

The Footsteps of Faith Series

Lesson # 20 “A Transformed Heart”

Romans 12:3-21

Scripture: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.””

Introduction:

I know my illustration get a bit corny from time to time but I need you to work with me on this one.

What if by some miracle of heaven you were transformed into a lizard. Never again to be a human. Would that be some fate you would just have to accept and scamper off and be on your way?

Or would you need to know about how to live as a lizard. Can you imagine all of a sudden having four feet and slithering tongue and about 6 inches long.

First thing how would you get out your chair? Then how would you get out of the building or would you want to?

What would you eat? The last time I checked there are not rest rants for lizards. Oh and as a lizard are there things that if you eat might kill you?

Can you get to much sun? What about birds....or cats? Or even children?

I don't know about you but if I was changed into a lizard I would need some instruction on how to be a lizard.

Transitional Statement:

Well thank goodness we haven't been turned into lizards ...Amen? But we have been transformed into the likeness of God. And the rest of Romans Chapter 12 clue us in to how we should live this new transformed life.

I. First, the transformed heart strives for clear thinking.

Romans 12:3

3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

- A. First Paul calls attention to the fact that God's divine influence in his heart is where this message is coming from, this is not Paul's opinion but the very words of God. (2 Timothy 3:16).

- B. Then Paul brings up our thinking.
 - 1. That is our thought processes
 - 2. How we understand information that is given to us
 - 3. How we form opinions
 - 4. How we draw conclusions.
 - 5. God really wants the Christian to stop and give careful consideration to how they think.
 - a. And not to buy into the idea that we have no control over how we think....that is the devils angle.

- C. God says that we need to be of sound judgment
 - 1. The Greek word here is "sober"
 - a. i.e. Sober in thought
 - 2. In our world we understand that sober thought is thinking that is not impaired by alcohol right?
 - 3. Here the idea is similar, it means that we shouldn't allow outside elements to take control and impair our thinking.
 - a. I can see how my judgment has been clouded, or impaired from time to time by outside influences.
 - When my feelings are hurt I get defensive.
 - When I am scared I tend to lose trust in people
 - When I am frustrated....well I just get grouchy
 - b. So outside influences can certainly cloud our thinking.

- D. The opposite of sobriety would be drunken thought. And Paul brings up one of the most intoxicating things that we can take into our bodies that would impair our thinking or judgment.....and that is having a high opinion of ourselves.
 - 1. Church if pride and arrogance creep into our hearts our thinking becomes like a drunk man who is unable to make clear judgments.

2. Have you ever watched a drunk person? They are consistent in one thing for sure....they always make a fool of themselves.
3. Church, God doesn't make fools....that is something we choose to be on our own.

E. So the transformed heart must be given to clear thinking.

1. And clear thinking has its beginning in Humility

- Proverbs 1:7 *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*

2. And finds its ending in the word of God.

- Here our text talks about the measure of faith that God has given to each of us.

- And how else can we understand the measure of faith, other than to know it is simply the amount of God's word that has absorbed into our hearts Romans 10:17

II. Then, the transformed heart understands that it is part of a team

Romans 12:4-5

4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

A. First of all, a body has many members

1. The foot, the hand, the eye, the arm and so on.
2. And they all have different functions

- a. The fingers grasp things
- b. The legs carry us
- c. The eyes see
- d. The ears hear

B. Each member by itself is nothing, but collectively they form a working living functional body.

1. I think the point is that we are interconnect and that each one of us are important and vital to the whole.
2. Now Paul talks about this same thing at length in:

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. 19 If they were all one member, where would the body be? 20 But now there are many members, but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; 23 and those members of the body which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our less presentable members become much more presentable, 24 whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

C. One Sunday, quite a few years back, at the Church in Inola the strangest thing happened during church. A dear brother that I still think a lot of got up and made the announcements and then he started the song service, but when he lead the opening prayer I was really surprised. You can only imagine the look on my face when he single handedly did the Lord's supper. Yes He preached and did the closing prayer.

1. At the time I knew this was wrong. The church is not a place for a one man show.

D. God made us to be a team, functioning and relying on each other.

III. Well, a transformed heart focuses on the gift that God has given it.

Romans 12:6-8

6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

- A. First, it is vital to understand that God has given each one of us here today gifts or abilities to serve in His Kingdom.
- B. And each of us have different gifts according to His desires
 - 1. And thank God for that....
 - a. If we were all song leaders who would preach right?
 - 2. Have we earnestly tried to seek out and understand the gift that God has assigned to each of us?
- C. Did you catch that we are to exercise our gifts?
 - 1. These gifts are not like a wrench that might sit on the shelf until they are called upon for service.
 - 2. These gifts are suppose to be a daily part of our lives.
 - a. We are suppose to develop
 - b. And grow in them.

IV. Then Paul roles out a portrait of a transformed heart.

- 1. Let Love be sincere.
 - 9a Let love be without hypocrisy...*
 - a. Not contrived or fake
 - b. Not from obligation
 - But from desire
 - c. Sincere and genuine...
 - Heart centered.
- 2. Stick to what is good.
 - 9b ...Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.*
 - a. Utterly detest what is evil
 - b. Be (Greek, glued) to what is good.
- 3. Be devoted to each other.
 - 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;*

- a. Devoted to each other...not quick to give up on.
- b. And with brotherly love
 - The idea is one of family
 - i.e. Tender, warm, kind and quick to forgive.
- c. The word preference here really has to do with helping each other along.
- d. Devotion to each other also includes honor, which has to do with valuing others.

4. Serve God in Diligence.

11 not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

- a. Here the way we serve the Lord is brought to mind
- b. It should be diligent
 - Not slothful or half hearted
- c. It should be fervent
 - Fervent here is the idea of being heated to the point of action
 - Like when you heat water and you keep heating it until it reaches 212 degrees it becomes active and starts to boil.

5. Trust God in all things.

12 rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer,

- a. Rejoice in hope...in the hope of God.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:19 “If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”
- b. Hang in there when times get tough
- c. Appeal to God in all things
 - Knowing that He is in Control
 - Know whom you have believed in and be convinced that He is able to guard what you have entrusted to Him until that day.
 - 2 Timothy 1:12

6. Be generous in all things.

13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

- a. First here would be to recognize that everything we have belongs to God.

-He gave them to us

-And most of these things are meant to be dispensed to others.

- b. Then we should be actively looking to help others needs.

-Not burying our heads in the sand.

-Not the “they can take care of themselves approach”

- b. But, generosity here also includes the idea of hospitality

-Now hospitality is the love of strangers by definition.

-Not just a love focused on ourselves.

-But one that reaches out in a giving way.

7. Promote the well being of everyone.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

- a. Recognize their needs.

- b. Consider their difficulties

- b. Be quick to forgive

- c. Not retaliatory toward them

- e. And desire whole-heartedly God’s working in their lives.

8. Get to know the people in your world.

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

- a. Come along side them

- b. Walk beside them for a while

-Get a feel for the road they travel in life.

- c. Take time to celebrate with their joys and take time understand their grief.

9. Understand that all people are created equal before God.

16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

- a. It's interesting that this is the second time this has been brought up.
- b. Here we are to remember that we are all created in the image of God
Genesis 1:27

-There are no super people

-No one person more important or more valuable to God than another.

- b. Galatians 3:28 *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

- c. I think Paul says it well in :

Philippians 2:3 *"... with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;"*

10. Then, we are to live at peace with all men

17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

- a. Peaceful, not always trying to balance a score with someone.
- b. We are to do what is right at all costs

-For all men stand in the balance

-And are watching and influenced by our actions

- c. We are to seek peace

-Reminds me of the very words of Jesus (Sermon on the Mount)

Matt 5:9 *"Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God."*

- d. In seeking peace we trust in God to take care of all injustices
-He even says "vengeance is mine"

e. Peace includes our enemies also, for we are to take care of him....
feed him if need be, clothe him and give him drink...even if he curses
us all the while.

-In this we will heap burning coals upon the enemies head

-Not that we wish or desire their destruction

*But more so, that God has given us victory !

Conclusion:

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.