

# ***Be Transformed***

Romans 12:1-21

September 10, 2017

First United Methodist Church, Lindstrom

(This is a manuscript prepared for sermon delivery and may not represent actual words spoken.)

*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.*

Okay...so all Scripture is inspired by God. All of it is God breathed. I believe this. I also believe that there are passages in what God has breathed that are key...key passages for the life lived as a follower of Jesus. I believe this twelfth chapter of Romans is a key passage.

The book of Romans was written by Paul. Most of Paul's letters can be divided into two sections. Part one is the teaching portion. Part two is the practical portion. Part two of Paul's letters tell us how we can live out what he taught. Romans fits this pattern quite well. Part one is the first eleven chapters. Part two consists, obviously, of chapters twelve to the end of the book.

Part one is the teaching portion. In the first eleven chapters Paul taught one basic truth. We are justified by our faith. Paul wrote that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. Paul further wrote that the wages of sin is death. But to that he added that the gift of God—the gift of God—is eternal life. We obtain this gift of life not by anything we do; it is a gift. We place our faith in Jesus, and we receive the gift of eternal life. Faith. As Paul wrote in this first section, "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...."

Okay...so we are justified by faith. What do we do? How do we respond? Paul wrote about this, beginning with chapter twelve. We respond to God's grace and mercy in three ways. First, we give ourselves totally to God. We do that now...while we are still living in this world. "Living sacrifices" Paul said. Second, we do not conform

to the pattern of this world. The world does not set the pattern for how we live. Third, we are transformed. As you probably know, the word translated "transformed" is the word "metamorphosis". In view of God's mercy and grace, we give ourselves to following Jesus, and we become new people...we are transformed. As Paul wrote in another letter, those who are in Christ are new people.

So we are saved by faith. It is a gift. We live this out by giving ourselves to God and by not conforming to the world and by being transformed...metamorphosis...going from being like a caterpillar to being like a butterfly. What will this non-conforming, transformed life look like? Paul laid that out in the rest of chapter twelve. As I said, a key chapter in all of what God breathed.

Pause for just a moment. What does the world look like? Now there is a lot of good...plenty of good people doing plenty of good stuff. Let me be quick to say that...lest someone label me a total Danny Downer. But there is also plenty of not good too. In fact, I would offer that a lot of the good is done in response to the not good. Whatever you think the world looks like...we are not to use it as a pattern for how we live. We are to be transformed.

Paul, in the last half of this chapter, lays out what this transformed life looks like. Now I am not in the habit of doing the three-point sermon deal. I most often have difficulty making even one point that seems to stick over the long haul. But Paul, in putting forth a description of the transformed life, lists at least nineteen characteristics of the life lived not in conformity to this world. So I guess I could turn this into a nineteen-point message. What I did instead is I grouped these nineteen characteristics of the transformed life under two headings.