**THE TRANSFORMATION OF ME (July 30, 2017 Oak Ridge, TN) w/Terry Bennett**

This is the last sermon in a series called “**Getting Back to Basics**”.

This is a nymph, or early stage, of a white-tailed dragonfly. The look of this organism is not very appealing. But when perfectly transformed, it results in a beautiful adult. This little dragonfly triggered the thoughts for this lesson. We, before we are Christians, are in our sins and are not very appealing. But after we are baptized, our sins are washed away, we then are transformed into something that is useful and appealing to our Father in Heaven. We begin a life-long transformation. We never quite reach perfection in our walk on earth, but our hope is to one day put on perfection and immortality forever with the Lord in Heaven. Then we can fly like a dragonfly.

We hear a lot of talk about transformation today.  Healthcare needs to be transformed, our government needs transforming, entire industries are being transformed by advancing technologies, homes are transformed through extreme makeovers, and individuals decide to transform their bodies in dramatic ways. We understand that a transformation is a change – often a radical one. Transformation is not easy.  It takes work.

The life of a Christian is about transformation.  The transformation of a Christian is not just a one-time occurrence. It is much more than just simply being baptized.  In fact, you may have seen those who were baptized but then nothing seemed to change in their lives.  Or perhaps you know of one who underwent a short-term change but soon returned back to their old ways.  Just like in the parable of the sower

(**Luke 8:11-15**). In that passage we see that only the good soil underwent a solid, continuing transformation!

For those of us who are Christians, a wondrous transformation occurred in the waters of baptism. But the transformation process did not end when we arose from those waters.  God did not just zap us so that we can no longer sin or even that we will no longer be tempted to sin.  In fact, every day we are to resist the temptation to be conformed to this world.  In Athens last Sunday, an older sister came forward in repentance because of her struggles in falling back into the bad habits of “her baggage” of the sins she committed before she became a Christian.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (**Romans 12:1-2**).  We are undergoing a transformation process to change over time into the image of God (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).  This transformation is a life-long growth process.

This morning we will look at passages that may be very familiar, with a focus on transforming our lives.

**1. Our life is transformed by: Valuing a person’s soul as much as Jesus**

Many times the folks of the world are very good about providing for the physical needs of others. And we Christians should be active in helping those in need. But Jesus valued a person’s soul much more than their physical well-being(**Mark 8:34-38**)**.**

**2. Our life is transformed by: Not conforming ourselves to this world**

Am I too focused on 401Ks, education, job advancement, or the politically correct hot topic of the day vs. what Jesus would have me focused on? Where is my focus on a daily basis? Is it to please God, or is it to be successful in a worldly way (**Matthew 6:19-21, 1 Timothy 6:17-19**).

**3. Our life is transformed by: Focusing on the spiritual rather than the physical**

Jews in Jesus time – focused on the physical – wanted a Messiah who would be their physical King and bring back the physical presence of their people. Jesus focused on the Spiritual (**Luke 12:13-21**). How can I start a conversation with my friend at work about Jesus; how can I stand for Jesus when I am asked to do something that tempts me to disobey Him; how can I get a Bible study started with someone I meet (**John 4:7-10**)? Jesus works the spiritual into this conversation and we can do the same.

**4. Our life is transformed by: Seeking and saving those who are lost**

The sword of the spirit is an offensive weapon **(Hebrews 4:12-13, Ephesians 6:17).** In order for the sword to be effective, it needs to be used. Jesus expects Christians to set a good example and have an influence on those around us. But He also expects us to be actively spreading the gospel **(Acts 8:4, Acts 17:1-3, 16-17).** Paul shows us how to seek and to save.

**5. Our life is transformed by: Being more like Jesus each day**

In **2 Peter 1:5-7**, Peter summarizes this transformation as “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love”. To be like Jesus, we must be diligent; we must work at it. We must regularly examine our lives against the standard of God’s word (**2 Corinthians 13:5, James 1:25**).

**Close**

We Christians look forward to the completion of our transformation as Christ transforms our lowly body to be like His glorious body (**Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58**). Then we will be able to fly like the dragonflies and butterflies!

**The Transformation of Me: How are you doing with your transformation?**

If you are not a Christian today and understand your condition, you are not very appealing to God. But there is hope! You can start your transformation this morning by repenting of your sins, confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, and being baptized for the remission of your sins (**Romans 6:3-7**). Once baptized, you will be appealing to the Lord and can start your journey toward eternal perfection!

If we can help you now, please come forward while we stand and sing!