

## Transformed Daily Devotional

### Day 15:

Congrats! If you are reading this then you are two weeks into this devotional. If you have kept pace then you have been in the Word every day for 15 days. This morning we pick up right where we left off in the Gospel of John.

#### > **Let's open our bible and read John 15**

In this passage, Jesus shares about the vine and branches. It is a beautiful picture of our relationship with God. This whole narrative revolves around the idea of abiding. It is about having our lives connected to the Lord. You have been reading about transformation for the past two weeks and we can get the idea of sudden, immediate and drastic change but that is not always the case. Sometimes transformation takes time. God works in us day after day until gradual change can be seen in our lives. This transformation all depends on abiding. Jesus has a pivotal statement in verse 5.

#### **John 15:5 (ESV)**

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."*

We see two powerful truths. First, if we stay connected to the vine we will bear fruit. That fruit is a gradual transformation. Pay attention to Jesus' analogy. Does fruit grow overnight? In a week or two? No! Fruit takes time to grow. Slowly. Sometimes the things God is doing in our lives takes time and our role is to stay connected to the life-giving vine of Jesus.

The flip side of this analogy is the end of verse 5. Jesus says, "apart from me you can do nothing." That's a powerful statement! Think about an actual vine. If you cut off one of the branches from the vine will it continue to grow? Will it continue to gain nourishment? Will it ever produce fruit? The answer is simple, no! If we are not connected to the Lord we cannot do anything.

As you continue in this journey of faith you must abide. Your life must be centered up on Christ. The apostle Paul put this truth in other words.

#### **Galatians 2:20 (NIV)**

*"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*

When we understand that it's not about us then we can humbly serve the Lord day in and day out and spiritual fruit, spiritual growth will develop in our lives.

## Day 16:

### > Let's open our bible and read John 16

At the end of chapter 15 and through 16 we get a picture of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. A lot of believers are unsure about what the Holy Spirit's role is in our lives. Truthfully, when I was young it was referred to as the Holy Ghost and I was scared to have a ghost follow me around! Chapter 16 gives us some insight into what the Holy Spirit is sent to do. Before we get there, it might benefit us to read the amplified version of John 16:7. The AMP version gives you all the possible English translations of the original Greek work. Many Greek words in the New Testament can be translated into several different words in English. Each word can give a verse or passage a deeper meaning and understanding behind it.

#### **John 16:7 (AMP)**

*"However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthener, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you]."*

Look at all the ways the word used to describe the Holy Spirit can be translated into! The Lord sends His Holy Spirit to be our comforter, our counselor, our helper, our advocate, our intercessor, our strengthener and our standby. His role is vast in our lives!

This passage goes on to discuss sin and the Holy Spirit's role to convict. Before transformation can begin in our lives we must first be aware of our sin. We must be convicted in our hearts about our sin and desire the change. The Holy Spirit does that.

#### **John 16:8-9 (NIV)**

*"When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;"*

When the Spirit convicts our heart about the sin in our life then we must not ignore it! All of us have blind spots in our life and the Holy Spirit helps point those out in the conviction He puts on our hearts. Ask the Lord to convict your heart of any sin in your life right now. I know, it's not fun but the Lord wants us to grow and shed any sin that is slowing us down in our journey of faith. Whatever the conviction is upon your heart, give it over to the Lord. Confess and move on. Repent.

#### **1 John 1:9 (ESV)**

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

## Day 17:

### > Let's open our bible and read John 17

The heading in your bible might say something like, "The High Priestly Prayer". Here we find Jesus praying for His followers. It is incredibly humbling to read Jesus' prayer for us. In this prayer, we can get some insight into what God would have for us. There is a lot of rich material in this prayer and I challenge you to reread several times this morning in order to grasp the full truth found in it for us. I want to highlight a small portion of this passage.

#### **John 17:17-19 (ESV)**

*"Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."*

Words like sanctify and consecrate can be intimidating when we come across them in Scripture but they simply mean to become holy. To be holy is to be set apart, set apart from the world for the things of God. Jesus talks about that in this prayer. He reminds us that we are not of this world, we are just in it for a short period of time.

Part of our transformation story is the process of sanctification. It is something we are going to dig into next week but I want to introduce it to you in this passage. Jesus reminds us that in order to be sanctified, in order to become holy, godly men and women then we need to know the truth and the truth is God's Word. If you have been to COV for any period of time then you know the significance we place on the Word. We have to read it every day! That's a non-negotiable. In Matthew 4 Jesus puts it this way.

#### **Matthew 4:4 (NIV)**

*"Jesus answered, 'It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

All of eat something every day in order to have physical strength to tackle the day yet how often are feeding ourselves spiritually? Open your bibles every day, feed yourself and grow.

## Day 18:

### > Let's open our bible and read John 18

John 18 brings us to Jesus' betrayal, arrest and mock trials. After His arrest, Peter follows behind to witness everything that happens to Jesus. Here we have Peter, the man who built the first church upon his faith, who ends up denying Jesus.

Peter is pressured three times if he was one of Jesus' disciples and each time he denies it. In this example the crowd wins, not the cross. Peter succumbs to the pressure put on him and rejects his Lord and Savior.

This story is a perfect example of our everyday life. Truthfully, most of the world doesn't know Jesus. They have no desire to live for Him and most people think that faith in God is lunacy. The apostle knew that when he penned 1 Corinthians.

### **1 Corinthians 1:18 (NIV)**

*"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."*

The truth is that you may have close family and friends who don't understand your faith. They don't understand what God is doing in you. They will think it crazy to follow Jesus, to read the bible or even have faith at all. Despite all of the opposition you will face for your faith, we must take Peter's example and do the opposite. Instead of denying Christ, use it as opportunity to share what God has done for you. They may think it foolishness, but we know it is the power of God transforming your life.

## Day 19:

### > Let's open our bible and read John 19

John 19 is a tough chapter to read. Here we encounter Jesus' torture, crucifixion, death and burial. Despite how difficult this is to read we must understand how significant this is for us. This is the pinnacle of God's redemptive plan. This is when all the sin, and I mean all the sin of the world, is heaped up Jesus. He pays the penalty of sin for all time here at the cross.

### **Colossians 2:13-15 (NIV)**

*"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."*

Grasp that truth. You were dead in your sin and transgressions. There was nothing you could do about it! Your sin is a death sentence, something we must pay for. The payment for our sin is eternity away from God in a place that is called hell. That is how significant your sin is, my sin is, all of our sin is. It must be paid for but Jesus takes our place and pays the price for our sin. Look at what Hebrews 9 says about payment for sin.

**Hebrews 9:22 (NIV)**

*“In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*

Hebrews 9 relates the Old Testament system of sacrifice and forgiveness with Jesus and the New Testament atonement found at the cross. I encourage you to read all of Hebrews 9.

Jesus’ blood is the payment for our sin. No matter what you have done, are doing or will do in your life, Jesus paid for it on the cross. The cross provides forgiveness. The cross provides freedom from our sin and death. The cross provides transformation!

**Day 20:**

**> Let’s open our bible and read John 20**

Where John 19 is sad and difficult to read, John 20 is the good news, the happy ending. John 20 is Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Proving He was the Son of God, capable of saving all of us for eternity. The empty tomb is more than a nice story but it is the greatest comeback of all time. That come back was for our sake! Read what the apostle Paul wrote about the power of the resurrection for us.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-58 (NIV)**

*“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace*

of God that was with me. Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he 'has put everything under his feet.' Now when it says that 'everything' has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? I die every day--I mean that, brothers--just as surely as I glory over you in Christ Jesus our Lord. If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.' Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God--I say this to your shame. But someone may ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?' How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being'; the last

*Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 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. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: 'Death has been swallowed up in victory.' 'Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."*

I know that was a lot of Scripture to read but the apostle Paul explains why the resurrection was so important. Without Easter Sunday, then Good Friday doesn't matter, there is no power in the cross and His death unless He was raised from the dead! That is significant. Because of His resurrection, we have freedom from the grip of sin in our life.

The next few weeks we are going to look at sanctification. The process of becoming holy, becoming more like Christ. The transformation we have been looking at is Salvation transformation. Salvation is the first step and immediate when we give our lives over to the Lord but sanctification take a lifetime. God changes us over time, for the rest of our lives. A process worthy to undertake!

## **Day 21:**

### **> Open your bible and read John 21**

That's it for today, just read John 21. Congratulations, you just read through the entire Gospel of John! That is awesome! Now get your behind to church and sit under the teaching. Bring your mom, because it's Mother's Day and we are going to celebrate her today. Keep at it, dig into day 22 tomorrow. Looking forward to seeing you at church!

- Pastor Matt