

## Measuring Up. Transformers

3 weeks ago, my second son Joseph was born. Wow things have changed a bit!! A distant memory is a full night's sleep, excuse the bags under my eyes...The amount of time it takes to get ready to go out seems to have multiplied 5 times not twice. Our little family has changed, the dynamics have changed. Zachary has a little brother who shares the attention of his mummy and daddy, we had to get a double buggy to be able to take both boys out. Our morning and evening routines have changed.

**Change is part of life.** Whether **we like it or not**, whether we can **cope with it or not**, whether we **thrive on it or not**. **Change is here to stay.**

We all have to face up to this, **we have to face change, otherwise life could be very stressful!**

We can embrace change or we can stick our heads in and oppose it. I'd suggest we do the first.

This term we are looking at the theme of **measuring up**. This **is not like a plumb line** that shows **how out of line we are and can make us feel ashamed, condemned and rather rubbish.**

Rather we are looking at **what we can do to measure up to God's calling on our lives as followers of Jesus, and how we can fit into God's measurements for our life rather than the worlds.** This can and should be a very positive process. There will be things we need to face up to and overcome and this could be hard and painful, but it will be worth it as we become more like Jesus.

So let look at the biblical process of Change, or a better word for this: **Transformation.**

**This is why I have titled this message Transformers.**

### **2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

### Romans 12:1-2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not conform any longer 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.

### 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (NIV)

<sup>51</sup>Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— <sup>52</sup>in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

Here we see in these passages today the words transformed and changed.

So what does the **word transformed mean?**

Well the Greek word used is *metamorphōō*, Does that ring any bells? What word do we use today that comes from this?

Of course it is the word **metamorphosis**. And immediately we think of the **caterpillar turning into a Butterfly**. This fits with the phrase **“from one degree of glory to another”** beautifully! A caterpillar is an amazing creature in its own right, but how wonderful is it as it increases in glory and becomes a butterfly. There are no accidents in God's world and this picture is one we can and should rightly use as a parallel in our walk with Jesus.

**Paul says we are to be in the process of a spiritual metamorphosis.**

This is what **God expects of us**. He presumes that it's taking place. We are to be **reflecting the glory of Jesus Christ in ever-increasing measure**. We are to be continually **growing**, continually **transforming into the image of Christ**.

**Do we measure up to Jesus in our lives?** He is our perfect model, the one who we aspire to be like.

If we have already been saved, we have already been made right with God, we have already been justified – just if I'd never sinned. **But there is more to it; there is an ongoing process of transformation that should happen in every follower of Jesus as we follow him.**

**None of us are like Jesus**, without sin, there is therefore still **transformation to take place** in our lives.

Last week we looked at where we are on our walk with Jesus:

**Are we exploring Christ, Growing in Christ, Close to Christ or Christ centred?**

Paul says: **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

**Is this something we are actively doing?** Are we obedient to the word of God? **Do we just go along with the world's way of doing things?** Friends **we belong to a different kingdom.** We do not gain our wisdom from the world, **there is nothing higher than God's wisdom and His ways, if we believe there is, then we are believing a lie.** God says in [Isaiah 55:9](#) "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We need to **metamorphose from worldly people into godly people**, we need to change from living in the flesh **to living in the spirit** and we need to **be transformed from those who love the world and the things of the world to those who love God and His ways.**

**How? By the renewing of our minds, we need to change our thinking, attitudes and beliefs.**

Paul says "[we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another](#)" Literally it says **from glory to glory**, but the NIV translates this as "ever increasing glory" This implies a continual process, like blowing up a balloon. **This is not the way change always takes place.**

**Change can be both a gradual process and a radical process.**

For example, when I got **married** to Em **everything changed**, I had to think of someone else above myself, I had to share a bed, I had to take responsibility for setting up home etc. When my boys were born it wasn't a gradual process, even though Em carried the boys for 9 months, it all changed the day they were born.

**Not like an escalator it is like climbing a set of steps. "step by step we're moving forward"**

Or let's take my hair line, **it is gradually receding.**

But the change I am talking about today is **the intentional change that we actively take part in.**

**So how does or transformation come about?**

1. People are usually only prepared to change if they either **see a vision of what the future could be (Aspiration)**, or have a conviction of that they cannot live as we are anymore, **something's has got to change (Desperation)**.

2. This causes us to **desire transformation**, our mind is being renewed, our **attitudes are changing** and we're beginning to **think out what we need to change and how**. We start to talk to God about it.

3. This will bring us to a **point of decision**, what are we going to do about it and when. This is the **renewal of our will**.

4. We recognise that **spiritually only God can change us**. And we take a step of faith **trusting that God will change us**. (Jeremiah 13:23): "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" God is saying of ourselves **we cannot make such changes**. Often we **try to change ourselves in our own strength, and so fall flat on our faces in failure, because we were not flat of our faces before God**.

**The Holy Spirit causes spiritual metamorphosis to happen**. When you look at a cocoon, you don't see metamorphosis happening. You just see the visible results of it when the butterfly emerges. You don't see the Holy Spirit at work, but you see the results as exhibited so visibly in transformed character and conduct.

5. We must **build in the change permanently** otherwise we will fall back. We need to go on **being filled with the Holy Spirit** so that this change can be permanent. When we are not living in the spirit it is so easy to fall back into our old ungodly ways. I don't know about you but **I find it much easier not to sin, when I am walking close to God**. But very hard when trying to do things my own way. This is where **spiritual disciplines and spiritual practices are so important**, such as keeping **short accounts with God, Prayer, Bible reflection, Listening to God, Christian friendships, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, serving, giving and mission**, all of which we will be looking at in detail in future sessions.

Someone said "**The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to make the child of God like the Son of God.**"

So what is the vision? **The vision is to be the person that God created me to be. Is that your vision?**

Or is your vision to have a nicer house, to succeed in your job, to be well liked, to make your place in society, A good reputation, have kids that don't show you up in public.

**I want to be the person God has called me to be, and all I want for my boys is that they will become the men of God has called them to be.**

**Is this the vision for your life?**

Romans 8:29 (NIV)

<sup>29</sup> For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

This is why we are here, to be **transformed from what we are now**, so that we are **conformed to the likeness of Jesus**.

**So how on earth do we actually become more like Jesus?**

We see that God wants us to be like Jesus, that's quite obvious. **That's the vision, and we have to move from vision to desire, do we even want to be like Jesus?** Let's pray about, let God put his desires into our heart, this will lead us from desire to making a decision to change. **Do we believe we can change, not in our strength, but God really can change us!**

During the week of prayer when we were praying about God moving among us and changing us **I had a picture of someone sat in a car**. They were asking God to help them change and step out into his fullness, but they had **their foot firmly on the break**.

God wants to take us from one degree of glory to another.

We need to make **a decision to take our foot off the break and let him change us**.

**I'd like to finish with a story:**

There's a story about a Middle Eastern oil sheik who had three sons. Two sons were physically normal. The third son was stooped over and crooked. The father told his three sons, "I want to grant you each a wish. What would that be?"

His first son said, "Father, I would like to become a physician. I would like to study in America, that I might return and help my people." The second son said, "Father, I would like to study in America to become an engineer, so that I might return and help my people." He granted their wishes.

The third son came to his father and said, "Father, I would like for you to have a statue sculpted for me of myself." The father was reluctant. He knew it was already painful for the child to look at himself in a mirror, much less there be a statue of the child that would always be a reminder of what he appeared to be.

The son said, "No, what I want is not a statue of me bent and crooked but of me standing straight and tall."

The father decided to grant that wish. He commissioned the statue, and the statue was sculpted ... a beautiful image of that son standing straight and tall and proud. He had the statue placed in the courtyard of their home, but the next morning, the father stepped out in the courtyard to see a scene that disturbed him deeply. He saw his son stooped and crooked, standing next to that statue. He was focused upon the statue, trying in agony to stand up straight. The father resolved never again to go into that courtyard or look at that statue.

Some years passed. The father forgot about his pledge to himself, and one day, he happened to glance in that direction. This time, he saw his son standing next to that statue, but his son was standing tall and straight ... just like the statue.

The Holy Spirit of God uses the **Word of God, just like that statue, to aim us directly at the person of Christ.** However, it's not an image of us He points us to. **It's the image of Christ.** It's not just a better version of ourselves He wants to transform us into, but it's the Person, the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The Holy Spirit of God wants to use the Word of God to make the child of God like the Son of God.**