

“The Transformation”

Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification

Romans 12:1-2

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Jeff: Thanks. Well it’s good to be here this morning. I just returned last evening from a conference. Do you men know the Banner of Truth conference, oftentimes these days held over in Elizabethtown? It was a great conference, a lot of good speakers. I really enjoyed that. So I feel refreshed from that. But before we get started, why don’t we ask Don to lead us into prayer? (*Music*)

Our heavenly Father, we are so thankful for so many things, things from the least to the greatest. We’re thankful for things like the ant, for we can learn even from them. But Lord, we are thankful for things like our children. As we think about them graduating, or we have grandchildren graduating these days, we are mindful of their lives and for the work they’ve put into school these last several years, and we pray that Your hand would be upon them and that this would be a time of blessing as many children graduate. But Father, we are most thankful for Christ Jesus our Lord, for in Him we have every blessing in the heavenly places. In Him we are united one to another. In Him we stand as righteous in Your sight. We stand with the anticipation of the hope of glory. We no longer need to fear. But You invite us, yea, You command us to be bold. And so we come before You boldly as children, knowing that You are not only God, for there is no other, but You are our Father. So we ask for Your blessing today upon our work here, upon our work afterward, upon our fellowship and relationships, with our families and our friends. And we pray, Lord, that You will bless them all by Your grace, not only for our good, but most of all for Your glory. We ask these things in Christ’s name. Amen.

Men: Amen.

Jeff: Well this morning I just want to re-visit for a minute what we did last time. Just to recap for a minute, I want us to just think about those three things that I mentioned to you because they’re foundational.

I want you to think about how salvation is in Christ. And when you think about salvation in Christ, I’m not talking at this point about the experiential aspect of salvation. I’m talking about the historical unfolding of redemption. I’m talking about what Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15 when he talks about how Jesus came, how He lived a life of perfect obedience, how He died on the cross, how He was resurrected, how He ascended into the heavens. I’m talking about what we call the history of redemption, the historical exfoliation of one event after another of the gospel.

Now that’s the accomplishment of salvation in Jesus Christ. And so it’s as a part of those events that Jesus becomes what? He becomes the justified One. He becomes the sanctified One. He is, in His mediatorial office, the adopted One. God says, “*Today I have become Your Father*” in Psalm 2, which He says at Jesus’ baptism. He is the glorified One, and so on. That’s the *in Christ* that I’m talking about.

And then that third point we talked about was *in Christ* and *Christ in us*. And that’s the application of the gospel that we usually think of when we think of the gospel, the *ordo*

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salutis, that golden chain, how it was that we were elected, how it was that we were converted, how it was that we were exercising faith, that we were repenting, how it was that we are sanctified, and so on—those things as applied to us.

And then we thought about life in Christ in the world. And I talked to you about the difficulty that exists because the future age has been brought into the present age in us, as we stand in Christ. And we need to exercise things like faith and repentance. That’s just a staple of our existence. So that was last time in a nutshell.

I want to move on from there. And I want to do it by thinking about that mixing bowl illustration again. I want you to remember that what we’re looking at is not necessarily a step-by-step-by-step progress through sanctification so you do step one and then step two and then step three. What’s happening in your life are many things all at once. And what we’re doing is, we’re thinking about sanctification like a bowl of ingredients that we’re mixing up. And week to week we’re taking out one of those ingredients and looking at it, considering it, thinking about it under the microscope of the Scriptures. And we’re asking ourselves how this plays a part in our growth in grace.

So that’s what I want us to think about as we head into this next section. But I want to exercise due diligence and ask if there are any questions from the last time before we get started. Maybe there are some questions that you’d like to ask, but you want to wait until we begin to unfold this particular section today. Anything? All right. Well again, feel free to ask questions at any point throughout the lesson and I’ll be glad to stop.

Well let’s think, first of all, about the transformation that takes place in us. And this is one of those ingredients in the bowl that I was talking about. We are transformed into the likeness and the image of Jesus Christ. But we’re told that this happens in a very specific way. And this is the text that we’re going to be considering today. So if you want to open up Romans chapter 12, verses 1 and 2, that’s fine. If you just want to read it up here and then think about it as we go along, I’m going to be working somewhat closely, somewhat loosely through this text, as we think about this particular aspect of sanctification. So let me read it.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, 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.”

Now I think that this idea of the renewal of our thinking, the transformation of our minds, is a vital, pivotal, foundational thing. And we’ll talk about why that is first. But I always, always, always want to remind you that the things that we talk about for instance, when we get to the doing,--and we will get to the doing. We’ll even get to some talk about what it is that we need to do today, as we’re sanctified people. As we talk about that, we’ll never divorce that sort of talk from that which God has done in us. In other words, we’ll never talk about our doing out of context from God’s doing and what God has already done in us, because that’s so vital when we think about sanctification.

So let’s move forward and let’s think about this for a minute. I want to talk to you about *foundations*.

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Now when we think about sanctification, there are three things that I want us to think about—three vital things that I want us to think about that we cannot miss in the process. The first one that I want to talk to you about is *monergism* or *synergism*.

I went through this with my church school class in Gibsonia. I had a cartoon and I looked for it, and I couldn't find it. I don't know what I did with it. But if I do find it, I'll bring it in and I'll post it up on the board because I think that it's really entertaining.

We need to think about what these words mean. So let's think about what they mean for a minute. Let's think first of all about *monergism*. What is monergism? It's a big word. What is it? Well it's really simple. *Mono* means *one*. And this last part of the word, this *ergism*, is from the Greek word *ergon*, which means *work*. And so when we think about this, there is one worker. That's the idea behind monergism.

What about *synergism*? Well when you think about the *ergism* it's the same thing. It's work. But what about the *syn*? Well the *syn-* is a prefix that means *together*. And so the idea is *a working together*.

Now when we think about these things, we oftentimes think about them in a way that's all-encompassing. And I think that the way in which we need to think about these particular words is very carefully, and in a very specified way. What do I mean by that? Well when we think about this, we're—oh, I get it! The pointer won't work on the TV. I didn't know that! (*Laughter*) You learn something new every day. I can see that.

(*Laughter*)

Okay. So when you think about monergism, you have to ask yourself this. When and where does it apply? When and where does that word apply? Well I want to tell you something. It applies in our *regeneration*.

I was teaching a group of children in my very first congregation. I was serving in a small community. And there were some rough kids living in a trailer park, and they were great kids. I enjoyed myself thoroughly with them. There were just about five or six of them and I was trying to communicate the gospel for all I was worth, and I was trying to help them to understand that they were dead sinners.

And so I asked this one boy. I asked him to come up. And I said, “Hey, I'm going to set this table up. I want you to lay down on the table.” And you know, the other boys just loved that. And so I said, “All right, now. I want you to remain absolutely still.” And you know, that guy could not remain absolutely still for anything in the whole world.

(*Laughter*) So I strapped him.

But I'll tell you what I did do. I was in this same congregation, and I was a little prone to theatrics back then in my preaching. I was just starting out. I don't even think I was fresh from seminary yet. I think I was in college. And I worked for a funeral director. And so I asked him. I said, “Would you do me a favor and bring a casket to me?”

He said, “I can't do that.” (*Laughter*)

I said, “How about bringing your gurney?”

He said, “I can do that.”

I said, “Okay. Bring your gurney.”

So I had this guy who was newly converted. And you know, you always want to subject the newbies to the weirdest stuff, right? (*Laughter*) So I said to him, “I'll tell you

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what. How about you climb up on this gurney and I’ll get four guys to wheel you in while I start reading Ephesians 2:1-10—“*you were dead in your trespasses and sins.*”

No one in the congregation knew what was going on. It was absolutely great. They just loved every minute of it, right? (*Laughter*) They knew I worked for a funeral director, right? It was just great. So they wheeled him in. They put him up on top of the platform. And here’s this dead body.

And I started asking them, “Can a dead body hear?” And I got down beside him and I talked to him, and he couldn’t hear.

And I said, “Can he smell?” I took off my shoe and put it up under his nose. (*Laughter*) Can he smell? You know, that guy hated that. (*Laughter*)

But the idea was that I was trying to communicate that *he is dead*. And you see, the idea here is that every man, woman and child, no matter how cute that child is when it comes out of the mother’s womb, is dead in sin. And they are in need of a spiritual resurrection. And that spiritual resurrection happens in regeneration, because “*God is rich in mercy*”, and “*makes us alive in Christ Jesus.*” That’s Ephesians 2:4. That’s where monergism applies.

Now when we are made alive in Christ, when we are resurrected in Christ—and we’ll talk more about this as we go—there are things that we’ll think about that are important to what it means to be alive in Christ—but for now you need to understand that when we talk about the sanctification process, that’s where the word *synergism* comes in, because as soon as I am made alive in Christ, what begins to happen? What begins to happen is that I exercise faith. I start to say, “Wow! This Jesus! I think I’ve known about Him in the past, but now I have a care for Him. And the fact of the matter is that I agree with the things I’m hearing from that pulpit about Him. And I want to live my life in a way that’s different. And all of a sudden I am responding in faith to what I’m hearing.”

And the other thing I begin to do is this. I begin to be sorry for the things I’ve done in the past that are contrary to His will. And so I what? I repent of those things. I turn from them.

And so that’s where *synergism* comes into play, because I am bearing the fruit of regeneration. So the resources come from God, but they bear fruit in me. And so I begin to exercise faith and repentance.

That’s an important thing because when you think about sanctification, we need to think about our responsibility. We need to think about what it is not only what God is doing in me, but what it is that I’m required to do as it relates to God in me.

Now let me just take a really quick flashback. Remember that I talked to you about the twofold grace of God last time. I said that you never, never, never have the forensic justifying grace of God without the renovating grace of God. The two are possessed by us in Jesus Christ. You don’t have one without the other. And that’s the idea. Because we’ve been resurrected by that working of God, now all of a sudden I am what? I am not only justified before God. My life begins a renovation by faith and repentance.

Well that’s that. And there’s a second thing that’s essential, and that’s *grammar*. I want you to think about indicatives for a minute. What’s an indicative? We’re back to high school. What’s an indicative?

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Participant: A command.

Jeff: Did somebody just say “Amen?” That’s close enough. (*Laughter*)

Participant: I think he said “command.”

Second Participant: Command.

Jeff: No, not yet. An indicative comes before the command. The indicative describes the situation as it is. And when we think about the indicatives of God, we are thinking about what God has done. That takes us back to the monergism, what it is that God has done.

Now when I think about what God has done for me, then out of that flows the *imperatives*, or the commands, whoever said that—the commands. And so because of what God has done—the indicatives—then I do.

Now you think about it like this. You see this in Scripture everywhere. You see it like this. It says, “You are light; now be light,” right? It says that you have been raised up into the heavenly places with Christ. “*Therefore, seek the things that are above.*” Do you get that? You are light. That’s what God has done, the indicatives. This is what God has done for you. You are light in Jesus Christ. Now be the light that you are.

This is what I was talking to you about the last time. Remember when I said that there’s a zygote. The zygote is the smallest form of human development in a person, right, in the mother’s womb. And I said to you that that zygote gets twenty-three chromosomes from Mom and twenty-three from Dad. It has forty-six altogether. That zygote will never be more human than it already is. Why? Because it will never get more chromosomes. If it does, it’s in trouble, right? It has forty-six and it will always have forty-six. And it will grow into those forty-six chromosomes that it has.

So it is what it is becoming, just like the Christian is light and needs to be light. That’s the idea of the indicative and the imperative. It’s crucial. And we’re going to be coming back to this time after time after time after time. We’re always thinking about our sanctification in relation to what God has done.

Let me put it this way. You get into a situation where people are telling you to do without telling you what God has already done. What do you have? You’ve got legalism. If you get into a situation, though, where people are talking about the indicatives and they’re not talking about the imperatives, what have you just gotten yourself into? Antinomianism—people who are against the law. You see, in Christ there’s no legalism, and there’s no antinomianism. In Jesus Christ there are indicatives—what God has done for me—and what I’m required to do as a result of what God has done. Yes, Don?

Don: Jeff, would it be similar to the fact that Ephesians particularly says that we are now seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Jeff: That’s right.

Don: But we haven’t experienced the fullness of it yet. We won’t until we’re in glory. And so isn’t it kind of the same thing here?

Jeff: It’s exactly the same thing, Don. That’s exactly right. Yes.

Don: We’re sanctified now. The victory is sure.

Jeff: Yes.

Don: Yet we are becoming more and more conformed to the image of Christ.

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Jeff: That is exactly right. Bill?

Bill: I’m a little slow.

Jeff: Okay, I’ll catch you up. *(Laughter)*

Bill: Lots of luck. *(Laughter)* Back to monergism and synergism. Can I quote from this book?

Jeff: You can quote from anything you want, as long as it’s not heretical.

Participant: What book is that, Bill?

Bill: The book you gave me, *Devoted to God*.

Jeff: Yep, go ahead.

Bill: Page 13. *“Sanctification, then, is God setting us apart for Himself. Thus, as saints, we have already been sanctified by Him.”*

There’s a footnote from John Murray. *“It is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms that refer to sanctification are used not as a process, but a once-and-for-all definitive act.”*

Jeff: Thank you very much. *(Laughter)* All right, Bill. Thank you very much for that.

Bill: I’m not finished.

Jeff: Oh! *(Laughter)* We’ve got to go back, then. Go ahead. *(Laughter)*

Bill: Back to monergism and synergism.

Jeff: Absolutely.

Bill: You know, people like Luther and Augustine believed that it was total monergism, from beginning to end. I have a problem with synergism because of irresistible grace. Are we saying that grace is only irresistible before regeneration and not afterwards?

Jeff: Well, that depends. You could flip that around and you could say that when you do the good works that were prepared in advance for you to do, you would say that’s God in me. That’s God, right? Monergism. What happens when you sin? Is that God?

Bill: Well, there are certain people who believe—

Jeff: Uh-uh! Don’t go there, brother! Don’t go there! That’s a place you don’t want to go, because that’s not God.

Bill: But God does use our sin.

Jeff: See, what those guys who are talking about monergism—if you were to say to me, “Monergism or synergism, brother?”, I would say to you, “All right. In the sense that Augustine is using monergism, it’s monergism all the way.” In other words, it begins with God. It’s God’s resources by which I am made progressively holy, and it is by the work that God began in me in Jesus Christ that it will be brought to completion. If you want to talk about monergism in that sense, I say that it’s monergism all the way. But if you want to talk about me specifically, and faith and repentance, then I would say to you that it’s not God who exercises faith in me. It’s God who enables me. It’s God who gives me the resources. It’s God who has given me the spiritual resurrection in order to exercise faith. And when I don’t and I sin, it’s not God’s fault. It’s the remainder of sin in me that I choose to follow. That’s the sanctification process.

The *definitive* is the zygote possessing all forty-six chromosomes. The *progressive* aspect, which is in Scripture, is the growing into what I already am in Jesus Christ.

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Bill: The zygote doesn't become a baby by itself, on its own. Left to—

Jeff: Bill, Bill, Bill, listen! Absolutely! And we don't become Christians by ourselves.

Participant: Yes, right.

Bill: But I would say that the baby has nothing to do with it.

Jeff: Do you believe when Scripture says, “Bill, you are required to seek the things that are above,” do you believe that you are required to do that?

Bill: Yes, but if God doesn't give me the desire, I won't do it.

Jeff: Granted. Do you believe that you're required to do that? Then we're saying the same exact thing. I saw a hand at the table back there. Please?

Participant: I think of the Scripture that says, “*Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.*”

Jeff: Yeah. Got it right here.

Participant: “*Because it is God who is working in you.*”

Jeff: Both and.

Participant: Both and.

Jeff: Yes. Both and. Philippians 2:12. That's what it means to be synergistic when you think about sanctification. Okay, let's go to—

Participant: I heard a guy one time say that if you're afraid to do something, or you don't know what to do, think about what God would want you to do, and then do it. Even if you're afraid to do it, think about what He wants you to do, and go do it.

Jeff: Yes, right! Well, you know, one of my heroes, John Wayne, said at one time that courage is being afraid, but saddling up anyway. (*Laughter*) I'm just saying it, okay? (*Laughter*)

All right. So *definitive sanctification* again is what we've been talking about. If we think about monergism, if we think about what we just talked about, we talked about indicatives. If we think about indicatives, we're talking about the same thing. Here is something I want you to think about. When we think about definitive sanctification, we're thinking about it over against *progressive sanctification*.

In definitive sanctification, think about it in terms of spheres, and you won't then get confused with justification, because you never want to confuse definitive sanctification with justification. So you'll stay out of those weeds by thinking about definitive sanctification in terms of spheres.

What do I mean by that? Rick Gamble, in his second systematic theology that's coming out, gives a good example of this. He said that he used to work for a funeral director. He said that he worked for a florist and he took flowers into a funeral home. And he said, “I walked into that funeral home and I set the flowers down. And I turned around and there was a dead body there.” And he said, “I was surprised because I didn't expect to see a dead body there.” And he said, “That dead body, believe it or not, was not startled by my entrance into the room.” (*Laughter*)

He said that dead body, that person, was in a different sphere. And he says that's the way we need to think about definitive sanctification. We are no longer under sin's dominion. Yes, the presence of sin remains. There is no denying that. But we are no longer under sin's dominion.

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We have to be careful in the way we talk, men. I counseled a man one time, and he was struggling with pornography. And I want to tell you what he told me because it was startling to me. He said, “You know, sometimes I feel like I have a responsibility to go look at pornography.”

Participant: Oo!

Jeff: And I said, “Brother, if that’s the case, then you’re still under the dominion of sin. You’re not dealing with the presence of sin any longer. You are under its dominion, and you need the gospel.” Right?

So when we think about definitive sanctification, we need to think about being removed from sin’s sphere as a kingdom, and as sin being the king of that dominion, to the sphere of Christ’s kingdom. We are now children of the living God, and not slaves to sin any longer. So that’s what we need to think about. Yes, Don?

Don: Jeff, there are people who say, for example, in Romans 7 that Paul says that “*there is no good thing that dwells in me, in my flesh.*” And people will say that if you believe in a synergistic view of sanctification, then you’re saying that there is something good in your flesh, and you give yourself credit for what you’re doing. How would you respond to that?

Jeff: “*He who is in me is greater than he who is in the world.*” That is the good thing that indwells me and enables me to do that which God commands me.

Don: Well said.

Jeff: Okay. Very good question. All right, let’s move on and think about the presentation here in this text. Now I want us to think about a *unified dispositional complex*.

Participant: What? (*Laughter*)

Jeff: I know, I know! But this is easy, not hard stuff. I want you to think about *dispositional*. You know what *unified* is. Let’s see about *dispositional*. You know what *complex* is. *Complex* is varying parts.

What about *dispositional*? When you think about *dispositional*, I want you to think about character traits. I want you to think about different aspects of your being. We have a complex of those.

What do I mean? Well, we have the mind, right? And we have emotions, and we have a will, and we have a body.

So I want you to think now about Adam in the garden. Adam in the garden thought God’s thoughts after Him, was delighted to do so and willed to do so prior to the Fall. He had a unified dispositional complex. In other words, all that was in him was aimed at one purpose, obeying and glorifying God.

Now we have what is called a *fragmented dispositional complex*. We are fragmented because we think one thing, feel another, and do an entirely different thing altogether. (*Laughter*) The closest we’ve ever come to a unified dispositional complex is when we met our wives. (*Laughter*) Brother, I want that woman! I love her! And all that was in you willed to have her, right? That was a unified dispositional complex. That’s the closest you’ve ever been, until you were in Christ.

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In Christ now you have the ability to be a unified dispositional complex. And you need to understand that when we talk about presenting ourselves to God, like Paul does here in Romans 12:1-2, when we present ourselves to God, we have in mind here because Paul has in mind, presenting our whole selves to God.

Let me tell you this. I sat across from a woman and her husband one time years and years ago, and the woman had developed into an affair with another man. And we were sitting across from one another, and her husband was sitting there. He was a model of godliness, and he was saying, “Hon, I’ll take you back.” This was her second affair.

He said, “Hon, I’ll take you back.” And she said, “I don’t know if I want you.”

And I said, “Let me ask you a question. Do you know what the Scriptures say?”

She said, “I do.”

We read through the Scriptures. I said, “Do you believe what Scripture says?”

She said, “I do.”

I said, “Well then, call up this man and tell him you’re done.”

And she said, “I can’t.”

And I said, “No, you can. You just don’t want to.” And I said, “Call him up and tell him. Who is the authority here? Is it God speaking in His word, or is it you?”

You see, that’s a fragmented dispositional complex. We want to present ourselves to God in a unified way—in our thinking, in our feeling, in our willing. That’s so important. And in doing that we are what? We are living and holy and acceptable sacrifices.

What is a sacrifice? We are surrendering ourselves to God. That’s what we ought to be doing, men.

I want to tell you something. Do you want to hear something practical? If you do what Paul is telling you to do, you will not only honor and glorify God, but your wives will find you appealing and wonderful. Why? Because they love God. And you are looking more and more like God when you do this. Do you see what I mean? It’s a wonderful thing. This is not just theoretical. This is exceedingly practical.

And this is then a whole self-approach. I’ve already brought that into the mix. So let’s move on, and let’s think now about the *prohibition* in the text. Yes. Absolutely.

Participant: Before we move on,--

Jeff: Please! This gives me a good chance to drink coffee. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Sure. So what you’re not saying is that you won’t be faced with incredible temptations and struggles. That’s not a sign of lack of faith or lack of belief. It’s that even though we’re sanctified with the justification part, within that sanctification process on to glorification, that’s where the battle is, and it’s a fight. You might get knocked down, but you get back up. So that’s all normal; that’s all Christ; that’s Christian living; that’s Romans 7. We just keep fighting.

Jeff: That’s it. You know, we’re talking about the definitive stuff because it will give us hope when we talk about the progressive stuff. When we talk about the progressive stuff, you’re right. We’re going to get knocked down, right? And we’re going to get discouraged. But we need to realize that the doing is not perfect doing. But what God did is perfect.

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Participant: So going back to indicatives and imperatives, the indicative is *be*—abide in Christ and abiding and being in Christ.

Jeff: No. The indicative is what God has done for me. It is God abiding in me because of what He has done on my behalf. So when you think about the indicative, you think about my state of affairs because of what God has done. And when you think about the imperative, you think that because I am this because of what God has done, I need to be this, and so I need to do this. Does that make sense? Okay, Bill?

Bill: Sanctification is a one-time event. Why can't we use the word *maturity* in this process as we're using the word *sanctification*?

Jeff: We can.

Bill: Do you see anything wrong with that?

Jeff: We can use growth in grace. We can use maturity. We can use sanctification. We can even use holiness, growing in holiness.

Bill: Do you think you're holy?

Jeff: I think I am as holy as I'm going to be in Christ, and I think I am getting progressively holy. I think I'm catching up to what I am in Jesus Christ.

Bill: But I would underline that—only in Christ.

Jeff: I would underline all of it in Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: Okay. Now let's think about the *prohibitions*. These are all good questions. Let's think about the prohibition for a minute. And when we do, let's go back to the prohibition just really quick. You still have that. Let's go halfway through and refresh our memories here, maybe more than halfway through.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, 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.” That's the prohibition that I want us to think about.

But before we think about that, I want us to go back to Romans 6:17. And Bill, you are absolutely going to love this. You're going to love it. (*Laughter*) So I want you to think about 6:17. I want to read this for you. It's a great verse. I love this verse. *“But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.”*

Now that has two elements in it. That's got the progressive aspect in it. You were obedient. That's certainly progressive. But notice this. This is what I want you to catch. *“You have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed.”*

“To which you were delivered.” That's what's called a *divine passive*. In other words, you were delivered to this form of doctrine. God delivered you to this!

I want you to think about an ice cube tray. You hold that ice cube tray underneath the faucet. You turn it on. It fills up according to that form. Guess what? We have already been delivered into that form of doctrine, and that form is Jesus Christ.

Now I know I'm going to ask you a trick question here. But as we grow up into this form, what are we to look like?

Participant: Christ.

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Jeff: Jesus Christ, yes! It’s not a trick question at all, is it? It’s Christ all the way down. So I’m delivered to that form of doctrine which is Christ, and I’m becoming obedient from the heart to that very form of doctrine, that Christ to whom I’ve been delivered.

So it’s the mold. So now, you think about that mold and what do you think about? You think about that I can’t be conformed to the pattern of this world. As a believer in Christ, I can’t be, I ought not to be delivered over to the mold of the world’s pattern.

Think about that. If I am in the mold of Jesus Christ, if I’ve been delivered to it and I’m becoming that mold, then what’s happening with regard to the world? The world is trying to stuff me, says Romans 12, into its mold. And here’s the interesting thing. This is a *passive*, too. It’s not a divine passive. This is a world passive. That’s not what it really is in Greek, but that’s what I’m calling it, because the world is trying to get me to be stuffed into its mold.

Participant: That’s right.

Jeff: And because I am already in the mold of Christ, I need to resist conformity to the world’s mold and I need to actively pursue the mold that I’ve already been poured into.

Okay, so let’s think about being and becoming for the last five minutes. Be what you are. Be transformed. Become what you are. Yes?

Participant: You know, you had us reading 6:17. In 19, it goes on to say, *“For just as you once presented your members as slaves to lawlessness, leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, leading to sanctification.”*

Jeff: Yes, absolutely.

Participant: It’s a process.

Jeff: Yes, that’s exactly it. That’s Romans 6, right?

Participant: Yes, the next verses.

Jeff: Yes, that’s it. We won’t be going there yet, but we’ll be going there. That’s exactly it. Okay, so we need to—

Participant: Jeff, I’m sorry.

Jeff: Don, yes?

Don: One question. Could you, just in a very short summary, talk about what it means to be conformed to the world, how that works itself out?

Jeff: Yeah. I think I can talk about that easily. We’re living in a day and an age where sexuality has become the defining standard of our day. So, for instance, when we get into this situation—and I’m going to talk about the church, Don—the church has been made to feel very guilty about calling homosexuals sinners. And so what happens is—and this is happening in some Christian colleges—what’s happening is that they’ll say something like this. They’ll say, “Well, look. Let’s think about it like this. The disposition to be a homosexual is not a sinful disposition, but the activity is sinful.”

And so what begins to happen is this. What begins to happen—and it’s happening right now,—is that you have seminary students popping up and they say, “I am a gay Christian.”

Participant: Wow!

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Jeff: And I want to say this. I want to say that’s like saying, “I’m a drunkard Christian,” right? “I’m a thieving Christian.” I’m defining my Christianity and I’m defining myself by my sin, right?

Participant: Right.

Jeff: And we ought to say this. We have to say, “Look! It’s behind, brother.” What has been crucified with Christ, let’s call it crucified!

Participant: Amen.

Jeff: And yet the Christian church continues to conform, and institutions continue to conform to the pattern of this world’s thinking in those kinds of ways. Does that help, Don?

Don: Yes. Thank you.

Jeff: And we allow that to happen, frankly, by the influence of the world on us. Now I’m not saying that we ought to be mean. But, you know, this gets back to the courage to stand up and say, “Hey, this is really wrong.”

I mean, I love those people who are on the stage right now, calling me names. And I love this guy back here who wants to beat me up after the meeting’s over, like a meeting I was in at the school district. But this is wrong. I can’t do anything else but call it what it is—that sort of thing, right?

So we need to be transformed. We need to become what we are. And this is so vital. This means thinking God’s thoughts after Him. I don’t mean getting the next book on the Trinity, though I think all of you ought to know the Trinity. I think you ought to know Christology. I think you ought to know salvation and all those things.

But this is more than that. This is an attitude change. This is being a different person—thinking about the world differently, thinking about my wife differently, thinking about my kids differently, because of what I am in Jesus Christ.

Because of who I am in Christ, I don’t exasperate my children because I think differently about them and about me, and our relationship together. And so I need to think differently. I need to be renewed, not in my mind only, but just like we’ve been talking about, in my unified dispositional complex I need to be renewed in all of me. And that’s important. And the fruits of that will be the discernment of God’s will.

I don’t have time right now to talk about this. But this is so important. I just want to whet your appetites, and at some point on the way we’ll get back into this.

You know, how many of you—I’ll tell you what, when I was a young man, this was the way it was. I know the will of God. I know she’s the girl for me if the phone rings twice on Tuesday. (*Laughter*) Sally is mine if that happens, right? And,. You know, a lot of people do that. If I see a red car this morning before 9 a.m., I’m going to get the job! (*Laughter*) It’s God’s promise, right? No!

See, when our minds are renewed, what are we doing? We’re thinking God’s thoughts after him, not in our own imaginations, but in His word. He gives me principles to live by. And where there are principles and no details about thinking His thoughts after Him, guess what there is. There is wisdom. I apply the principles.

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For instance, let’s think about it this way. There’s Sally and Susie. And what do I do? I ask myself what the principles are here at work. Both of them have to be believers. Okay, Sally is not a believer but Susie is. Sally has got to be out of the running.

But I like her better! Tough! *(Laughter)*

Now wait a minute. What if they’re both believers? Yea, right? They’re both believers. Now what do I do? I go back to the Bible. It doesn’t say “Sally” or “Susie” for me. So what do I do? I apply wisdom.

I have to ask some hard questions, right? Things like does she honor her mother? Has she been a Titus 2 woman? Do I get along with her father? Does he honor me, respect me? You know, there are all kinds of things, wisdom that needs to be applied in order to discern God’s will. And oh yes, this part’s tough. Go ahead.

Participant: Can you change Sally?

Jeff: Huh?

Participant: Can you change Sally?

Jeff: Next question? *(Laughter)* No, you cannot change Sally. God can change Sally. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Let’s say that you like Sally. You know that she does not believe.

Jeff: Just for the record, I’m married. *(Laughter)*

Participant: Her name is Sally, right?

Jeff: Sally’s my wife.

Participant: So with God’s help you can change her.

Jeff: Well, the danger is missionary dating. The danger is your affections getting wrapped around something that is for now off limits to you, right? And you don’t want to be sat down. You don’t want to sit your son down who has missionary dated and say, “Look, son, she’s not a believer.”

And he says, “But I’ve been with her six months and I love her.”

“Son, you’ve got to give her up. You can’t marry her. She’s not a believer.”

“I don’t want to.”

You don’t want to put yourself into a position where you will act in a fragmented way. That’s the danger of that. We have another question.

Participant: It’s not so much a question, but it’s something that Bruce has talked about. It’s the revealed will of God and the secret will of God. His revealed will is all those things that you’re talking about.

Jeff: Yes.

Participant: His secret will is Susie or Sally, right? We don’t know who to choose. So that’s always going to be the way to think about it.

Jeff: And if you choose Sally, you can’t divorce her later and say, “I should have married Susie. Susie was really the dot.” No, there is no such thing as a dot. You married the other one. Make the bad decision the better decision in the long run, right?

Participant: Amen.

Second Participant: The other side of the issue is what are Susie and Sally thinking about? Are they looking for the will of God?

Jeff: Are they lovely? *(Laughter)*

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Participant: And maybe one would be led in the same direction.

Jeff: Yes, that’s right. Okay, men, one more thing before we close out today. It’s a great day for hockey in Pittsburgh. *(Laughter and applause)*

Participant: It’s tomorrow.

Jeff: Is it tomorrow night? Oh, what are we giving them days off for? You got the dagger in the heart. *(Laughter)*

Let me lead us in prayer. Let’s pray. Father, thank You so much for this day and the time that You’ve given to us to be together. And thank You so much for Your work in us. Lord, we praise You for that. We pray that You will continue to give us the wonderful indications of Your tokens of kindness and grace day by day, that we might be renewed in our thinking and think Your thoughts after You and become more like Your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us. It’s in His name that we pray. Amen. Have a good day. *(Applause)*