

Romans 12: Transformed Churches

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Introduction

What kind of church is this? Three kinds of churches—what kind is this.

We are going to study three kinds of Christians—what kind are you?

Lots of ways to think about Christianity, measure Christianity. Are we using the right measures, Biblical measures?

Where are we? Where are we going? What is the path? How will we know when we get where we're going?

MapQuest: How do we go from here to there? See the final destination, directions

Google Earth: What will it look like when we get there?

Measure #1

How become more like God? 2 Cor. 3:18

We are moving from modernity—rationality, info, deduction, but not pray, depend, stillness, meditation, spiritual nurturing

Measure #2

How do I respond to the mission of God? Basically, there are three responses to mission of God.

*Despair—from life of Moses, who am I, I can't speak, how can I do this, I'm not able

*Ego—savior complex, power, think of self too highly, both of these first two responses focus on self, are opposites

*Reliance on God—not off/from/by us, but from God. Humble self. Maintenance—80% are stagnating or going down. God, bring us renewal, help us reach cities, changing demographics, money in wrong places, money in bricks/mortar, African Americans, or Hispanics, lose what we have put all of our money in. Understand kingdom issues; change to missional churches, reflect neighborhoods; go to theaters, schools, meet where the people are.

Measure #3

Can we imagine what God wants to do through us?

Cannot fathom what God can do through us—Eph. 3:18.

Do we expect God to work in surprising ways, Acts 10—conversion of Peter. Acts 10 typifies—God in unexpected ways goes before/ahead of his people in surprising ways. 1000s could come to Christ—how?

Text

It's about God. Therefore, in view of God's mercy....

It's about submission to God. Present your bodies a sacrifice—living, holy, acceptable

It's about serving God. A thoughtful, meaningful, logical, reasonable service.

Come to wonderful metaphor—metamorphosis. Word we know in transition from caterpillar to butterfly. Do not be conformed, fashioned from the outside, but from the inside. How is it possible? By renewal of mind, passive not active. We do not renew our minds. God renews our minds. Then we can demonstrate as valid his will—good, well-pleasing, perfect.

Church Type #1. Person #1.

Conformed, squeezed, outwardly fashioned, schematized, defensive, reactive.

Catepillar churches, have not escaped the basic form.

What do caterpillars do? Eat and grow; consume and expand. Spend resources on self. Inwardly focused.

Caterpillar—consuming church, marketing, social surveys, what people want, self-serving, church is to give people what they want, self-absorbed, self-concerned, meet felt needs, focus on humanity, caterpillars crawl only in the earthly realms—paradox is that many caterpillars die as caterpillars. Unable to perceive more.

Sign outside—don't want visitors, don't want things messed up.

Transforming Churches

Active. Some are not content being pressed from without, want to change, what to progress, but are not there yet. The process has begun—it is happening, but not yet.

Pupa—redefine self, renewal, revitalization, turn from self to God, what does God want, question purpose for existence, try to fulfill God's purpose, realize own weakness, dependent on God, not human endeavor, decision making in Bible was made

in Bible under God through prayer. This is a time of spiritual conversion, transformation, pray, need to reach community, not have spiritual vitality to do that. Need to be evangelistic, but requires major transition.

Transformed Churches

Proactive. Acting by God's power.

Butterfly—weak, fragile, yet fly in the heavenlies, draw nectar, power from God in prayer, discipline self to bow under God, not know where we are going, open doors, nectar from Scripture, hearts are formed, prayer, fellowship, Bible, community. Draw nectar in order to spread pollen. Evangelism not hard for authentic Christians, living out there in the midst of culture, people come to Christ out of relationships. McClaren, More Ready than you Realize. Evangelism is like learning a song—absorb the song. Becoming a Christian is like absorbing the Christian way—relationships, participation, osmosis teaching, come to Christ out of special events, inclusion, games... These kinds become what God created us to become.

Caterpillar was not meant to remain a caterpillar—inside the chrysalis a great change is taking place, pupa. Now butterfly draws nourishment from nectar—pollinates.

Invitation

Three lessons.

Caterpillars: we were not meant to satisfy own desires

Pupas: do not focus on yourself to accomplish your personal transformation; you must learn how to be pollen-carrying butterfly

Butterflies: fragile, need nectar, not live long.