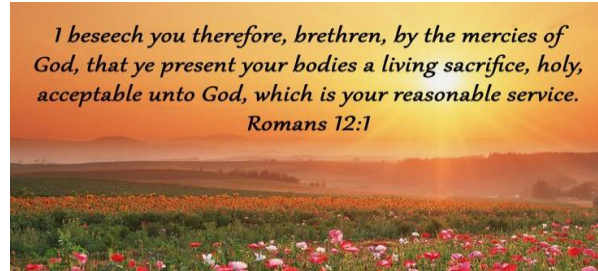


January 16, 2021

Transformed



"Therefore, prepare you minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do..."

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart..." I Peter 1:13-25

Like the Apostle Paul, Peter reminds us that we are constantly being called to overcome our own evil desires. We desire to gratify our own selfish ambition and vain conceit, but God's mercy demands that we live holy lives. A part of living as transformed sacrifices requires that we see ourselves as those who have been dedicated or consecrated to God's purposes and not to our own.

To live lives dedicated to God's purpose requires that we no longer live to gratify ourselves, but to satisfy the one who saves our souls. Peter would teach us that a key to living holy lives is self-control. From the very beginning mankind has been far more prone to blame and justify their selfish ambition and vain conceit than accept responsibility for those weaknesses. But those who follow Jesus must learn self-control which essentially demands that we accept responsibility for our own weaknesses which is always where transformation begins.

The call to be holy as God is holy should constantly bring us back to the reality of an impending judgment. We all will face a ***"...Father who judges impartially..."*** which should, in turn, lead us to live in ***"...reverent fear..."*** Even as those who have received grace and no longer face eternal condemnation, we still face a God and Father who will hold us accountable for our choices both good or bad, right or wrong.

Understanding that we have the power to make choices and that we will be held accountable for how we use that power is really the beginning of self-control. Even though I would prefer to blame and justify the wrong choices that I make, God will not let me. He will hold me accountable especially in that one command that matters most to him; how I love others.

Our Father's holiness led him to let his one and only Son to die on the cross to redeem me from the eternal cost of my sins. If he loved me that much how much should I love others. Peter would demand that we love others deeply and from the heart.

As is nearly all of God's Word these lessons apply to us individually and are not generic. Regardless of how others act, regardless of how others talk, regardless of how others behave I must choose how I will act and talk and behave as one who is called to be holy. I am accountable for

me and God will judge me for what I do and say regardless of who I might try to blame or how I might try to justify my choices.

My life is short. I will never be more than a stranger or sojourner passing through this life. In what days I still have I would choose to live as one who has been consecrated to God's service. What will you choose?

FOR **GOD**
has not given us
a *Spirit* of fear
but of
POWER
LOVE
& self-discipline.
2 Timothy 1:7