

Sermon Guide: Rediscovering the Good News of Jesus: “Transformation and Power” | Edith Rae | February 25, 2024

Summary

As part of our journey through the series on Rediscovering the Gospel of Jesus, Edith addresses the theme of transformation, a metamorphosis that mirrors the natural wonder of a caterpillar's change into a butterfly. This transformation is not merely an external alteration but a deep, internal reformation of our very being, aligning us with the image of God, which was marred by our rebellion against the King. The Good News of Jesus encompasses the promise of transformation and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and ultimately leads to the restoration of His Kingdom, where destructive forces are expelled, and all creation is healed.

We are created in God's image, and it is in union with Him, in allegiance to King Jesus, that we find our true selves. Jesus, the long-awaited King, did not come to gather card-carrying converts but to call apprentices into the Kingdom of God.

Edith points out that the Gospel is not a narrow call to individual salvation but a call to participate in the Kingdom of God and to recognize Jesus' kingship. Discipleship is not optional; it is central to our faith. It is about allegiance to King Jesus, a journey from spiritual birth to spiritual maturity. It is about becoming more and more like Jesus and reflecting Him.

Edith then reminds us that our transformation is the work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us with the capacities of Christ. We are not left to our own devices but are given the power of God's Spirit.

How then do we participate in this transformation? Edith points out that it requires intentionality to give Jesus space to form us. This involves slowing down, creating space for spiritual disciplines that open us to the Spirit's power. These practices are not about earning salvation but about accessing the life God offers. We fix our eyes on Jesus habitually, and express our love through obedience to His teachings. This involves a long obedience in the same direction, a journey marked by daily cross-bearing and the liberating way of the cross.

Key Takeaways:

- Discipleship is an act of allegiance to King Jesus. It is not a mere transaction but a transformation.
- The Holy Spirit is the catalyst for our transformation. It is by His power that we grow in the fruit of the Spirit and become more like Jesus.
- Spiritual disciplines are essential for transformation. They are not about earning salvation but about creating space for the Spirit to work within us.

****Bible Reading:****

1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 (ESV)

"For our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. And you became

imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit,"

Romans 12:2 (ESV)

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Matthew 16:24-25 (ESV)

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.'"

Discussion Questions

1. Considering the Thessalonians' example, how does the Holy Spirit's power manifest in someone's life when they embrace the gospel?
2. What practical steps can be taken to renew one's mind and resist being shaped by the patterns of this world?
3. What does it mean to take up one's cross daily, and how does this act of self-denial lead to true freedom and life in Christ?

Going deeper

1. Identify a situation where you have experienced the Holy Spirit's power in your life. How can you share this experience with someone to encourage them in their faith journey?
2. What is one specific pattern of this world that you struggle with, and what is one action you can take this week to renew your mind in that area?
3. Reflect on a recent decision where you choose comfort over Christ. What is one way you can practice self-denial in that area to follow Jesus more closely?