

Romans 12:1-2 & Galatians 4:19

2/9/25

Who here likes the new college football playoff? Who here likes the 17 game NFL season instead of the 16-game season? Who here would like the Super Bowl on President's Day weekend? Then who here would like an 18 game NFL season? Who here likes it when gas prices go up? Who here likes our current health insurance system? Who here likes their current job?

Some changes are good, some not so good. A wise elder of this church often says, "Temporary inconvenience for permanent improvement." That's the story of Jesus Christ.

Change is at the very core of Christianity. God's Word teaches us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds..."-Romans 12:2 Jesus lives to transform us! Are you committed to positive change? Are you **Committed to Christ-Centered Community**? The Lord needs us to change to realize His vision for humanity!

Let's hear how the Lord wants to change us in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18.

Are you living your best life? The specifics to that question are going to be different for each of us. But according to the Lord, the overarching goals to living our best lives are the same. Do you believe you are a child of God? Do you believe your sins are forgiven on the cross? Do you believe Jesus lives to live in you? Are you practicing ways to deepen Your friendship with Jesus Christ? Are you intentionally building Christ-Centered Community?

How do you determine your best life? Some philosophers argue that a way to answer this question is to ask, "If I lived my current life over and over again for eternity, is this the life I would live?" Some in this room may say, "No." If that is the case, then what life do you want to live? If "Yes," could there be improvements? Both answers involve intentional examination and intentional change.

I went back to school at Villanova to change. I went back to school to better serve you. The reason I invest in education, the reason I invest in worship is because both pursuits are to live our best lives.

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Think about some of the major stories of the Bible and how at the core is change. God did not want the status quo for Israel in Egypt. God does not want us to live in slavery and fear but God desires for us to thrive in faith and freedom. As we read Exodus, God envisions a preferred

future for humanity. God acts to make this change, but in the end, we must want it for ourselves.

When the disciples first meet Jesus, He asks us, “What are you looking for?” Jesus preaches, “Repent, the Kingdom of God is in front of you, reach out and grab it. Believe the good news.

As we read Paul’s words today in Romans, Galatians, and 2 Corinthians, we hear the message that Jesus lives to transform us. The wages of sin are death, but in Christ Jesus is life!

So good news and bad news. The bad news is we can’t change through our own work. We can’t positively change by ourselves. The good news is we are never alone! Jesus says, “Remember, I am always with you!”-Matthew 28:20 We have help. Jesus says, “Receive the Holy Spirit!”-John 20:22 Changing into Christ’s presence is the work of the Holy Spirit. But the Lord still needs your permission, your intentionality, your commitment to change.

In the big picture, your commitment to Christ is not simply about you. Paul writes to the Church. Christ’s Church is the goal! Friendship with Jesus and each other is the goal.

Committed Christ-Centered Community is the goal!

To achieve this goal, we must acknowledge our sins. God’s Word teaches “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” -1 John 1:8 When we accept Christ, we are saved from the penalty of sin but not from its power. God knows we will keep sinning, but the Lord desires to work with us by the power of His Holy Spirit to transform us into Christ. It is a life-long process. The Lord does not need us to point out other people’s sin, but to concentrate on our own. “Do not point out the splinter in your neighbor’s eye until you pull out the log in your own eye.”-Matthew 7:3

There are plenty of stories in the Bible where faithful people sin. King David is the prime example. You remember the story of David cheating with Bathsheba. It’s a terrible story. David gives us an example of what confessed sin looks like in Psalm 51. David cannot forget his sin, but he acknowledges first and foremost it is a sin against God. The next step to live a better life is to ask for forgiveness from others. Forgiveness is not the goal. Reconciliation is the goal. Friendship is the goal. **Committed Christ-Centered Community is the goal!**

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Love,
Pastor Curtis