaks God's heart, should move us to action - What God wants, we do - What God's Word says, we put into action

We are not to conform to the pattern of this world, but we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds - Not conforming to the world means we should always avoid sin

Galatians 5:19-21 warns us, "Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God"

Maybe you say to yourself, wow, that's relief, I would never do any of those things - My friends and family are all fine Church going folks - But be warned, we are not to conform to the Church going folks' ways either

The sins of good Church going people may not have the social stigma of all the sins mentioned in Galatians 5 - But sin is sin and it will stop you from being transformed by the renewing of your mind

The only way to accomplish that transformation is with a glad, whole-hearted giving of ourselves to God - We are to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice - Sacrificing all that we want in favor of what God wants - Then comes being transformed by the renewing of our mind

In conclusion, we need to realize what the Therefore, the first word in today's passage is there for - The first eleven chapters speak of humankind's sin - And God's redeeming work through Christ Jesus our Savior

All that follows in chapter 12 to the end of the book of Romans, with the exception of some personal greetings in chapter 16, are God's instructions on living out the redeemed life

Inviting Jesus into our lives to be our Savior is the number one top priority - Because without Him, we do not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit - And without the Holy Spirit working within us we don't stand a chance of doing all that God spells out for us in these closing chapters

We are to present ourselves as a living sacrifice - Yielding ourselves to the will of God - All those things we think we want are not as important as we think - What is truly important is that we belong to Jesus - And we are doing what He wants us to do with our lives

We are to be transformed - Not looking like the world in our lives - Not being conformed to the world in any way: in thoughts, words, or deeds

The transformation of knowing the Lord becomes so obvious in our lives because we are avoiding evil of every kind - And doing good at every chance we get