

Romans: A Study on Reformation  
Lesson 3 “Transforming the Image of God”

I. Introduction - We are continuing our series on the book of Romans today. Paul wrote this letter from Corinth to the church in Rome to bring reformation to this church in 57 A.D. We are studying verse by verse through the book with our focus being on “Reformation.”

A. Reform is a compound word. Re means to do again and form means to make or create. Reform does not mean to add to. God wants to go deeper than just bring revival to our nation. He wants to reform it. **Explain the difference between reformation and revival. This is about a new culture - way of doing life (return of Jesus at the center, parents more involved in kids lives, an understanding of identity, value for our fellow man, etc.**

B. Today we are going to talk about “Transforming the Image of God.” That’s a weird title. What do I mean by that? **2 Corinthians 3:16-18:**

1. This passage says that when we turn to Jesus, the veil (that which is preventing me from seeing) is taken away and then we are transformed into the same image we behold by the spirit of God. **This is the will of God for our lives. He wants us to be conformed into the image of Jesus.**
2. Unfortunately, too many people haven’t walked in their calling and have decided to transform God into their image and glory.
3. Look at **Exodus 32:1-6:**
  - a. Aaron made a calf and said, “This is your god which brought you up out of Egypt. This happened just a short time after the exodus from Egypt.
  - b. Why? Moses went up on the mountain to meet with God in **Exodus 20**. The whole nation of Israel was invited, but refused the invitation because of fear (saw thunders and lightning, etc).
  - c. My opinion as to why they chose to meet with God was because they had been under Pharaoh’s rule for 400 years and projected onto God that He would be like Pharaoh.
  - d. When we refuse the invitation to meet with God, we are left to our own devices. We all want to worship something (it’s hardwired in us). When we refuse the best, we tend to create our own stuff and say it’s god, but it’s really just us. This leaves us worshipping ourselves. ex: sports, reputation, job, status, a relationship, etc.
4. **Exodus 34:29-34** Moses went back up Mt. Sinai to get the 10 commandments. As he did, he was transformed. This didn’t come through striving, it came through meeting God.
  - a. Some of need to quit trying to change and need to just go meet with God. Change will come out of that.
  - b. The evidence he met with God was apparent to those around him.

II. Transforming the Image of God - The rest of *Romans 1*, Paul focuses on the Gentile need for righteousness. He teaches how the Gentiles transformed the image of God into a god like themselves.

A. **Romans 1:18-23** Right after Paul says the just shall live by faith in the gospel, he then talks about the wrath of God that falls on unrighteousness.

1. Some in the grace camp today say God doesn't bring wrath on unrighteousness. This is an idol. They made a god in their image. Instead of beholding God and letting Him clean up past hurts about abusive authority and getting an understanding of sowing and reaping, they stay at the camp and create an idol. **God is right to have right to have wrath because He put two trees in the garden and gave people the opportunity to choose.**
2. *Verses 18-20* reveal everyone knows about God, but they suppress this truth. It's been clearly revealed through creation. ex: Stage expansion example.
3. *Verse 21* - The process of falling away from God. We stop glorifying Him (making Him bigger than anything else, stop being thankful, our imagination goes crazy, and then our heart becomes dark.)
4. *Verses 22-23* All this leads to transforming the image of God. When we don't meet with God (*verses 16-17* talk about His radical goodness), then we make God into something like us.

B. **Romans 1:24-32 The Effects of Not Beholding God**

1. Paul goes onto list many different sins in these verses, but I want to focus on one because it's one we face today and it cuts to the core question of identity.
2. The issue I want to focus on is homosexuality. These folks exchanged the truth of God for a lie and began to worship the creation rather than the Creator.
  - a. First, this is New Testament and Paul is the apostle of grace and he's saying homosexuality is a sin. Does everyone see that? I've heard people say homosexuality was sin under the law, but its ok now under grace. It's not.
  - b. We have churches today marrying people of the same sex. They have transformed the image of God (Eve was on the inside of Adam. When God brought her back to Adam he was making him complete).
  - c. Our culture is teaching this is ok. Why is this such a big deal? It's warping people's identity. People are trying to fill a hole in their heart that only Jesus can fill with operations, pursuing someone of the same gender, etc and they'll never find joy. ex: LGBTQ people have significantly higher suicide rates than the rest of the population.
  - d. What's the answer? The Gospel. This means we preach the love of Jesus to those who are doing evil. The key to their transformation is getting Him on the inside of them. They don't have to clean themselves up

to get saved. They simply need to see their need for a savior and ask.  
When He gets on the inside, He'll change their externals.

III. Conclusion - The same principle I just shared for the homosexual will work for all of us. We must reformed in our thinking and understand that God is radically better than we think. Then we must behold (be-held) by His glory in the face of Jesus. This is how we are transformed by the glory of God into the image of Jesus.

A. Call Up Prayer Team

B. Pray Closing Prayer