

The Life of the Saved

Salvation

Romans 12:1-2

August 27, 2017

Well, welcome again. I came across this article several months ago. It was entitled “Bizarre Excuses Real People Made For Missing Church.”¹

- “We were out of peanut butter.” Of course, no one can worship without his or her peanut butter fix.
- “I was too drunk, so I went soul winning with my dog, Rambo.” I hope Rambo was sober.
- “Both of my girlfriends attend church there.” I think you might have other challenges.
- “My kids take naps during that time.” Bring them to church anyway; plenty of people nap during my sermon.
- “The pastor is too attractive. When I see him preaching, I have impure thoughts, and I am distracted.” I never heard that complaint while I’ve been a pastor.
- “My wife cooked bacon for breakfast, and our entire family smelled like bacon.” Bacon aroma is always welcome at our church.
- “The pastor stays in the Bible too much.” No excuse there.
- “I couldn’t get the lid off the peanut butter.” I never thought that peanut butter would such a hindrance to avoiding church.
- “We got burned out at church and have been taking a break the past seven years.” I think you broke the world’s record for length of time to cool down.
- “I always get hemorrhoids on Sundays.” I understand. Sunday is a terrible day for hemorrhoids.
- “I was constipated.” Is that a Sunday-only occurrence?

I don’t know about some of those excuses, so I’m glad you are here.

Today, we are concluding our short series on Salvation. We have talked about the misconceptions of salvation, then whether we can have assurance of our salvation. You can find those sermons and older ones on our website: germantownchurch.com.

Today, I want to talk about the way of the saved.

REMEMBER WHO YOU BELONG TO.

Our lives should reflect not only the saving work of Jesus, but also something else. I invite you to turn to page 5 in your bulletin, and let’s look at Romans 12:1-2, and we will look at this passage from the NRSV:

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.*²

¹ By Thom Rainer, downloaded May 9, 2017 http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/22628-missing-church.html?utm_source=omg-daily-nl&utm_medium=email&utm_content=text-link&utm_campaign=omg-daily-nl&maropost_id=716261710

² Romans 12:1-2 (NRSV)

Paul has written some wonderful things in the first 11 chapters of this letter to the Romans. Now he pivots. He writes, “therefore.” This participle gathers up all the great arguments he has presented and calls his readers to a conclusion, and if that wasn’t enough, he begs them to do so. And what does Paul feel is so important for the Christians in Rome to do? “Present themselves as a living sacrifice.”

When sacrificing an animal according to God’s law, a priest would kill the animal, cut it in pieces, and place it on the altar. Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important³. God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as living sacrifices – daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us.⁴

Then he writes:

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds...*⁵

We’re not to conform to what this world has to offer or say about how we should live. We are not to behave as the world does with its hatred and bigotry and violence and immorality and deceit and negligence... and the list goes on and on. Instead, we are to be transformed. The word for transformed here is the Greek word we get our word metamorphosis. A caterpillar goes through a metamorphosis to become a butterfly. And what metamorphoses, transforms? The inside, the essence of who we are. A person doesn’t have the same outside at 17 and 70, but they have the same inside. A man in jeans does not have the same outside when wearing a tuxedo, but he has the same inside. His outward form changes, but inwardly he is the same person. So, Paul says, to worship and serve God, we must undergo a change, not of our outward form, but of our inward personality.

And we do that through the renewing of our minds. I want us to focus on this word “renew” this morning. And let’s use the word renew as an acronym for this process.

And the first thing we must do is R - Reject the old.

Paul says:

*Do not be conformed to this world.*⁶

This rejection of the past is a key tenet of the Christian faith. From Jesus to Paul to Peter to John and to James, we are called to leave our former life and values, and take on a new life and new set of values. The world is no longer the pattern we are to follow. Instead, as Philippians 3:13-14 says,

*...Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*⁷

In 2004, Matt Emmons had the gold medal in sight. He was one shot away from claiming victory in the Olympic 50-meter three-position rifle event. He didn’t even need a bull’s-eye to win. His final shot merely needed to be on target.

³ See 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6; Amos 5:21 -24

⁴ Life Application Study Bible, Romans 12:1-2

⁵ Romans 12:2 (NRSV)

⁶ Romans 12:2a, NRSV

⁷ Philippians 3:13-14 (NIV)

Normally, the shot he made would have received a score of 8.1, more than enough for a gold medal. But in what was described as “an extremely rare mistake in elite competition,” Emmons fired at the wrong target. Standing in lane 2, he fired at the target in lane 3. His score for a good shot at the wrong target? 0. Instead of a medal, Emmons ended up in 8th place.⁸ It doesn’t matter how accurate you are if you are aiming at the wrong goal.

So, the life of the saved must first reject the old.

Second, the “E” in Renew stands for Educate the soul.

Paul says to be “but be transformed by the renewing of your minds...”⁹

Over and over again, God calls His people to spend time in His word.

As Joshua is about to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land, God told him:

*Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*¹⁰

The very first Psalm says this:

*Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*¹¹

PREFLIGHT CHECKLIST

If I skip any one of these checks, I have the potential of a failure that could result in the loss of the aircraft and my life.

The Bible is the checklist for my life, because it educates my soul.

This leads me to the next letter in Renew. N - Navigate by God’s compass.

Paul tells his readers:

*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.*¹²

During my instrument training, my instructor would often tell me to go to the Richmond, Indiana airport. It’s out of the way and has various navigational aids by which I could practice approaches. Now, each airport has its own identifier code. And in an airplane with GPS, you put in the airport code to get a bunch of information.

This is the GPS I fly with, and the airport code set in the GPS is KBOS, which is Boston. And the GPS tells you that this airplane is 162 nautical miles from Boston, that Boston is on a 063 bearing from where the airplane is, that this airplane is going 156 knots and is 1:02 from arriving. See all that?

Dayton’s identifier is KDAY. I can always remember Wright Brothers, where I fly out of: KMGY. So you dial in the code in the GPS to get your course to that airport.

Well, Richmond’s airport code is KRID, but you have to be very careful to put in the right code, because if you put in KRIC, the GPS will send you to Richmond, Virginia, and that’s in the opposite direction from Richmond, Indiana.

⁸ David Mordkoff, American Emmons Misses Out on Gold by Firing at Wrong Target, www.Sports.Yahoo.com, 8-22-04

⁹ Romans 12:2b, NRSV

¹⁰ Joshua 1:8 (NIV)

¹¹ Psalm 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹² Romans 12:2 (NIV)

By reading Scripture and being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will navigate by God's compass and discern God's way for our lives. I've been reading this Bible for 45 years now, and my major in college was Bible, and still to this day, when I read Scripture, God is showing me something. It might be something I've read but forgotten, or it might be something new that I never saw before.

The saved individual must navigate by God's compass.

The 4th letter of Renew and part of the life of the saved is E – Echo Jesus.

What is an echo? What is it? Right, it is a sound or series of sounds caused by the reflection of sound waves from a surface back to the listener, like in a cave. Echo also means a close parallel or repetition of an idea, feeling, style, or event.

The life of the saved is to echo Jesus. Jesus himself said:

*"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."*¹³

The apostle John reiterated, or echoed this in 1 John 2:6:

*Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.*¹⁴

To live as Jesus lived doesn't mean choosing 12 disciples, performing great miracles, and being crucified. To echo or walk today as Christ did, we must obey his teachings and follow his example of complete obedience to God and loving service to people.¹⁵

Max Lucado wrote, "Christianity, in its purest form, is nothing more than seeing Jesus. Christian service, in its purest form, is nothing more than imitating him who we see. To see His Majesty and to imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity."¹⁶

The final letter in Renew and a requirement in the life of the saved is W – Walk in the Spirit.

Earlier in Romans, Paul wrote:

*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*¹⁷

It is this same Spirit who was present at the creation of the world.¹⁸ It is this same Spirit that gave Samson his strength.¹⁹ It is this same Spirit that led Christ into the wilderness.²⁰ The entire book of Acts should be named, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" for it is the Spirit who is the moving force in the Early Church.

The Holy Spirit came to empower us to be God's life in the world. We are to do the work of God in the world. We are to point the way to God for the world. And we cannot do that alone. The Holy Spirit is the power behind the rebirth of every Christian. He gives us the power we need to live the Christian life.

A man starting a fish business put out his sign that read, "Fresh Fish For Sale Today" and invited all to visit his place of business on opening day. Many came and congratulated him on his new business, but one suggested that he change his sign. "Why the 'Today'? It is today." So he removed the "Today".

¹³ John 13:15, NLT

¹⁴ 1 John 2:6, NLT

¹⁵ Life Application Study Bible, 1 John 2:6

¹⁶ Max Lucado, When God Came Near

¹⁷ Romans 8:1, KJV

¹⁸ See Genesis 1:2

¹⁹ See Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14

²⁰ See Matthew 4:1

Someone else said, “Why, ‘For Sale’? Everybody knows you have fish for sale – or else why the store?” The words “For Sale” came off the sign.

Another said, “Why the word ‘Fresh’? You are a man of integrity, that guarantees your fish to be fresh.” “Fresh” came off the sign.

Only one word was left, “Fish” and one complained about it. “I smelled your fish two blocks away.”

The man started out so well: Fresh Fish For Sale Today. But as he went along, he started dropping the parts that made his store and his product special. If we start compromising, we will end up serving the devil. The man should have put up his sign and then stood by it. This is what we are to do in life. Be renewed by rejecting the old, educating the soul, navigate by God’s compass, echo Jesus, and walk in the Spirit.

That is the life of the saved. Leaves those out, and you’re just smelly fish.