

Week 4: Citizen Transformation.

Objective: To understand that transformation is required for Citizenship and understand how we engage in this transformation.

Focal Passage: Romans 12:1-2

1. Change in citizenship means a transformation. The things of value, beliefs, and practices of our old citizenship pass away and become irrelevant to this new citizenship. They are replaced by the values, beliefs, and practices of this new Kingdom citizenship.
 - a. One of the best examples of this idea of transformation is found in Paul formerly known as Saul. In Acts 7 we find Saul was a persecutor of the church. He was active in persecution of what he thought was a threat to God even going so far as to be a part of rounding up Christians for trials with the Jewish leaders. In Acts 13 He received permission to go to Damascus to hunt down Jesus' followers and while on the way Christ comes to him in a bright light and audible voice. Saying Saul Saul why are you persecuting me? Saul asked who are you? Jesus identifies himself. Saul is blinded and helped into Damascus where he is baptized after 3 days and changes his name to Paul.
 - b. From there he does a 180 on his life. He goes on to complete 3 missionary journeys and is a prolific letter writer and supporter of the churches he helped plant. 13 of those letters are found in our New Testament. He went from being exclusively for the Jews and the law to the gospel of Grace and all people including the Gentiles.
 - c. Paul describes his old citizenship in Philippians 3: 4-9 These were the trappings of his old citizenship which he says were rubbish to him in this new citizenship. He held status, and importance in his old citizenship but that did not carry over into his new citizenship. His new citizenship found him storing his treasures in heaven as Jesus says. (Matthew 6:19-21)
 - i. 4 though I have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be

found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God based on faith.

2. Transformation is expected. Being a citizen means transformation.
 - a. And Paul is not the only one. Can you think of other followers of Christ? What changed for them?
 - b. People Jesus healed, life changed dramatically; Zacchaeus cheated people, became a follower, and repaid everyone; Peter hot-headed fisherman to the apostle who preached the first sermon of the church; Esther, a Simple Jewish girl to the queen who saves her people. Ethiopian Eunuch became a follower of Christ and spread the church to Africa; Thief on the cross was condemned as a criminal to be forgiven in paradise. Abraham, Jacob, Moses.
 - c. The list goes on but think about all the characters in the Bible that are seen going through life transformations in their lives most only because they followed God's directions. They didn't decide to be what they became, instead, they allowed themselves to be used and changed by God.
3. How do we engage in transformation? Read Romans 12:1-2
 - i. Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
 - b. Here Paul tells us that it is a mind change. Left up to our flesh we will conform to the world around us but we have to take ownership of this process. We are all being transformed into something so the challenge for us is to allow God to have control of that process. Step 1 to that is to remind yourself that you can't change in this way by yourself. We need to engage with God in this work by walking with the Spirit Galatians 5:25
 - c. There in Galatians 5 16-26 Paul tells us how to gauge our status in the familiar passage the fruit of the Spirit. The reality for us should be that as we are being transformed into our new citizenship we should see and be drawn less to the works of the flesh and exhibit more and more of the Fruits of the Spirit.
 - i. 16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They conflict with each other so that you are not to do whatever[c] you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 The acts of

the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other.

4. What are the ways you can engage with the spirit practically? Because transformation is the product of true worship and time spent? (Romans 12:1) Here we are likely to run against the old familiar spiritual disciplines such as Prayer, Bible reading, bible studying, fellowship with other believers, and memorization.
 - a. Consider your transformation. Have you seen improvement?
 - b. What's one thing you are going to eliminate this week to help you partner with the spirit?
 - c. What is one spiritual discipline you are going to make an effort to increase this week?