

1-26-14 Message Fighting For The Better You

PPT: Key Question: What is GOD'S Responsibility & What is YOUR Responsibility?

Last week we talked about God's Surrendering to God and allowing Him to change you. Throughout the Bible and especially here, in Romans 12, we go back and forth between what God promises to do and what he then desires from us. Becoming Transformed is no easy process... staying engaged is so important!

PPT: Romans 12:1-2 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ² Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

SURRENDERING yourself to God's control was the first step in being able to experience the fullness of Jesus love, mercy, and grace. He SO desires us to see the ourselves through HIS eyes and this requires a change. And let's be honest... CHANGE IS SO HARD! It's easier to just keep moving hoping that everything will just turn out alright.

Q: Have you bought into this attitude of Calvin from the comic strip, Calvin & Hobbes?

PPT: Calvin – Ignorance is Bliss (4 slides)

Ironically – this is more true than most of us want to admit. We often chose the idea of forgetting instead of trying to figure out what we can LEARN from our mistakes. Like proverbs 26:11 says... "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his foolishness."

Q: So how after we surrender to God, what comes next?

PPT: Romans 12:3-8 (NLT)

³ Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. ⁴ Just as our bodies have many parts and

each part has a special function, ⁵ so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

PPT: Inflated – Real - Deflated

Changing the way you THINK about yourself is a constant battle. You can think too HIGHLY of yourself or too LITTLE of who are you. The measure of thinking comes from trusting GOD'S perspective of you!

ILL: I've received many notes over my life and I've kept many of them. One that I did not keep, but has stayed in my mind was a letter from a person who criticized me for the poor judgment I had on taking kids on a dangerous rafting trip. I had made some mistakes, recognized them, and apologized for them and wrote up a plan on what we would do next time to ensure greater safety. But that was not enough. They decided to write a two-page letter listing out every mistake on this trip and in every event I had done that they were a part of. The criticism hurt even more when they sent out the letter to all the leaders of the church and parents as well. I was devastated inside. I knew as a young youth pastor I had areas to grow in, but this attack on my character was not out of love, but out of anger and a need for control.

Q: Isn't it fascinating how easy it is for us to remember the negative things someone says about us instead of focusing on the positive traits within us? Or maybe you have the opposite problem... Like Calvin, you think too highly of yourself and your pride often gets in the way.

PPT: Philippians 4:4-9; (NLT)

⁴ Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

PPT: ⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

PPT: ⁸ And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and

worthy of praise. ⁹ Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Q: What do you fix your thoughts on? God has given us his Spirit that lives in us.

Note your insert: What three words express patterns that most characterize your thinking? Ask two or three people close to you to go through this list and give you three words they think most characterize you.

PPT: Character Traits

ILL: Toddlers who are beginning to walk.

Ever notice how they hang on to items as they move around to keep their balance. They learn from their falls. They don't get paralyzed by negative thinking saying, "I'm so clumsy. I'm such a klutz. I should just stick with crawling. I don't deserve to walk. I am going to just give up." They see their parents and others around them walking on two feet and keep trying until they can do it to! God has placed HIS Spirit in each person who has surrendered their life to Jesus. He now gives us the ability, by HIS strength, to work together with HIM in this transformation process. Notice what God did and then what our responsibility is...

PPT: Romans 12:6-9

⁶ In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. ⁷ If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. ⁸ If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

CONCLUSION:

It was 7:51 a.m. on Friday, January 12, 2007 in the middle of the morning rush hour at the Metro Station in Washington D.C. In the next 43 minutes, Joshua Bell, possibly the world's greatest violinist.

performed six classical pieces as an experiment. 1,097 people passed by. Almost all of them were on the way to work. The people who conducted this experiment were warned by experts that a crowd would certainly gather and they might need extra security. Many people would stop and flock to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Joshua Bell brought his 1713 Stradivarius that cost millions of dollars and began to play his six most beautiful songs in his repertoire. Did anyone stop? Were their crowds that gathered? Just one person, who recognized who he was, stopped to listen. The rest were too preoccupied with their agenda for the day. There were in a hurry, moving past the musical beauty Joshua Bell was bringing them because they had other things to do and their day was full.

Jesus said, "To what can I compare this generation?... We played a flute for you and you did not dance."

Our Lord is still creating masterpieces, but listening is optional. The world hears the beauty of what he offers through each one of us. Nurture the gifts He has given in you. Use them to bring His joy, peace, hope, healing, help, love to each person around you!

PPT: Your THOUGHTS lead to ACTION... then to HABITS... those become the QUALITIES & CHARACTER of Your life. As a person thinks in their heart, so he is! Proverbs 23:7

PPT: Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen.