

Life Transforming Worship

(Bibles = use from floor & bring home; & Notes Area on Bulletin back; Study Guide)
In case you've missed it, over the last 4 weeks we've been talking about our Rejoice! Core Value, Worship. We've been wrestling with what it means to live our lives personally and corporately in **"God directed, Christ inspired, Holy Spirit led and life transforming worship."** Today we're going to conclude our series on our Worship Value by focusing in on "life transforming worship." Transformation is one of the key marks that God is at work in our lives. When we become a God-worshiper and Christ-follower and a person led by the Holy Spirit change happens in our lives in many ways. This morning I'll be sharing some of the sure signs that transformation is occurring in our lives plus some transformational areas to focus on.

We love stories of transformation. I love hearing how people who were lost, broken down, hopeless, despairing, ignorant ...how their lives turned around (like a Disney Classic movie – examples: Beauty & the Beast, Snow White, Cinderella, Shrek,...).

2Corinthians 3:18 (Need a "run-up" from verse 3:7) **"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."** For those of us who reflect God's glory – there ought to be a kind of glow about us. For those of us who reflect God's glory we need to remember that we are being transformed into God's likeness or becoming more like God with ever increasing glory.

- 1) Paul says we are being transformed – Paul says transformation is not an automatic. The moment you meet and accept Christ is just the beginning, for it is a life-long process. It just doesn't happen over night. **Galatians 5:25** says **"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."** It says walk by the Spirit every day, daily. Every day when you get up it says "walk in step with the Spirit." It does not say "sit in Spirit." It says walk, go for it, be active – pep step it! Pray daily, "God I want to walk with you today – so guide me – change me this day." Transformation is a daily walk – a life long process. No one achieves perfection this side of heaven. Question: Is that "being transformed: into God's likeness, with ever increasing radiance/glory" – is that true of you? Is your heart being transformed, softened? Are your behaviors being transformed? Is your language, priorities, and values changing? Do you have an ever increasing passion for truth and holiness and goodness and generosity? Are you still dominated by things like self-centeredness, anger, greed and lust? Are you stuck in the old patterns or do you see evidence that you are being transformed with the ever increasing likeness of God?

When Jesus said "I will build my church and nothing will ever be able to stop it," Jesus was not talking about buildings and programs. He was talking about people. Jesus was in the business of transforming people, buildings are just tools to reach people. Rejoice!'s greatest passion – transforming people and relevance is how we do it. Worship is how we support this passion. I believe that transformation is why we do what we do every day and week. Transformation is the reason why we pray and give and

sacrifice and put together a staff and prepare messages and minister and have programs/ministries and small groups and buildings – the reason why we do all this is to help people like teens/youth find Christ and have their lives changed! (Example of the 7 Project this past week at LCHS Gymnasium...)

#2 What does transformation look like? Actor Stephen Baldwin was recently quoted as saying **“God doesn’t want me to stop being Stephen Baldwin, God just wants me to stop sinning and become more and more like Him.”** Being transformed doesn’t mean you & I lose our personality & become a weirdo or someone we’re not wired to be! It doesn’t mean we become religious or soft. I’m still nuts about the Pittsburgh Steelers, biking, golfing, walking, my wife and kids, fishing and the Chicago Cubs for I can’t get enough of those! God doesn’t, as I worship Him, God doesn’t want me to stop being Steve Brouwer, God just wants me to stop sinning, being a sinner, and become more like Him in goodness, purity, love, mercy & grace(repent 180 Degree turn)

Question: What are the signs of transformation? How do you know that transformation is occurring in your life? Romans 12:1-8... What does life transforming worship look like? 1)Do you have God’s mercy in view (front window, side mirrors, rear view mirror)? 2)Are you offering your body as a living sacrifice – holy and pleasing to God - for this is your spiritual act of worship. 3)Are you no longer conforming to the pattern of this world - No longer copying the behavior/customs/norms of this world? Are you not just falling into the patterns of this world but letting God transform you into a new person, as you continue to worship Him? 4)Are you being transformed by the renewing of your mind – by letting God transform you into a new person, as you continue to worship Him by changing the way you think about life? 5)Are you no longer thinking about yourself more highly than you ought? Are you using clear judgment in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you? 6)Are you not just pretending to love people – are you genuinely loving them, sincerely loving them?

At least 4 Signs that transformation (life transforming worship) is occurring in your life: 1)Don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought, but think of yourself with clear/sober judgment (you move from PRIDE to HUMILITY) v3. People who are being transformed into God’s likeness are moving from the prideful arrogant lifestyle, or thinking highly of self, towards humility. The reason why this happens is because when a person’s worship is God directed and Christ inspired and Holy Spirit led, the Trinity has a tendency to show us what our sins are, as well as sheds a fine light on our flaws and hang-ups and skewed tendencies. So we, as we continually worship become more and more aware of our sinfulness. As we become more aware of our sinfulness we lose this prideful arrogance and become more and more humble in the way we tend to walk/do life. A transformed person does not tend to think poorly of herself/himself – he/she just thinks more clearly. Sometimes the transformation from pride to humility comes from a hard fall (marriage lost, job loss, friend walks out of your life) and it is at that rock-bottom moment when a person begins admitting “o.k., I’ve got a problem, or issues, sin in my life.” You start chipping away at some pride and you move towards a more humble vantage point - thus the transformation road begins to be cleared out and paved. **Helen Keller was quoted as communicating “I long to accomplish a great and noble**

task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. Question: Is such happening in your life, because such is a sign that life transforming worship is coming to be a key component in your life's walk/journey.

2)Another Sign that Transformation is Occurring, or life transforming worship is occurring in your life is that you're (Romans 12:4-5) **Moving from Isolation to Belonging.** We belong to each other in a unique spiritual sense. BELONG! Moving from isolation to belonging is a sign of transformation. People who are fully engaged in the process of transformation they try/attempt to get connected with other believers. They realize that God uses other persons in their life to bring about spiritual growth. I used to think if I read my Bible, went to Church/worship and prayed that I would become all God wanted me to become. Not true! Yes, such things are most definitely vital and important, but I realize I need the ongoing wisdom, accountability, resources, correction, support and encouragement of other believers if I am going to become/be transformed into the kind of person God wants me to become. Honestly, the second most important reason for my personal transformation, other than what God has done for me in and through the life, crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus, goes back to persons and groups who helped inspire me, wooed me, mentored me, and under-girded me. It has not been my degrees, travels, experiences – primarily it has been the people in my life that God has used to aid His transformational process in me. (Example(s) Hank Grit, Fred VanNoord, Dave Nonamacher, Harlan VanOort, Dale Assink, Dave Schut, Jack Glass,...). Persons just taking the time to build into me. It has been the God directed, Christ inspired, Holy Spirit led persons in my life who have moved me from isolation to belonging. What an amazing transformation! Many of us have never had such persons in our lives. We've been spun out into society with such huge deficits. No one prayed for you or taught you or challenged you or inspired you how to live. A healthy marriage was never modeled for you. You are/have been out there all alone trying to cope with addictions and depression and failure and guilt without any help from God worshipers, spiritually mature people and I just have to tell you "that does not work!." You can not become transformed (like a cocoon to a butterfly), because one of God primary ways of changing/transforming people is by/through the other people in our lives - helping us, challenging us in a God directed way to be a true worshiper. **Psychologist Henry Cloud says, "when I became a Christian, I thought God would just zap me into being a new person. But I learned that God would heal and transform me not through a supernatural zapping, but through people in my small group. God healed me, spoke to me, and made me a complete person through the people in my small group."** God transforms us when we move from isolation to belonging (steps of: belong, become, believe). Question: Is moving from isolation to belonging happening in your life? When we move from isolation to belonging we being to radiate more gloriously the life transforming worshipers that we were created to be.

Another sign that life transformation, life transforming worship is occurring through your life – **Move FROM SERVING SELF TO SERVING OTHERS. Romans 12:4-8** Examples: Children's Ministry Servant Leaders this year during our Worship Time. Mid-Week Leaders. Sunday Morning Leaders...Sr. & Jr. High Leaders. It is not about you! It is all about God! It is all about God having a relationship with you! It's not just

about serving Rejoice!, but most importantly worship is being in service to God. When you really truly begin to step out/down this path of transformation with God you begin to feel an inner desire/yearning to want to give back out of gratitude and thanksgiving in some way or another – worshipers/transformed-lifers are engaged in such. Question: Is that happening inside of you (this desire) and then is the “giving back” actively happening? Romans 12:1 “I urge you to offer your bodies as living sacrifices” (Jesus Christ’ example of sacrificial atonement – Hebrews 12:1-3). The transformed life requires sacrifice. Service and sacrifice are trademarks of a transformed life. Romans 12:6-8. **You know the first 5 words of Rick Warren’s Purpose Driven Life Book “It is not about you!”** If it is still about you, all about your career, your money, your house, your toys, your friends, your assets, your future, your today, your entertainment, your whatever....that should be a warning sign to you! Persons engage in life transforming worship, begin noticing a shift from just serving themselves to serving God and others. (JOY principle – Great Commandment vs. Law & God’s radiance/glory transformation).

Another sign that life transforming worship is taking root – transformation is occurring – is that **you and I are “Moving from Apathy to Affection”** Don’t just pretend to love others, really love them! These verses are bothersome because some people are difficult to love. It’s just true! Question: How many of us know someone who is hard to love? (Raise hand – don’t look at them) For years we have heard preacher after preacher (radio, TV, net...) say “You just have to love everybody!” GIVE ME A BREAK! How do you love a boss who is dishonest? How do you love a coach who plays favorites? How do you love a person who harasses people? How do you love an abusive spouse or parent? Well, just love everyone! What does this mean? Yes, God does command us to love, but the mistake many people make is they confuse loving someone with liking someone. Love is an action and is suppose to have nothing to do with feelings. “Like” is a feeling. The Bible does command us to love everyone, but then how do you love a dishonest person? You do so by confronting their behavior (keep it off the person) – such is an act of love. In 1Corinthians 13:4-8a (read from Bible) shares with us the actions of love (like getting angry at the right things). Again, these are actions, not feelings! I can love someone by forgiving them – forgiveness is tough love, it is not a feeling. I can be patient with another person and be truthful, but I do not have to like them. The Bible does not command us to like everyone! Thank God! But while it is true that I can love them, but not like them, what I have noticed is that sometimes I do not even make the effort to like them. I don’t even give my affections a chance. I just say. “well, I’ll try to love you, but I certainly don’t want to make an effort to like you.” Consequently, I’ve missed out on some chances to relate to some persons on a closer level. I’m trying to allow God/Jesus/H.S. to transform that. Sign #4 is the transformation for Apathy (I could care less about you) to genuine Affection (I love you, I’ll put up with you) such is what begins to be displayed in the life and actions of a life transforming worshipper. When you and I engage in this transformational sign (radiance/glory) of really loving people that’s a true sign God has a hold of your life and you’re becoming a worshipper – a sign that worship is a value in your life!

Question: Do you see any of these transformations happening in your life? Do you see any movement from pride to humility? From isolation to belonging? From serving self

to sacrificing for others? From Apathy to Affection? How does all this happen? How does all this take place? (Example: Art Work) (Example: Beaker & Fire = water goes/transforms from a liquid to a gas at 212 degrees by heating it up or liquid to a solid by placing it in a freezer, or air temperature of less than 32 Degrees. How do we heat up our spiritual life? How do we get transformed spiritually? **How does transformation happen – how does life transforming worship happen?** 5 G's (Becoming a Participating Member of Rejoice! Handbook) **1)GRACE** – Have you accepted God's forgiveness, accepted Jesus Christ into your life, and the direction of the Holy Spirit? Have you received God's grace- the ignition/spark/fire that begins transformation. But the mistake many people make is that they think once they accept Christ and worship God and come under Holy Spirit's direction - that's it! **NO** – that is just the beginning of transformation! Now one has to grow in their faith. How do you **2)GROW?** You need to be reading the Bible on a regular basis – God's Word to us! Need to be praying. Need to be out on the front lines – in Ministry & Mission (John 4 & Woman at the well) **3)GROUP** Need to have other believers in your life – a small group that tends to sharpen you! (Example White & Red Blood Cells) **4)GIFT** – Every Christ- follower has a spiritual gift to serve God or worship Him in an outward/visible/tangible fashion. One needs to exercise that gift to keep it healthy (you Snooze you lose). **5)Good Stewardship** – Are you using the resources God has entrusted unto you to worship Him, thank Him, and bring His kingdom to LeMars/earth? Are you giving of your time, talent, treasure, money, service, effort, to lift God's name up in some visible way? The 5 G's are how transformation happens in a person's life.

Part of what God has called the church (you are the church) to do is to plant “the church” all over the place. We believe that affective churches are the only hope (outside of salvation/grace in Christ) for this world. As I reminded us earlier, of what Jesus said, “you are the church,” you & I are called to be a Grace-filled church, dispensing unabashedly the grace of Christ who is definitely the hope of this world. Can government, schools, vocations, vacations, change a person's life? Hardly! Can a soccer league, volleyball league, Golf Club, home, transform a persons life? Such can not transform a person's life. It is the church, the living, active, church (the hands and feet and breath of Christ), the vibrant body of Christ corporately and individually that ushers in (makes preparation for) transformation – or the church is a zero! I hope you know this and are committed to such transformational preparations. I've committed my life to such – trying to reach as many people as we can. I want to and I hope we want to do everything we can to multiply that grace-filled transformation by the thousands. There are a little over 25,000 people in Plymouth County – people within a 20mile drive of Rejoice! - and over half do not attend a church on Sunday morning. I would suspect most of these are not worshipers – simply lost people. So our Long Range Plan will be unveiled in October (the Board is hoping to complete such on Tuesday Eve & we covet your prayers) – part of that plan will be to keep planting and replanting and replanting & planting the church. I invite you to link with us in life transforming worship!

(Ruisch - Screenage) (Prayer of Response) (Giving of Tithes & Offerings) (Singing)