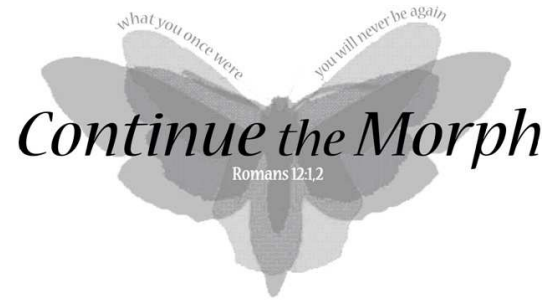


Lesson # 9

Sunday November 13, 2011



“We are the secret”

Romans 12: 2; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 10:5; Philippians 4:8

Our culture loves secrets. Stop and think about how many books have been written and movies made over the last few years that deal with the supposed secrets of the Vatican or the Free Masons. Do a quick TV listings scan and you will discover secrets of alien invasions in ancient archeology, secret codes that lead people to hidden American civil war gold, or secrets of the rich and famous that are now being revealed to everyone. Clearly, we are fascinated by secrets.

Maybe that is why so many people believe the Bible also has secrets buried in its pages. Well meaning people have passed on secret bread recipes, secret formulas for anointing oil that will cure arthritis, secret locations of oil in Israel and my favourite to date: the secret code that revealed the King James Version is the only one sanctioned by God.

We seem to love secrets.

There is just one little problem: God doesn't do very many secrets. Yes, there are some obvious secrets like the exact date of Jesus return and the exact details of how the Trinity works, but for the most part, God doesn't do secrets. He tells us exactly what he is going to do and why he is going to do it and then he does it. His version of secrets is an ***obvious secret*** – something that is plain, known and can be easily seen and anticipated. For instance, Jesus said that he was going to build his Church and the gates of Hades would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). So, obviously we can conclude that Jesus is indeed going to be building his church and that by no stretch of the imagination could the Church ever be seen as a secret. In the same way, Jesus said that he was going to build his Church through people, his followers. So, where is the secret? Simply that we forget it is that simple and obvious and keep trying to discover a deeper secret, because after all, it couldn't be that easy could it?

Yes, it is that easy. It is an ***obvious secret*** that Jesus is going to build his church, he is going to use his followers and in order to facilitate that process he is going to transform their lives for his glory and purpose. In fact, at the simplest level possible we need to recognize that rather than digging for deep secrets in the Bible, we need to remember that we *are* the secret.

Group Discussion:

- How do you feel about our cultural fascination with secrets?

- Do you believe the Bible really has secret codes that reveal things?
- Do you believe that God's secret is his ability and desire to use your life for his glory?

Going Deeper:

Read Romans 12:2

- What are the two commands in the passage?
- What is the purpose for these two commands?
- Of the two commands, which one seems easier to you?
- From your understanding, what does it mean for the words "conform" and "transform" to be passive verbs?
- How do you feel about the idea that both conforming and transforming happen to us and we can not really control much about the process?
- How are we transformed?

Transformed through the renewing of our minds:

The Bible reminds us both negatively and positively that our thoughts really do matter, especially in our journey of transformation.

Read I John 2: 15-17

- How do you feel when you hear a command like "Do not love this world or the things in it?"
- According to John, what does the world offer us?
- Are these really bad things? Is it really wrong to crave certain things? Should we not take some pride in our lives and successes?
- What is ultimately wrong with pursuing these things?
- How important is it to you to please God?

Read Philippians 4: 6-9

- On a scale of one to ten generally how anxious are you?
- What does Paul suggest we do about our anxiety?
- What is the promise if we *do* pray about things?
- Why do you think that Paul connects our thought life (V 8) with our anxiety (V 6)?
- Would you ever be able to say the words of Verse 9 to someone?
- Rather than thinking about the things of this world (I John 2:15-17) or the things that make us anxious, what should we be thinking about?

- Is the peace of God with you? Is your response an indication of your transformation journey?

Transformed through the Holy Spirit

Just like DNA drives the morph of a butterfly, we also have DNA that drives our morph. Our DNA is given to us at the moment of our salvation when the Holy Spirit comes and indwells us.

Read 2 Corinthians 3: 17-18

- When you hear a phrase like “The Lord is the Spirit”, how do you understand it?
- Paul notes that when the Spirit is present, there is freedom – do you feel free?
- In verse 18, he references Moses’ experience of having a veiled face in the presence of God and how we are able to have unveiled faces. Then he notes that we all reflect the Lord’s glory as we are transformed into his likeness. How would you explain that to someone who was new to the faith?
- If the Holy Spirit is the one who transforms us, why are we commanded to be transformed? Should God not have commanded the Holy Spirit to transform us?

Read II Corinthians 10:5

- Does the idea of taking every thought captive seem possible to you? Does the idea seem overwhelming?
- Have you ever met someone who was able to do this and experience genuine transformation?

Transformation is possible because God wants your life to reveal his obvious secret.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is a series of lessons that some candidates for baptism or membership need to memorize and repeat. One question asks: What is the chief end of man and the response should be: To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

- Does it feel possible to enjoy God forever?
- Are you making every effort to glorify God through a transformed life?

Responding to the Truth

The mercies of God and the freedom that are ours in Christ are an extravagant gift of grace. Are we willing to respond to them by surrendering to God and willingly grow in obedience? Are we willing to believe that God has our best interests at heart and that living his way really is the best way for us to go? Are we willing to believe that transformation is really possible and that our minds can be transformed?

Prayer Time

As a group, praise the Lord for his mercies, grace and the freedom that is yours in Christ! Pray that you would grow in the ability to surrender until your lives are a living sacrifice and you are striving to please him in every way. Pray together that you would be transformed for the glory of God. Ask the Holy Spirit to drive your morph and commit to the renewing of your mind.

Foundational Truth: II Corinthians 5: 17

Therefore is anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!