

Transformed Daily Devotional

Day 8:

Pastor Mike shared a couple common statements that people often hear about the Lord in Sunday, April 23rd's message. The two statements were as follows, "God loves you just as you are" and "God's love is unconditional". Both of them true but not the complete story. Yes, God loves us just as we are, messy, sinful and utterly lost and broken. There is no condition on His love for us but God's love goes beyond that. His love challenges us to change. He loves us so much that we cannot stay where we are at, broken and sinful. He loves us to the point of maturity. Take a look at how this is fleshed out in Scripture.

John 7:53-8:11 (ESV)

"They went each to his own house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?' This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.'"

Notice what Jesus says to this woman at the end of this narrative. You are not condemned! You are not destined for punishment! Your sin no longer defines you! He is telling her she is loved unconditionally and just the way she is...but! And that is a big but! Jesus doesn't leave it there. Jesus commands one last thing before she leaves. Go and sin no more! God loves us too much for us to stay where we are. When we are saved, God rescues us right where we are, in the midst of the mire and muck. He picks us up and transforms our lives and from that point we have this command, go and sin no more! What sin still plagues your life? What area is the Lord telling you to go and sin no more?

> Read the rest of John 8, rereading the passage provided above.

How is the Lord speaking to you through this text? How does this portion of Scripture impact your journey of faith and transformation story?

Day 9:

> Let's open our bible and read John 9

John 9 is a beautiful story of a man who was born blind and then miraculously receives his sight for the first time. Jesus performs this miracle to bring the glory and attention back to God. In this passage, there is a question that is raised about sin, specifically whose sin causes this man's malady.

The unfortunate truth is that many people are still asking this question today. When a man or woman of faith is stricken with an illness then often time's people blame sin for the issue. Can I tell you something? Personal sin is not the issue for this man's blindness. Personal sin was not the cause of Pastor Mike's cancer. Personal sin did not cause type-1 Diabetes to strike me.

The trials and hardships we go through are to shine light onto God's glory and power. The apostle Paul wrote about hardship and how God could use it in our lives for the sake of others. Look at what Paul writes in Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 1:3-6 (NIV)

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer."

God has used Pastor's cancer to reach hundreds of people, the Lord has used my physical condition to reach people and the Lord used this man's blindness to reach people. The things we go through in this life are to mature us and bring God the glory. Look again at what Jesus said about this man's blindness.

John 9:3 (NIV)

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

That is why our transformation story is so important! We are a testimony to the work of God being displayed in our life! Four times this man and his parents are asked how Jesus healed him of his blindness and I love his last response!

John 9:25 (NIV)

"One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

All he knew was his transformation! I was blind but now I see. When we come to Jesus we can have a story like that. I once was a slave to my addiction but now I am free. I was broken and hurt but now I am whole and healed. I once was (fill in the blank) but now I am (fill in the blank). If someone asked you that question what would be your response? What has God transformed in your life?

Day 10:

> Let's open our bible and read John 10

To truly understand our need for transformation then when must begin to grasp who Jesus really is. I run into people all the time and inevitably being a pastor comes up in conversations. I love it, it's a great way for me to engage people and talk about Jesus. Most people have misconceptions about who Jesus is, what he has done for us and the fact that He truly desires a relationship with us. John 10 introduces us to Jesus our Shepherd. Remember, this is a farming and agricultural society. Jesus would use parables and metaphors that connected to His audience's real life experiences. 2000 years later we don't see too many actual shepherds, if any!

Let me give you a biblical reason why we need a shepherd. Isaiah 53 is a beautiful prophecy of a suffering servant, giving His life for us. In this passage, we have the same metaphor of sheep and a shepherd.

Isaiah 53:6 (NIV)

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

All of us are just like sheep! Did you get that? We are all selfish and tend to go our own way. The problem with sheep is that when they don't have a shepherd to guide them, protect them and discipline them then they get themselves into trouble! Without a Shepherd in our life, we get lost and we get ourselves into trouble. That is where Jesus comes in, He is our great Shepherd and the truth is that we need Him! Psalm 23, one of the most popular of all the Psalms, dives into what Jesus, the Shepherd, does for us.

Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV)

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint

my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

Once you can grasp the significance of this truth then you can understand your need for transformation. Jesus our Shepherd, He provides for us, He guides us, He protects us and He leads us. I know that is something I desperately need in my life; I hope you understand your need as well. He truly is the great Shepherd.

Day 11:

> Let's open our bible and read John 11

If you haven't figured it out yet, we are going to work through the entire Gospel of John. If you stick to this devotional you will have read the Gospel of John in just 3 weeks. My prayer is that God would open the eyes of your heart to see the wonderful truths that are embedded in this gospel account. In John 11 we encounter the greatest miracle to date in Jesus' life. The water in wine in John 2 and later the feeding of the 5,000 was pretty amazing but this miracle takes the cake. One of Jesus' friends, Lazarus passes away. A messenger rushes to Jesus to give him the news that Lazarus is sick. Jesus doesn't rush to Lazarus to save him yet he takes 4 days to get there. Jesus was only 20 miles away but took his time to arrive and when he arrived, He is greeted with the news that this sickness actual killed Lazarus. This passage clearly illustrates a deep sadness and mourning by everyone around Lazarus but Jesus has a message that must not be ignored.

John 11:25-26 (NIV)

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’”

Jesus physically raised Lazarus from the dead! Everyone is astonished; they cannot believe what they are seeing! What a miracle! Jesus knew what He was doing the whole time. Jesus wanted to give a real example of what He was going to do for the entire world after the cross and resurrection. Jesus will give everyone new life! All that we have to do is believe. Believe that Jesus has the power to raise us up. The key to salvation and eternal life is belief in Jesus. Romans 10 gives us another view of this truth.

Romans 10:9-10 (NIV)

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

Many of you reading this devotional have given your lives to Christ. You have believed with your heart and confessed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, but I know some of you have yet to take that step of faith. Are you ready for Jesus? Are you in need of transformation? I will leave you with Jesus' words from the verse I shared earlier, *"Do you believe this?"* (**John 11:26**)

Day 12:

> Let's open our bible and read John 12

The last half of John focuses on Jesus' last week here on earth. In John 12 we get John's perspective of Palm Sunday and His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The crowd was all shouting, "Hosanna", which means God save us and they were ready to crown Jesus as their new king. Unfortunately, like the Israelites of old, they wanted an earthy king but instead they received a heavenly King.

Jesus' words at the end of this chapter are powerful and we should take note of what He had to say.

John 12:44-50 (NIV)

"Then Jesus cried out, 'When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.'"

Jesus reminds us of His purpose. He came to save! Jesus' mission statement is clearly given in the Gospel of Luke and repeated here in John 12.

Luke 19:10 (NIV)

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Jesus came to save us. He came to bring us back to Him. He came to transform our lives. John returns to chapter 1 with his mention of light and darkness. Instead of John calling Jesus the light that breaks the darkness, this time Jesus says it about Himself. Jesus is the light to the darkness of our life. He gives light in our darkest moments!

The truth about our transformation is that it lasts. When we are truly transformed by the Lord we don't go back to our old ways. Listen what Jesus says in verse 46, *"I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness."* (**John 12:46 NIV**)

Take a look at what He says at the end of the verse. No one should stay in darkness! The gospel calls us out of the darkness and we shouldn't stay there. Jesus has brought us victory over the darkness and we need to let his light shine in our hearts and mind. Darkness no longer wins. You may ask, how do we keep the light at the forefront of our lives? That's simple, stay in the Word! Remember back in John 1, Jesus is the Word embodied for us. He is God's Word fleshed out for us. If we would discipline ourselves and be in the Word on a daily basis then we can fight the darkness that wants to creep into our lives! The Psalmist put it this way, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."* (**Psalms 119:105 NIV**)

Open your bible every day, read it, digest it and let it light the way!

Day 13:

> Let's open our bible and read John 13

John 13 shows us the powerful image of Jesus our servant. This passage humbles me each time I read it. Our King is our servant. The opening verse of this passage captures how meaningful this act of service really was.

John 13:1 (NIV)

"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love."

When Jesus washed his disciple's feet He was showing the full extent of his love. There wasn't an act of service that was as humbling as washing someone's feet. Remember, no shoes and dirt roads made for some fairly disgusting foot conditions. To His true nature of a servant, Jesus begins to wash each of His disciples' feet, one by one. The apostle Paul echoes this idea of Jesus our servant in the book of Philippians.

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

I want to highlight an amazing truth in this chapter of John. Jesus didn't come just to serve some, to serve the deserving, the beautiful, the powerful and important, but he came to serve everyone! The beginning of this chapter talks about Judas Iscariot, who would betray Jesus. Jesus still washes his feet! Jesus knew Judas would betray Him and hand Him over to be killed yet he serves him. What an amazing picture of Jesus' grace. Despite our heart and intentions, Jesus still served us by dying on the cross. The cross brings us to our knees and is the starting point of our transformation.

Day 14:

> Open your bible and read John 14

That's it for today, just read John 14. John 14:6 is a powerful truth about salvation. It comes from Jesus and Jesus alone! Do you believe that? Is Jesus your Savior King?

You might be wondering why so little commentary or questions. Well, because today is Sunday and the commentary, the questions and challenge happen during the message. DO whatever it takes to be in church today. Sit under the teaching of God's Word and allow it to transform you.

Looking forward to seeing you at church!

- Pastor Matt