



Sermon Transcription • Romans 12:1-2

How Then Shall We Live?

Pastor Jeff Bucknam

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

So Romans 12:1-2, look one of my favourite passages in Scripture, which will you hear me speak about repeatedly because it's so central to what I believe we ought to be doing in response to the grace of God that's been shown us, we Christians - one of the central passages of Scripture that we talk about over and over about is in Luke 7. It's actually a story about Jesus having a meal, as he often did with lots of different people. On this particular occasion there was a Pharisee, a religious leader who's sitting at the end of the table, his name's Simon, and Simon has orchestrated this wonderful event so that you know some of the good religious Jew Jew that Jesus has is going to rub off on him and everyone's going to think more highly of Simon because they'll say, "Well who did you have over for lunch today?"

"I had Jesus." So Simon is thinking this is going to be a really great networking opportunity and a way for me to increase my name in the community. So he invites Jesus and some of his followers over. And then the craziest thing happens - these events back in those days were all male affairs right? A bunch of a guys sitting around at the table because they really only important people apparently - so they were all sitting around this table or reclining, as they used to do on some cushions, and Simon is at the end of the table and kind of you know surmising what's going on around him and in breaks this woman, not just any woman, she was a well known woman in the community - hair flowing everywhere, which in those days was a sign of looseness. So she runs in, she's crying, she's a mess. She's got perfume that she uses for her, her particular work in the evenings. She pours it out on Jesus feet, she's wiping Jesus feet with her hair. Her tears are mingling together with the perfume. You can imagine sitting there and this kind of shameful event, at least in their eyes, taking place. Even in our day people would be like, "Woah, what's going on here?" Well Jesus looking at this woman realizes that end of the table Simon's also looking but in a disapproving fashion. In fact, Simon's thinking to himself, "Man if this Jesus were a true prophet, he would know who it is that's touching him right now, and he would do what true prophets, true godly men do, and that is shune her." No you don't have woman of the night touching you in any fashion at all if you want to be taken seriously in the religious circles. Jesus knowing this man is thinking these things, he, he says outloud, "Simon I've got a question for you."

"What is it, teacher?"

"There was one man who had two men who owed him lots of money. One of those men owed him five million dollars and the other one owed him five dollars. He forgave the debt of both of them. Which one of those two men," said Jesus, "do you think will love the one who forgave the debt more." Well Simon's not an idiot, "Well of course, the one who, the one who has the greater debt."



“Right Simon, that’s exactly right. So here’s the thing, you’ve sat over at the end of the table here, and you’re making judgements about this woman who is responding rightfully to me. Why is she responding rightfully to me? Because she’s had a massive debt forgiven. She knows who she is. She knows that she falls short. She knows that she is a mess and so she is lavishing on me worship, that you have not given because you think you’re the five dollar guy. He who has been forgiven little, loves little, but he who has been forgiven much loves much.” Or in other words - *radical grace yields radical responses*.

The reason I love this story is because if there’s one thing that I want to convince you of in my entire ministry is that you Christian, has been graced on such a profound level that your worship should match it. That’s what Romans 12 is about, Paul is finished the first whole part of Romans 1-11, trying to describe for you how grand the grace of God is and you reach - we should’ve stopped the sermon series there, verse 36 of Romans 11, it’s a doxology - it’s like a benediction. It should have been done, but I don’t want to leave you thinking that there’s no response that you and I are supposed to give. I don’t want you to wait until next year. What do we do now in light of the grace of God - how then shall we live?

Well this passage is going to describe it - just two verses and in it we’re going to learn number one that you should surrender yourself to God; first response is to surrender yourself to God and then second what does that surrender look like; I’ve got two things. It’s a three point sermon, right - I hid it in two because I’m sneaky like that. So look, surrender yourself to God and then two ways that that surrender shows itself, okay.

[Surrender Yourself to God]

Here’s the first, surrender yourself to God. How should we respond to the radical grace of God - you surrender yourself to God. Let’s look at Romans 12:1,

“Therefore, I *urge you*, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—*this* is your true and proper worship.”

You might hear my voice being a little gravelly today, it’s because my son was in a volleyball tournament yesterday and I have a hard time withholding my opinions at the volleyball tournaments - both about the play of the kids and a number of other factors going on in the game. And so, my daughter has just - my daughter knows this about me, she’s nine years old now, she’s gotten involved in playing some soccer. I’m not able to go to a lot of the games but when I did go to one of the games recently, it was on a Saturday and I was walking in holding her hand and she, she turned, she stopped me in the middle and she kind of like pulled me aside like we were going to have this private little conversation. I was like, “Oh, I’m being confronted.” And she pulled me aside and said, “Dad, um, you can cheer, but you need to do it quietly.” [Laughter]

“Well why, what?”

“Well Dad, you sometimes are on the side and you’re like yelling so much at the players, like in a good way, but I don’t, I get embarrassed if you’re going to do that to me, so like...” Okay so I’m



standing on the side going like [making hand gestures]. [Laughter] Like making as many hand signals as I can, I have a habit in other words, of *urging*, is the right word, in a *passionate* kind of way, what I want to see. This is what the word means here in Greek, that's what it means. It's this passionate plea, right - <yelling> "Get the ball! Back on defense!" Right, it's that urging, so Paul wants you to see, listen "I'm urging you, I'm pleading with you." Some translations, "I beseech therefore." To what? "Well first before I get to what," Paul says, "In light of the mercies of God, so I'm pleading with you first to think about the mercies of God." What mercies? Okay, chapters 1-11, you and everybody else on the planet were objects of the wrath of God because of our disobedience to him, we have broken his moral - I don't care who you are, I don't care what colour you are, I don't care what your sexual orientation is, I don't care what your background is, I don't care anything - *all* have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. And therefore deserve rightly the justice of God to be displayed against him in his wrath, he is angry toward the world and people who have broken his moral commands - they've broken his world. But God, the very God who is angry with the sinner, took his own son and sacrificed his son in the place of those sinners - while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, Romans 5. And now by faith, not by your background, not by your birthright, not by any works that you do, by faith alone. You can eternal life with God. All it requires is an expression of your will in response to him. I am a sinner and I need a Savior. That's it! And this God then will keep you all your days. He's has a covenant love for you, he makes a promise to you that no matter what happens he will bless you here and in the life to come forever and ever. That's what's happened to you Christian. The mercies of God have been *lavished* on you.

There is a great Old Testament story, that whenever I think about the mercy of God I just - people say, "Okay, give me a good picture." So there's this guy named Mephibosheth in the Old Testament, 2 Samuel 9, you might not know this guys name, it's not a well known story. I've talked about it several times though. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Saul the king. So if you're doing the kingly line you've got Saul, Jonathan, Mephibosheth; the problem is that God had come in and said "No no, David is going to be the new king." David and Jonathan were buddies, Saul and Jonathan die in battle. David comes into the kingdom. The way it worked in those days if you were the new king and there was any other rivals to the throne, you had one job to do - what do you think it was? Trump the rivals. Sorry that was a bad joke right - eliminate them, get rid of them! So the expectation is that when David comes to the kingdom and comes to the palace he's going to just clean house in the physical sense. He's going to kill them. Well the nurse maid - Mephibosheth's just a little guy, the nursemaid knows this so she picks up Mephibosheth hearing that David's coming and Saul and Jonathan have died - and she's running out the door and she drops him and he breaks his leg and they don't ever get it fixed. So this guy's got a limp the rest of his life. They run, they run as far away as they can go - Lo Debar, sounds forever away, Winnipeg. It means it's forever away in the middle of nowhere - Lo Debar. Sorry, Winnipeg, okay. [Laughter] So they're off in the middle of nowhere, and rightly so because if David finds out about it; they're thinking you know what he's going to come out and he's going to try and kill this guy because Mephibosheth might grow up one day and might claim the throne, lead people into battle against David. Well years go by, Mephibosheth's just living out in the middle of nowhere and David, what he doesn't know is that David decides that he is going to go and find Mephibosheth to show him kindness for the sake of his friend Jonathan. So David sends out the king's guard and they find Mephibosheth out in Lo Debar, I mean the whole king's guard



goes out there [knocking] knocks on Mephibosheth's door and there's Mephibosheth shaking in his boots because what does he think's going to happen? This is what he's been avoiding his entire life. King's guard's there, are they going to take him to the palace. Can you imagine that ride in the chariot maybe - talk about a dead man walking. He shows up at the palace, limping and dragging himself forward to present himself before the king on his throne. First words out of Mephibosheth's mouth are, "What would you want with a dead dog like me?" Like I get it David, I deserve, I deserve death. And David the king in this moment stops and "Woah woah woah woah woah wait a minute, you got the wrong idea. I actually called you here so that I could show you kindness, that I could give you the grace of the king, in fact what I want to do is I want to restore all your land and property to you and then I want you to come and eat at my table everyday like one of my sons." Isn't that a great picture? Essentially Mephibosheth every evening, what at 6:00 PM he shows up at the table, you know with dragging his broken leg, limping while David's kids are all bouncing around and they're all sitting there ready to eat the turkey or whatever it is and they sit down and the tablecloth of this table covers this man's legs and he sits there knowing he deserves none of it. And that's you and me for centuries we will eat at the king's table as one of his sons and daughters, knowing full well that we never deserved to be there.

In light of the mercy of God, I *urge* you, to what? Ah offer your bodies as to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God. So that language is supposed to draw your attention back to the Old Testament where they used to offer burnt offerings, so if you went to the Temple and you wanted to have your sins atoned for you would offer a burnt offering; the idea of a burnt offering is that they would burn the entire thing up, a bird or something like that. You put it on the altar and all gone, that sacrifice was all gone. The idea behind this is that Paul's like, "I want you to do be that sacrifice but the difference between the burnt offering that's completely burned up and you is that you stay alive; every part of you, every ounce of your energy." How do you respond to the radical grace of God - with the *radical* response as a living sacrifice. You say well what does that practically, what does that look like.

Okay I'll give you another passage of Scripture, the Old Testament you get in this story about Isaiah, in Isaiah 6 he sees a vision of the Lord. I'll just read you this passage, it's really rich. Isaiah 6:1-8,

"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. [Back in those days the longer your robe, the train of your robe, the more important you were. Sometimes if you see the wedding's of princesses and things like that they have these enormous long trains. It's supposed to show historically a kind of honour, like the more important you are the longer the train. This one, God's train fills the whole temple, it just keeps going. In other words when you get to heaven you're just going to be in cotton or whatever. Like the train of his robe filled the temple.] Above him [verse 2] were seraphim [these are angles], each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces [they don't dare to look upon the holy God], with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.' [So this is a song that they sing to each other over and over and ... you think our songs are repetitive right? They just does this one forever, why? Because no matter



how many times you call God holy it's not enough. Augustine said, 'Nothing we say about you is enough about you.' So these angels are repeating this song.] At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. [Absolute fear is overcoming this man in this moment.] 'Woe to me!' I cried. 'I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty. [If you've just read this passage before one of the questions that immediately comes out is, 'Why is this man identifying his lips as the problem?' But think about the picture here. So Isaiah is seeing the Lord lifted up. He sees the majesty of God and he sees these angels singing, words are being expressed about the holiness of God and he wants to join in. But he realizes that if joins in those words have to cross over some lips, don't they, and those lips are not worthy of carrying words about this God. I have unclean lips and I live among a people that have unclean lips and I see the Lord Almighty.] Then [verse 6] one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for. [Compleat act of grace, you don't deserve to talk about God man, but I'm going to make it so you can. Now what do you expect the first words to be that come out of this mans mouth? 'Holy, holy, holy,' you expect him to sing! Notice what he does verse 8] Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!'"

First words out of this man, the first words of worship out of the mouth of this man are a complete commitment of his life. What does it look like to be a living sacrifice? There it is. In light of the grace of God - right, sin being atoned for, lips being touched, it's not just a song folks - that is a response, but it's not just talk, it is *all* of me - point the way Lord and I will go that way. Tim Keller, he said it this way, "To be a living sacrifice is to be fully at God's disposal. It means, actively, to be willing to obey God in anything he says in any area of life; and passively, to be willing to thank God for anything he sends in any area of life." It's basically for you to say, "God here I am, hands wide open, Lord what you want to do with me is what you want to do with me, I have been bought with a price." You know I find a lot of Christians not with hands open but with fists clenched, "Why are you doing this in my life God, why are you calling me to this particular way of living?" That's not a living sacrifice. That's not a response to the grace of God, the response is hands open, willing to receive what it is he has. "Here I am. Send me."

[What Does Surrender Look Like?]

Now that's, I hope a helpful picture, but more specifically what does that mean in the practical everyday stuff of life that you and I face. So like I said, surrender yourself to God is his main point. But he gives some practical outward things of that, two in fact. What is surrender look like - Romans 12:2, notice that there's two commands here.

"Do not conform 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."



You saw the two commands right - they're juxtaposed, they're put next to each other. Don't conform to the pattern of this word, but *be transformed* by the renewing of your mind. I want to take those in turn. Do not conform to the pattern of this, now the original language here says, age - and there's a reason for that. The Apostle Paul has a way of viewing the world that you need to be led into. All of history in his mind, if you read the Apostle Paul in lots of different places, can be summarized in this chart. And I'm going to now draw on the flip chart. [Laughter] Oh great flip chart. Okay, so history Paul says, can be put into two categories - there is the present age. Now in Galatians 1, he calls that the present, evil age. So present age for Paul is the world in which we currently inhabit, it is governed by what he calls the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is at work and the sons of disobedience that's Ephesians 2. It's the present world system that tends to want to push us into its mould. It's the present evil age. But he says there's a new age that's dawned and he calls it the age to come. In fact Paul will say several places, the present evil age is coming to an end and the age to come has been inaugurated, begun. When? Well you can probably guess in Paul's mind, it was at Christ's coming. And when will the present evil age end? Well that's when Christ returns. So what about now? Well this is the challenge with being a Christian in the present evil age, but being citizens of the age to come. You live as theologians say, in the overlap of the ages. So why is it that you continue sinning even though you've been freed from sin? Well because you got a couple of different forces at play here don't you? You live in a society that is repeatedly telling you a particular way to live and this is the good life and that you have God who is the king of the age to come, his kingdom is calling on you and saying, "No, no, *this* is the future, *this* is the way you should view things." We struggle as Christians in between the ages, we're citizens of another kingdom, but we live in this one, and let's be honest, we tend to fit in to where we live.

When I - so when I moved here, back here from New Zealand, seven years in New Zealand and I moved back here. I could not believe how much people made fun of the way I talked and dressed. The way I talked, I remember saying as I do still time to time, "Rubbish, that's rubbish." "That's the *wroth* of God," things like that. People would say, "It's trash idiot, it's not rubbish, right, cast off the Queen." Anyway rubbish, trash, whatever. I remember specifically when I came back - so in New Zealand when I left they used to wear, men used to wear what was called three-quarter pants, which are like capris. Right so when I came here it was in the summertime and I was wearing pants that came down to my calves and those are considered kind of a cool pair of shorts in New Zealand and people were coming up to me and saying, <smirking> "Nice man-pris." [Laughter] I'm like what? Why was this normal for me? Well because I lived in New Zealand, everybody was doing it man in New Zealand - I know it was a bad idea, but everybody was doing it. We tend to fit in to those locations where we live. And those locations tend to form us and mould the way that we think about the world. Sometimes in good way, but often times in very bad ways like my man-pris like so in the Bible you get examples of this sometimes.

So Lot, Abraham's buddy, goes and he lives in this town called Sodom and Gomorrah, it's *completely* sexually against God. God's going to judge this city and he sends two angels to Lot to warn him. Angels show up, [knocking] knock on the door. Lot says, "Oh hello come in quickly, come in quickly!" "Why?"



“Well because the men of the city.” And then he pulls the guys in, shuts the door and immediately, bam, bam bam, bam, the men of the city had come along and said, “You need to send those two visitors out so that we can do with them what we want.” Like what kind of town is this? And Lot, *righteous* Lot, cause he’s lived in Sodom and Gomorrah so long says, “You can’t have these men, but here are my daughters.” What!?! Like that takes redneck to another level. And here’s - so what’s going on with Lot? Well Sodom and Gomorrah’s going on with Lot. Where we live tends to get inside of us and it tends to determine for us what kind of ethics that we’re supposed to hold. Here the message is over and over again right. You get this in the letter to the Corinthians and then the Corinthians are told repeatedly, you know like, “You guys need to stop having your divisions.” Because in Corinth they believed they could have their superstar preachers and superstar whatever and they would put the pictures of their favourite preachers on the wall. So people would say I’m of Paul, I’m of Apollos, I’m of Jesus, and everybody was having divisions. Why, because that’s the way they did it in Corinth. Corinth gets inside of you in if you live there.

So the question that you and I have to ask is okay, well when we read something like this we say, do not be conformed to the pattern of this age, you have to say - in what ways does living in 21st century Canada influence the way that we live. But let me give you two, two easy ones. Well one is the way we use our money and we think about our money. What is the pattern of this age in regards to the way we use our money? Well it can be summarized by; get all you can, can all you get, and sit on the can. I had a friend when I was in elementary school, he lived in this very lovely house. I used to love going over there because he had a waterbed - that was just awesome, it was the 80’s we did crazy things. So go to his house, he had a poster on his wall and on the wall - I mean we were in elementary school, his parents had bought him this poster, and on this poster was a picture of like a huge house on a hill overlooking an ocean, and there was a garage, a five car garage, down the hill from the house with a trail going up to it. And in each one of the spots in the five car garage were different cars, right; like a Maserati, and a Lamborghini, and a Ferrari, you know and a Mercedes, and a Toyota Corolla, right. [Laughter] And on the poster it said, “Justification for higher education.” So here are we, these elementary school students being told every night before he goes to bed and looks up on the wall and he says, “The goal of my life is to get higher education so that I can have a five car garage and a house that overlooks the ocean. And *that’s* the good life. Not to share necessarily, but to accumulate as much as I possibly can, pleasure myself as much as I possibly can with my money.” He who dies with the most toys wins. So that’s the pattern of this age. And yet you come to the Scriptures and you say to yourself, okay so what is the pattern to the age to come when it comes to money? Well the answer is that you’re a conduit of the grace of God, money should be passing through you to others. But you don’t need to be lined with gold, John Piper says, copper will do. Paul writes it really clearly, he says 1 Timothy 6:17-19,

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. [See] In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation *for the coming age*, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”



You really want to live? Invest yourself in the only age that's going to last. You want to be on the right side of history? Don't invest yourself in the age that's passing away, the present evil age, invest yourself in the age to come. Another one, money's easy, so is the way we talk about and think about sex in our world. I mean the pattern of this age when it comes to sex, sexual ethics is basically do whatever you want as long as it's consensual, and we can argue about what consensual means; but don't let anybody form your sexuality, don't let anybody tell you to use it in any way that it is against the way you feel in the present moment. The way that you're going to have the good life is for you to pursue whatever it is you feel. And yet you have the pattern of the age to come. You were bought with a price, honor God with your body. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5,

“It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God.”

See they're following the pattern of the age that's passing away but you are citizens of a *different kingdom*. So form your life around that kingdom and that age - do not be conformed to the pattern of this age.

So my wife, before she was my wife, wasn't even my girlfriend yet. There's a dude that lived on my dorm floor named Mark who was *cut*, like he was huge, right. He'd go to the gym like every morning for three hours, he was enormous. He was one of these guys who walks around with his shirt off all the time. I'd say, “Dude do you have a shirt?”

“Yeah.” Come on man, knock it off, you're just making the rest of us feel awful, he's huge, dude. Black hair, he did a lot of modelling right. So I found out that this girl Jeanne, who I was really fond of, was dating him for a little bit. Which of course made sense; she's beautiful, he's the model. I was like, “Yeah, okay.” Anyway, one day he's walking down the hall with his shirt off, right, and cause I was kind of interested in Jeanne I would occasionally check in with him, “So how are things um, how are things going ah with Jeanne, you know?”

“They're over man.”

“Really!! I mean that's too bad man. [Laughter] What happened?”

“She says my faith isn't deep enough <smirks> whatever.”

“Okay I'll talk to you in a minute.” Seriously I ran past him down three flights of stairs where she lived, went to the door of her room [knocking] right she opens it up. She's just looking at me like, “And you are?” And I said, “Listen I got to tell you something girl, you dumping that dude, because he's not a deep man of faith, is so amazing, I mean I tend to be a little deeper, I just want that to be on record.” [Laughter] And so I'm standing in her room and there's this awkward silence like . . . “Thanks.”

“So ah, that's um, that's all I really came to say. I guess I'm going to see you later.”

“Yeah.” And I left, what the? Went back upstairs and I said to Mark, “Dude you need to tell me more what's going on here.” And he said to me, “I don't know man, I don't know man, she's just weird.”

Right, people who curb their lives, people who order their lives around the age to come in the present evil age will be thought of as weird. If the age to come defines who you date, defines how you spend your money, defines how you use your sex, defines all the things about you, here am I, send me. If it



defines everything about you, people are going to think, “Man you’re just weird.” Are you weird? Oh come on now, are you weird? I hope so brothers and sisters, I hope we are, I hope we’re a little bit weird.

So do not be conformed to the pattern of this age but be transformed - you’re going to have to listen quicker than what you’re doing here okay. So be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Do you remember that show, *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* - yes? Okay some of you will remember this, it was about 10-15 years ago - like guys all your wives made you watch it, “Isn’t this so great, I love it so much.” And it was about this house and this family who had horrible stories and then they were going to come in and they were renew the house and get them new cars and often times just knock the house down and put it back up; and they put a bus in front of it while the family went to Disney Land and came back and they put the family behind it and the dude with the spiking hair, which was never in style by the way, like it was always, “Like yeah, Move That Bus!” And they moved the bus away and there’s this *new house* - completely transformed. From what it was, this dump to this magnificent palace. Yeah that’s what the Lord is doing in the lives of people who are his own. He is taking the mess, the squalor and he’s transforming it into a palace, a work of art. You are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus. How, how is he doing it? By the renewing of your mind. Well why does your mind need to be renewed? Look at Romans 1:28, Paul began this whole discussion he said in Romans 1:28-30,

“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, [So what is the description of everybody who is apart from Christ, what is the problem? They don’t want to honor God and so God hands them over to their own will which leads to a depraved mind.] so that they do what ought not to be done. [So the depravity of their thinking leads to a depravity in their living. Well what kind of a depravity of living? Well he lists them man.] They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents.”

You get the idea. So a depraved mind leads to unrighteous actions. So how is God going to fix the unrighteous actions in your life? Well he’s going to go to the mind. You need a renewal of your mind. You need to love what God loves, see things God’s way and *that* will lead to holiness of life. That’s what Paul’s saying here; so God’s purpose and you’re life and my life, is to renew our minds so that it yields good fruit, and *our* job is to let him. You notice the tense of the verb right, be transformed, there’s a Paul does not say, “Go transform your mind.” No, be transformed, *allow* the Lord to do this. Yes? Open hands.

So pastorly, let me finish all this just by giving you a couple of ways I think that can happen. First, if you want God to transform your mind, I think you need to first, if you want to allow him to do so - like I think you need to admit that you’re currently broken. I had a friend, when I was in high school, we used to drive around the Seattle area, he had a VW Bug that had no floor in the passenger seat where I would sit. That when you sat in it you had to put your feet on the dash and the road would just go



below you really fast. Car had no heat and it rarely started unless it was rolling, and about 20 minutes into riding in it like the second time I said, “Dude you got - this car is a mess. It’s a such a dump, it’s horrible you gotta get it fixed.”

“Ain’t nothing wrong with this car man.” Right, I think that there are a lot of people, even Christians who claim that. “Nothing wrong with this car man, nothing wrong with this life, the way I’m doing things is really awesome.” Really?? Cause I can see on the outside is a hole in the floor and you can’t get going unless you’re rollin. You need to be willing to acknowledge that things aren’t going great when you’re in charge if you’re willing to let the Lord transform you. So first, admit you’re currently broken.

Second, you then need to frequent places where fixing happens. You need to be in locations where you can *hear* about the age to come. My friend, if he said to me, “Yeah I agree the car is busted and so I’m going to bring it over to your house later, and you can fix it.” He would have come over later and I would have been like, “I mean it looks like a car. And the engine, I guess looks like an engine, I wouldn’t know.” I’m the wrong person to bring this to, my house is a bad location for fixing of cars. You bring it to a mechanic. Listen if you really want your life to be transformed, you *got* to make a priority of the local church - you *have to*. Because every day of your life you’re being bombarded with message after message after message; while you watch the football game this afternoon, you will be bombarded with messages of what the good life looks like, and I get like 42 minutes to tell you otherwise, every week. We are an embassy of the kingdom of God, we are an embassy of the age to come in the present evil age. So you’ve got to come, you’ve got to hear, I got to pump your tires up, try to fix the floor and then you go back out and share the message with people and you come back, because if you don’t come back, I’m telling you your mind is going to go back to that depraved state, I promise you. Give me a chance, give us a chance to be God’s instrument of grace in your life leading you to think about the age to come.

I was at American Thanksgiving last week, I’ll finish with this. My brother-in-law put his arm around me and after, cause I had been there for a few few minutes, and he said to me, “You’re sounding really Canadian these days.” [Laughter] I was like, “What, how?”

“I don’t know everytime you walk by me you’re saying, ‘Sorry, sorry, sorry’ about everything. I think I heard and ‘oat’ come out of you just a minute ago. You’re generally more polite than you’ve been.” And I was like, “Huh, I guess living among, I guess living among them has transformed me.” Right, right, time spent with the right kinds of settings and the right kinds of people will transform you, I promise you that. Invest yourself in the church and the word of God, have your hands open to the Lord and you will see. Romans 12:1-2,

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform 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.”

Amen? Amen. Let us pray. Father, I’m so thankful for this text and for, well the book of Romans as a whole. And I pray that you’d reorient our minds around who you are and the way you think. That we



might bear fruit for God. Yeah, you're the author of history Father, and you, by definition are on the right side of it. So Father, help us to invest ourselves in the kingdom that will last forever. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.