

THE BIG IDEA: We are changing because we serve a God who transforms.The Take-Off

This morning we're talking about how we are changing and I need to explain it a bit

First, I wanted to say that we are growing, but growth is so overrated and misunderstood

It can make you think about growing big as a church - Derwin Grey says that tumors grow big, so size can't be a goal

It can make us think about growing big physically, but we all know "grown" men and women who haven't matured

What we're after in this message is the fact that we value transformation

Not just growth, but change

Change is a huge deal because so much of the proof of our faith is in how our faith is changing us

My girlfriend: "Don't be sorry. Change!"

Ouch - that hit me right where it counted - I was willing to be sorry; I wasn't willing to stop what I was sorry about

If we can attend church, give some money, and then live and look like a culture that isn't doing those things, then we have very little to offer that culture

But if people who know they need to change but don't know how to change can see change in us, then they'll naturally want to know how we pulled that off

Change opens the door to conversations about the God who changes us

So, we don't have to like change, but we do need to accept it because God won't leave us as He found us

We saw last week that we are messy and God isn't scared away by that

At The Gathering, you can come as you are

But you'll also become more than you were because God is all about the change

We are changing because we serve a God who transforms

Now, to kick off this topic, let's have some fun - let's look at some strange transformations

[IMAGES - Weird animal morphs]

Not that you could forget those, but I want to make sure that you remember them because we'll circle back to them

First, let's ask 3 questions about change (or transformation).

1. How are we transformed?

- a. This is the process of change - the answer to the question, "**How are we transformed?**"
- b. I'm sure that we could mention more, but here are 3 ways the process happens:
 - REGULARLY
 - **Romans 12:1 (NIV)** / we're transformed by the renewing of our mind / mind your mind!
 - **Ephesians 5:26** / wash your mind with the Word / How often? However often your mind feels dirty and cluttered with junk / my guess is a lot!
 - INTENTIONALLY
 - **Ephesians 4:22-24** / In context, Paul is comparing how they USED to be and what they are NOW called to be
 - Action is required on our part
 - Paul says the Gentiles "gave themselves over" to their desires, but that we TAKE OFF and PUT ON
 - That's part of the process of being "made new in the attitude of your minds" (v. 23)
 - **Romans 12:1-2** / If it wasn't intentional, Paul would not have "urged" us
 - INCREMENTALLY
 - **Romans 12:2** / we are BEING transformed / a process that we partner with
 - Like tubing in a river, the river does the work but we have to actually get in the river
 - It takes time to get to the end of the process
 - **2 Corinthians 3:18** / The Tyndale Bible Dictionary says that the original Greek reads like so: "We all with unveiled face, mirroring the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image, from one degree of glory to another, even as from the Lord who is the Spirit"
 - It happens in degrees - glory to glory
 - People would say that we are looking more and more like Jesus as opposed to one day we wake up and BAM! we look just like Jesus!

2. Why are we transformed?

- a. So we can see how we're transformed, but what's the point? **Why are we transformed?**
- b. I find 2 answers in **Romans 12:1-2**:
 - v. 1 / First, we'll be ready for and pleasing to God / "holy and pleasing to God"
 - v. 2 / Second, we'll be able to discern God's will
- c. Can we hang out on that one for just a bit longer?
- d. The Greek word for "test and approve" is "dokimazo"
 - It means to test, prove, approve, like
 - Also means to recognize as genuine
- e. So many don't feel they know God's will for their lives - when we're transformed, we'll recognize it

3. To what are we transformed?

- a. We know the how and the why, but what's the what? **To what are we transformed?**
- b. The picture of transformation is none other than Jesus.
- c. **2 Corinthians 3:18** / we are being transformed into HIS image
- d. **Romans 8:29** / we're predestined to be conformed to the image of HIS SON
- e. This is key: remember those images at the beginning? The crazy animal morphs?
- f. That's not a picture of gospel transformation. We aren't becoming our best new selves; we're becoming less like ourselves and more like Jesus.
- g. **John 3:30** / He must increase and we must decrease
- h. This is a much better picture of gospel transformation
- i. [IMAGE / Metamorphosis]
- j. Listen to what scientists say about caterpillar to butterfly transformation: "The transformation from the pupa to the adult is the most dramatic change in the life cycle of a butterfly, and scientists refer to this change as metamorphosis. ***During metamorphosis, the body tissues of the caterpillar are completely reorganized to produce the beautiful adult butterfly that emerges from the pupa.***"
- k. **2 Cor. 5:17** - the old is gone, the new has come!

The Landing

Our mission at The Gathering says that we are becoming disciplers

A disciple in Jewish times followed their teacher and observed how that teacher engaged with the world and then became like that teacher

We aren't being transformed into a picture of Jesus and us, but of Jesus

That's the problem with transformation. It's actually a dying to self and coming to life process that is hard.

We like to be changed but we don't like to change.

We know that God accepts us as we are, but He transforms us into more than who we were.

That is a journey we want everybody at The Gathering to take.

We are changing because we serve a God who transforms.

Let's pray.