



# TRANSFORMATION

"we are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory." 2 Cor 3:18

*"Transformation and the Christian Life" is a series of studies designed to complement our Term 3 sermon series. The bible passages in the studies will not mirror the sermon text as previously.*

*Phil 2:12-13 "...work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

## WHERE WE BEGIN

### WHAT IS THIS SERIES OF STUDIES ALL ABOUT?

As we consider Jesus' teaching in the gospels it becomes clear that he has more in mind for us than merely 'getting saved'. Salvation, or to use Jesus' words, 'the Kingdom of God' is a reality that includes the transformation of our lives such that we are made like him. Our purpose in these studies is to embrace and cultivate this life-changing work of God in us. As Paul writes in 2Cor 3:18 "...[we] are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory.'

These weekly studies have the same overall goal as our sermons but will not necessarily be looking at the same passage as the Sunday sermon. Each study includes a practical component where we will explore new ways of being with God that cultivate this transformation towards Christlikeness. Some of these activities may be new to you and to your group. I (Stuart) encourage you to throw yourself into them and give them a 'go' before evaluating their success.

Transformation means Change—but not everyone instinctively likes change, particularly when we are talking about personal change. Personal inward change is often more difficult to handle than changes in circumstances and events surrounding our lives—perhaps because we really *do* love our 'vices' or perhaps because we are such habitual creatures.

#### *Discussion:*

- 1 What do you think of the statement: 'The more people change, the more they stay the same'?
- 2 Have you ever consciously sought to change something about yourself? How did you go about it? What did you learn from the experience?

### EXERCISE: READ ROMANS 6:11-14

- 3 We begin the process of transformation right where we are now: we are fallen, sin-tainted human beings who have been born again and declared new creations in Christ<sup>1</sup>. How does Romans 6:11-14 represent this struggle between our 'old self' and our 'new self' formed by Christ?
- 4 How do you think the process Paul describes in Romans 6:11-14 differs from popular 'self-improvement' programs?

5. **Take 15 minutes of quiet time alone apart from the rest of your group.**

Read through Romans 6:1-14 again and write a few sentences that describe your inner-self before God. Make a personal list of 'the parts of your body' that you now want to offer to God as instruments of righteousness (you might consider areas of your life such as your hobbies, your thought life, your social life or ambitions etc.). Try to be detailed rather than general. Are there any particular areas where you struggle to make God your master? Note these down as well.

Your notes from this session are private and need not be shared with anyone else.

## GROUP REFLECTION

6. How did you find the process of sitting and writing down your thoughts?
7. As a group, try to draw a diagram that represents the human condition shown in Romans 6. It might include our 'fallen human nature' (or "flesh", as it's sometimes called), sin and the evil desires it produces within us, our new nature 'in Christ', God's Holy Spirit and the ascended Jesus Christ.
8. How do you feel about the prospect of change in the areas of your life you have identified?
9. Who's job do you think it is to bring about these changes—God's or yours?

This series of studies and the related sermons on Sundays are all about this process of change, and the activities we might helpfully engage in to be part of the action.

Take time together to pray now for one another and in response to your time in Romans chapter 6

## HOMEWORK

### **Read Matthew 5:1-16.**

1. To whom does Jesus address these words? Look back at Matthew 4:17-25. What do you think was the basis of their desire to follow Jesus?
2. In what way do these verses demand change from the followers of Jesus?
3. Which of these "beatitudes"<sup>1</sup> most challenges you? Why?

## NEXT WEEK: AN OPPORTUNITY

Each of us is a unique individual—with our own personal strengths and weaknesses. If we could see one another's lists from this study, this would become even more evident. God's work of transforming us to become like Jesus will be as individual as we are.

Next Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of July, at 7:45pm, each of St Marks and St Davids Home Groups are invited to join together at St Marks Church for a special seminar. The seminar will help us to understand our personalities, strengths and weaknesses—perhaps in a fresh way that we'd never considered before. It will highlight the ways that certain personality types respond to the challenge of change, and give some direction as to where God's work might need to move in your life.

Keith Henry will lead this seminar and groups are encouraged to attend together. If your group regularly meets on a Wednesday evening, this seminar will take the place of your regular meeting. If your group regularly meets at another time, we encourage you to make a special effort to come along, perhaps cancelling your normal meeting or making it more of a social occasion instead.

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<sup>1</sup> A *beatitude* is simply a statement of blessing. The word is derived from the Latin language.  
St Marks Avalon and St Davids Palm Beach, Term 3 2007