

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGES

Text: Matthew 5:21-26

Key Word: Transformation

Key Thought: One of the best ways to overcome barriers that hinder the extension of God's kingdom is by becoming transformed through building quality relationships

There is a fresh wave of the Holy Spirit blowing over our land that has the potential of ushering in the return of the Lord. It is not based upon emotionalism or even doctrinal priority. This is not to say that our doctrines are NOT important. The fact is that quite often our doctrinal priority/purity has served to keep us separated from others whom Christ has redeemed by His precious blood.

A boastful pride has crept into our churches and has worked like a pry bar to divide us. Many times we have majored upon minor differences. It has destroyed the Kingdom Life that God intended for us to enjoy. It has also been used as an effective tool of the devil to bring mockery to the Church.

Our Lord often had to quench a divisive spirit before it took root into the hearts of His disciples. He knew that it would become a barrier for the Church to advance. The apostle Peter was confronted with this vital truth as he was waiting for his lunch on the rooftop of Simon the tanner. God gave him a vision that caused him to travel to Cornelius' house (a Gentile) and witness the conversion, Holy Spirit Baptism and Water Baptism of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:44-48).

*** The Civil War was carnage. Then Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy died. And Ulysses Grant of the Union died. Their widows, Varina Davis and Julia Grant, settled near each other. They became closest of friends. ***

Source Unknown

How Can We Develop Quality Transformations That Will Advance the Kingdom of God?

- I. WE NEED TO BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS (Matthew 5:21-22)**
- II. WE NEED TO BE RECONCILED TO OTHERS (Matthew 5:23-24)**
- III. WE NEED TO BE REASONABLE WITH OTHERS (Matthew 5:25,26)**

I. WE NEED TO BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS (Matthew 5:21-22)

Respect is a quality that is quickly being disregarded in our world. Yet the greater problem is that this same attitude is creeping into the Church. Our words and attitudes toward others often indicate a lack of respect. It is not simply a problem with children and teenagers. In fact, they have learned much of their skill by watching adults.

Sin reduces the value of others. It portrays itself through a violence against others who were created in the image of God. Jesus placed anger on the same level as murder. Both are to be subject to judgement.

*** One of our local high schools was shocked when a student led a gang swinging a machete at another group of students. We were told that the incident came about because of racism. Then within a week, in the same school, a teenage boy was stabbed by another over an incident that took place in the gym. Our daughter was shocked to see the blood at the entrance to the main office where the boy was taken. People who respect each other do not act in this manner. ***

“Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca’, is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”

Matthew 5:22b

The word **‘Raca’** is a very difficult word to translate. It is actually more of a tone of voice than it is the words that are spoken. It came to mean that the person was **“an empty-headed blunderer, a brainless idiot.”** It was a word used by someone who had placed themselves well above another through an arrogant contempt. Anyone who used such a derogatory word and attitude would have to stand before the supreme court of the Jews - the Sanhedrin. It was a very strong warning not to act in such a disrespectful manner with one another.

Jesus went on the use the word **“fool”** which was the Greek word **“môros.”** It was used to describe a man who was a moral fool. Such a man lived an immoral life. He also would often claim that there was no God (Psalm 14:1) hoping that he could continue with his lifestyle without punishment. So to call a man a “môros.” was NOT to attack his mental ability, it was rather to cast scandal on his moral character. Jesus took a high level of concern when anyone disrespectfully attempted to destroy someone’s moral character.

So Jesus made it clear that anyone who attempted to destroy a person’s name and reputation was liable to face the severest judgement of all. I believe that respect will become a strong differentiating distinction among Christians and non-Christians in our generation.

II. WE NEED TO BE RECONCILED TO OTHERS (Matthew 5:23-24)

Jesus offered another vivid illustration to capture the hearts of those gathered on the mountainside to hear His words of wisdom. It must be noted that our Lord kept the attention of the crowd not by performing miracles of healing etc. at this time, but rather by teaching the people practical truths.

“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teachings, 29. Because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”

Matthew 7:28,29

If a man had sinned, that sin would disturb the relationship between him and God, and a sacrifice would be required to restore that relationship. Yet we must recognize two very important facts that every Jew would know.

First, that there was no sacrifice that could atone for a willful act or deliberate sin. But if a man committed a sin unaware or committed a sin without premeditating it, then the sin would be able to be atoned for. **Secondly, the sacrifice had to include confession of sin and true repentance.** If it required a reconciliation between individuals, then the breach would have to be healed before the sacrifice was offered.

Jesus offered a slightly different twist to this important act of worship. He spoke about a person who would have prepared and purchased an animal to sacrifice at the temple. As he approached the altar to offer his sacrifice, he then remembered that a brother had something against him. He was to leave this sacrifice at the altar and go and make reconciliation with his brother before offering the sacrifice to God.

There was no place for a halfhearted sacrifice. **The worshiper could never . . .**

- 1). Worship quickly and then make things right
- 2). Thank God that he was in the temple without having to deal with the broken relationship.
- 3). Try to insinuate that everything was right when in fact, it wasn't.

There was only a place for a full-hearted sacrifice. **The worshiper could . . .**

- 1). Worship slowly once everything was right with God and man
- 2). Thank God that he was able to reconcile with his brother.
- 3). Enter with a sincere heart before God.

III. WE NEED TO BE REASONABLE WITH OTHERS (Matthew 5:25,26)

We all know that there are certain things that we can't change. The last 500 years of church history have taken place and none of us can change that fact. From the time of Martin Luther to the present day, we have seen many streams of Christian faith. Some are very expressive in their celebration of worship while others are quite solemn. Some approach worship with much pomp and spectacular beauty while others are overly simplified.

Churches have constantly tried to transform each other into what they believe is right. Perhaps we would build a stronger and more meaningful Church if we would just be who we are. We should NOT stop being a Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Pentecostal, but rather we should try to bring our best into the transformational equation that God is defining in this country. Perhaps it would be better if we would trust God to bring about the changes that He wants in individual churches! We all have changes to make! Not one of us have got it altogether. But all of us together have it all.

This is not to say that we lay aside the key doctrines of our faith. We cannot change the fact that God is a Triune God, that Jesus is our only sacrifice for sin, that He was born of a virgin; that He walked a sinless life performing miracles and teaching the word of God; that we must repent and live a life worthy of Christ; that the Bible is the divine authority for life and practice; that there is a heaven and a hell; that there is a literal devil; that Jesus is soon coming back again; that our world will be judged for its sin etc.

I am concerned that the church has become more of a guardian of the faith than a protector of the brethren. It is sad to say that the church that Jesus Christ died for; shed his precious blood for; is in constant battle with itself.

Anyone who has been taught Conflict Resolution recognizes that there is often a pie-shaped chart used to explain how to overcome conflicts. On one portion of the pie there are written the words, "*Incomplete information*" along the other side is written the words "*Personality style.*" It is easy to say that this simple pie chart can explain many of the problems we have among churches and each other.

May God grant us the grace to recognize our need of a Transformational Change in Kingdom Life in order that God's purpose may be fully recognized in our nation. **It is going to take an active, true humility, as well as leadership that is committed to do what is right.**

We must become dissatisfied with having hundreds of the empty chairs/pews in perfectly manicured churches. We can no longer ignore the right first step. Storming the gates of hell or feeling the right vibes will not bypass the fact that simple relationship building is still required for an effective gospel message to take hold in our country

III. WE NEED TO BE REASONABLE WITH OTHERS (Matthew 5:25,26)

*** By His sovereign grace, God can bring good out of our failures, and even out of our sins. J. Stuart Holden tells of an old Scottish mansion close to where he had his little summer home. The walls of one room were filled with sketches made by distinguished artists. The practice began after a pitcher of soda water was accidentally spilled on a freshly decorated wall and left an unsightly stain.

At the time, a noted artist, Lord Landseer, was a guest in the house. One day when the family went out to the moors, he stayed behind. With a few masterful strokes of a piece of charcoal, that ugly spot became the outline of a beautiful waterfall, bordered by trees and wildlife. He turned that disfigured wall into one of his most successful depictions of Highland life.

Charles Swindoll,
"The Quest For Character"
Multnomah, p. 49.

God is also able to transform our spots and stains of life into a beautiful masterpiece. Just like Stuart Holden discovered, we have a Wonderful Artist who is the Lord of the Landscape. He is more than able and willing to bring about Transformation Changes if we will simply invite Him into our lives.

Perhaps this is the day that God has made for you to begin a new process of transformations. I encourage you to step out of the driver's seat and let Him take control. Believe me when I say that He is more than able to lead you into incredible changes.

C:/My Documents/WPWin(X7)/Sermons.2018/Chrgrowth/Matthew 5_21.26.wpd

Date: May 20/18

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Change My Heart O God - C

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGES

Text: Matthew 5:21-26

Key Word: Transformation

Key Thought: One of the best ways to overcome barriers that hinder the extension of God's kingdom is by becoming transformed through building quality relationships

How Can We Develop Quality Transformations That Will Advance the Kingdom of God?

I. WE NEED TO BE RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS (Matthew 5:21-24)

I. WE NEED TO BE RECONCILED TO OTHERS (Matthew 5:23-24) - Matthew 7:28,29

III. WE NEED TO BE REASONABLE TO OTHERS (Matthew 5:25,26)