

# **Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion**

**Date** : 2 Jan 2022

**Sermon Title** : Conformed or Transformed

**Speaker** : Rev Reuben Ng

**Text** : Romans 12:2

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Our church's vision of "Transforming Lives, Changing the World" was given to the pastors, leaders and staff of the church years ago by God. Today, this vision is still what we should pursue as a church because it has not yet been fulfilled. Until it is achieved, we want to honour God and the past leaders by working towards seeing this vision come to fruition.

When we read the phrase "Transforming Lives", it is easy to perceive that we are called to transform the lives of others. Even though that is not wrong, we need to prioritize our own transformation. Our lives need to be transformed first before we can step out and begin transforming the lives of others around us. The world can only be changed when others witness the impact of a life that is touched and transformed by God to live out God's will.

## **What are we to be transformed into?**

Ephesians 5:1, exhorts us to be transformed by imitating God and be transformed into His image. God is working in us to transform us, but we need to partner with Him because God will not force us.

We know God calls us to be a people of love, kindness, generosity, graciousness, not hate, biasness or prejudice because God is love and gracious. He is not a judgemental or ungracious God. We need to know who God is to imitate Him and be transformed into His likeness.

## **A) Knowing God is critical for our transformation process**

Our focus for the year ahead is to know God, to know Him better and to know Him well because we can never know God completely since God is infinite. The more we know God, the more we will know and understand what we can be transformed into.

## **B) Know God through His Word**

There are many different ways to know God but the primary way that we can know God is through His Word. If we want to be transformed into His likeness, we need to know God through His Word. Hence if we do not read the Word of God, we will not

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be able to grow in the knowledge of God and our transformation process and ability to live out our church vision will be affected.

## **C) Renew our minds through God's Word**

**Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2 NRSV)**

### Do not be conformed to this world

- Do not give in or succumb to the pressure that is pressing in from outside of us
- Do not be moulded into a pattern of the world

### Be transformed by the renewing of your minds

- Transformation is an internal process and comes from within
- Transformation takes place via the renewing of our minds through God's Word. The word "renewing" in this verse tells us that our minds were once new, but something happened to make it old, i.e. decay and deterioration set in. Hence, the process of renewal needs to take place in order to make the old new again.

In the beginning when God created humankind in His image, men were perfect and their minds were new. In that state of perfection, God spoke to Adam and Eve and gave them His word which reveals His nature, character and will to them:

**But the LORD God warned him, "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden – except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die." Genesis 2:16-17**

From these 2 verses, God reveals that:

- (i) God is generous – He invites Adam and Eve to eat freely of the fruit from every tree in the garden. So we are also to be transformed to be a generous people.
- (ii) God also requires and values obedience – He indicated to them that one tree in the garden was forbidden.
- (iii) God cares for our well-being – When God calls us to obedience, it is not to make our lives miserable but because He desires to protect us and keep us safe, so we will not die.

**...One day he (serpent) asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden? Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, the woman replied." (Genesis 3:1-2)**

In these 2 verses, we see that when the serpent spoke to Adam and Eve, he attacked God's word and cast confusion and doubt about God's word and hence on God's character.

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**“It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden... God said, ”You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.” “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman.” (Genesis 3:3-4)**

- God told the woman not to eat from that tree but God did not tell the woman not to touch it or she would die. The woman may have good reasons to want to avoid touching it to flee from temptation, but that was not what God said.
- The serpent (devil) attacks the word of God directly by telling them, “You won’t die.” In this verse, we see that the serpent came and gave Adam and Eve his version of God’s word. The devil has no power over us because the Holy Spirit is in us but he can attack God’s word by casting confusion and doubt about God’s character in our minds because we do not fully know God’s word.
- When Adam and Eve forgot God’s word and chose to believe in the serpent’s words, their minds which were made new were affected and destroyed, the spiritual part of them died and their fellowship with God was broken. Sin then entered the world and decay and destruction followed, making the world a fallen place.

## **God loves us and wants our minds to be renewed and transformed so we may discern His will**

As we are God’s children, God still loves us in spite of our sin and our disobedience in following the wrong word given by the ruler of the earth that tries to make us conform to the patterns of the world. God will not let us remain in a sinful state but desires to transform us by the internal renewing of our minds through His Word. If we want to be transformed we need to know God, and we can only know God through the reading of His Word.

God’s Word is key to our transformation. We need to know God’s Word so that we may discern and know God’s perfect will (Romans 12:2) and not be derailed by the words of the serpent or any other word. When we go to God’s Word it is not just to obtain a promise for overcoming difficulties that we face, our primary reason for reading God’s Word is to have our minds renewed and be transformed into His likeness.

## **CONCLUSION**

Let us make ‘Knowing God’ our focus in 2022 and commit as a church to follow the Bible reading plan “Transformed by the Word” and embark on a journey to be transformed by God’s Word together. To seek to know God together, to have our minds renewed and be transformed to be more like Christ individually and as a church.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

## **A. Review Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.***

Take a few minutes to memorize Romans 12:2 and recite it together.

1. After reciting, say together, "This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God."
  - a. As you recite God's word, how has it impacted you?
    - b. (i) What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Conformed or Transformed"?
    - (ii) How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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## **B. Relate Sermon Content**

***Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.***

- 2a. Why is it important for our lives to be transformed by God's Word?
  - 2b. How can your life transformed by God's Word impact your family, workplace, school, ministry, church, community and the world?
  - 2c. Why is it critical for our minds to be renewed by the Word for transformation and not conformation to take place?
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- 3a. Reflect on your acceptance of God's word when you read the Bible. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the least and 10 the most, how readily are you "transformed by the renewing of your mind" through God's Word?
    - (i) Why do you give yourself this rating?
    - (ii) What cause(s) you to have confusion or doubt about God's Word?
  - 3b. God will not force us to be transformed. What is one thing you can do to overcome the challenge(s) in 3a(ii) so as to allow God's Word to transform you?
  - 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b. above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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## **C. Testimonies and Prayer**

***Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.***

4. Share your testimony on your encounter with God in His Word through TbtW Bible Reading. Highlight how your mind had been renewed or your life transformed by it.

OR

Give thanks to God for loving us despite our fallen nature and desiring to renew our minds through His Word for transforming us to be like Him once again.

5. With a prayer partner, bring all that have been shared in 3b and 3c to God, asking for the Holy Spirit's revelation on areas in your life where you may need to repent for not believing in God's Word and choosing to listen to the words of others.

As a group, pray for your members and our church to commit to and keep each other accountable in this journey to be "Transformed by the Word."

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