

Becoming like Jesus, by the Mercy of God

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Romans chapter 12. Please follow along on the screen, the bulletin, or your own Bible. Starting in verse 1, we read, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, 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 renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

This is the word of God. Great. Thank you so much, Janet. Well, once again, good morning. It is wonderful to be back with you again. And if you are new to Watermark, sorry, I didn't introduce myself earlier.

My name is Kevin, one of the elder pastors here. It's great to be with you again today. I wonder if you have ever had a big decision to make, and you've been grappling with what is God's will in this decision.

If only God could give me a sign. I've got two job offers on the table, A and B. Or maybe you've got a job offer to move overseas. And I just need a sign from God.

[1 : 19] What is God's will? If God will just give me a sign, I'll do it. That sound familiar to anyone? In the passage we're going to look at today, it's going to tell us many things.

One of the things we're going to find out is why God so often doesn't give us the signs that we want and doesn't tell us what to do in moments like that.

First, we're working through one chapter of the Bible at the moment, Romans chapter 12. Recently we preached through the book of Daniel, and each Sunday we looked at these long chapters.

Well, at the moment we're spending six weeks on this one chapter, Romans 12, a couple of verses at a time. Today we're just looking at one verse. And the reason is because Romans chapter 12 is one of the best chapters in the Bible to describe and explain what the gospel-centered life is all about and looks like.

If you've been at Watermark for a little while, you would have heard this phrase, gospel-centered or gospel-shaped life. But what does that actually mean? Well, what it means is that the incredibly wonderful good news of the gospel, that though the world was fallen and cut off from God, God in His abundant mercy and grace, because of His profound love for the world, has made a way to reconcile and to redeem the world by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross for us.

[2 : 42] So that sinners and sufferers like us, who put our faith in Christ, can be reconciled, can be redeemed, can be restored. But the gospel actually has a storyline that has a shape to it.

Remember Philippians chapter 2 talks about how Jesus laid aside His glory, took on the nature of a servant, humbled Himself to the cross before He was exalted to glory.

And so the gospel, something we're discovering, is not just a portion of the story Bible, it is the story Bible. The gospel is not just a way into the entrance into Christianity, it is the Christian life.

And so the gospel shaped life is the life where every area of our life, from our money to our sexuality to marriage to parenting, work success and work failure, COVID and cancer, political unrest, every area of life is shaped and informed by the shape of the gospel.

And Romans chapter 12 is one of the best chapters in the Bible to explain that and to describe that and to show what that looks like. And so we're spending six weeks in this chapter. And so Romans chapter 12 starts off like this, by the mercies of God.

[3 : 57] In view of God's incredible mercies, this is how you are to live your life. And last week Chris showed us that in view of God's mercy, one of the things that God calls us to is, the way that we don't waste our lives, is by bringing our whole lives, all that we are, all that we have, all that we do.

And so here it is, God, you are God and I am not, you are glorious. I am not, you are infinite. Here's my life. Take it and have your way. Now, today, we're going to look at the second part of that verse two, and continue to look at what is this gospel shaped life all about.

And so Paul continues with Romans chapter 12 verse two. What does it look like for us in 21st century Hong Kong, with everything that's going on, what does it look like for us not to waste our lives, but to bring every area of our lives before God and say, here it is, have your way.

Well, look at what Paul says in verse two. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed into the image and the likeness of Jesus.

Okay, that's what he means when he says be transformed. And that's the big idea of this verse.

That's the big idea of the sermon today. There it is. It's not very complicated. Do not be conformed to the patterns and the thinking and the ethos of this world, but be transformed into the image and the likeness of Christ Jesus.

[5 : 26] The life that God calls us to, for those of us that are Christians, is one that is not shaped by the worldview, the ethos, or the thinking of our culture, but one that is shaped and informed by the mercies of God and by the gospel into the likeness of Jesus.

By the mercies of God, present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to him. This is your spiritual act of worship. Therefore, do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed into the likeness and the image of Jesus.

Now, straight away, we need to think about this a little bit more. Okay. There's a couple of things we need to clarify. The first one is this. It is a Christian historian by the name of Andrew Walls from Liverpool Hope University.

He wrote a book in the 1990s called *The Missionary Spirit*, I think. And in it, he describes the difference between what he calls the indigenous principle and the pilgrim principle.

Okay. And this is what he says. He says, as Christians, we are called to both simultaneously be both indigenous in our culture, to make our home in our culture and the cities in which we live, and at the same time, see ourselves as pilgrims passing through the culture.

[6 : 46] So remember Jeremiah 29? We spoke about it a few weeks ago. Jeremiah writes to the exiles in Babylon. He says, build houses, plant roots, make families, have children, engage in the city in which you live.

Don't see yourselves as foreigners. Engage. Make yourself as a home there. But at the same time, there's something that the Bible calls us to, to be distinctive from the cities in which we live.

To not be so engaged that there's nothing distinctive about us. Or in the language of Jesus in John 17, Jesus says, be in the world, but not of the world. Be engaged in the culture, serving the culture, rooted in the culture, loving and serving your city, and yet something separate or something distinctive about your engagement.

And Paul says the same thing here. He says in 1 Corinthians, we are to become all things to all men, so that by all means we can win some. And at the same time here, he says, do not conform to the patterns of the world.

And so there's this paradox at play in the Christian life. We are both indigenous in our city, making a home here, loving and serving our city, and yet there's something distinctive, something pilgrim about the way that we engage in life here.

[8 : 00] I think the greatest example of this is Daniel, right? We just spent eight weeks looking at the life of Daniel. He has this man who thoroughly engages in pagan Babylon, serving in the palace, serving their kings, really involved in serving the city of Babylon, and yet there's something so distinctive about him, that at times it almost costs him his life.

And so when Paul says, do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, Paul is not saying, let's just retreat from society, and go build this Christian commune on Lama Island, and we all just live in this nice Christian bubble.

No, no, engage in the world, and yet as you do so, be distinctive. Here's a second clarification.

When Paul says, don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed, he's not talking about a new moral list of behaviors, things to do.

So Paul isn't saying, stop stealing, go to church. Stop gambling, read your Bible. Stop swearing, talk nicely. Okay? When Paul talks about this, he's not just talking about outward behavior, even though it will include that, he's talking about an inner transformation of our hearts.

Listen to how John Piper describes this. He says, non-conformity to the world does not primarily mean the avoidance of external behaviors. It will include that, of course.

[9 : 26] But you can avoid all kinds of immoral behavior and still not be transformed in your hearts. Transformation by the mercy of God is not switching from the behavior of the world to the behavior of religion.

The Christian alternative to immoral behavior is not suddenly a new list of new moral behaviors. It is the triumphant power and the transformation of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ, by God's mercy, which transforms our inner being.

Do you see what he's saying? When Paul describes the gospel-shaped, mercy-informed life and the transformation, he's not saying, stop that stuff and now do a whole lot of these things, A, B, C, D.

He's saying, let your inner world, your heart, be transformed by who God is and by the grace and the mercy of God. And that's why when Scripture talks about the evidence of a transformed life, it's not go to church, put money in the offering, stop swearing.

It's Jesus is this, by this will all men know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another. Well, think of the fruit of the Spirit that Paul describes about.

[10 : 38] Unbelievable patience, kindness, faithfulness, tenderness, gentleness. This is the mark of the transformed life. Now, here's one other clarification.

Here's a question for us. This radical gospel-shaped, mercy-empowered, transformed life of the heart, who do you think this is for? Is this for Christians or is this for non-Christians?

Okay? Is this, is Paul talking about the transformation for those who are dead in their sin or those who are alive in Christ? Because no doubt, we have both with us this morning.

Many of us here would be followers of Jesus. We've put our faith and trust in Him. He's changed us. You're born again. Some of us may be here this morning and no doubt, still on a spiritual journey. You're not yet a follower of Jesus.

So who's Paul talking to? The answer is both. If you're here this morning and you're not a follower of Jesus, friends, can I tell you, the God who made you, who knit you together in your mother's womb, loves you infinitely more than you could possibly imagine or hope.

[11 : 52] But the God who made you and who loves you so much is also the God to whom you're one day going to give an account for the way that you've lived your life. Have you loved and honored Him or have you loved and honored yourself?

Have you treasured and served Him or have you treasured and served yourself? Have you lived for His glory or have you lived for your own glory? This God longs to break into your life and to so transform your life to cause you to be new from the inside out.

This God longs to transform you to give you a new identity and a new security. One that's not built on your performance or how people think about you, but built on the fact that you're a son or a daughter of the living God.

And so if you're not a follower of Jesus this morning, God wants to transform you. But at the same time, for those of us that are followers of Jesus, Paul says that even the Christian life is not one which has merely put my faith in Jesus 30 years ago and now I just ride it out to heaven.

The life of a follower of Jesus is one of constant reformation, transformation, and renewal. 500 years ago, in the time of the Reformation, remember Martin Luther, John Calvin, Zwickley, those guys, they had a Latin phrase.

[13 : 11] It was this, *Sempe Reformanda*. Is that right? Something like that, okay? Do you appreciate my Latin? That's about as far as it goes, right? *Sempe Reformanda*. And what it meant is this, always being reformed.

And their concern was that the church went through this massive reformation as it changed from Catholicism and honoring the Pope to honoring Jesus. But their concern was this, that people would think, oh yeah, we reformed back then in 1519 or 1526 or whenever it was and thought that was a done deal.

And they said, no, the life of a Christian is always being transformed into the newness and the likeness of Jesus. Friends, if you're a follower of Jesus this morning, Jesus looks at each one of us in the eye and says, do not conform to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Just this week, on Tuesday evening, Oscar and I had a really good heart-to-heart conversation. I was grappling and struggling with a couple of things and Oscar came around and chatted and we protested, protested, not protested, processed, some of the ministry idolatries in my heart.

Some of the things that I'm grappling, my own insecurities, and my fears. Some of the rubbish that's in my heart. And we got to pray together and talk through that. Friends, you and I need the transformative work of the power of the Holy Spirit by the mercy of God in our hearts and in our lives.

[14 : 39] This is what God calls us to by His mercy. By the mercies of God. Don't be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed into the image and the likeness of Jesus.

Maybe a question for those of us that are followers of Jesus this morning to stop and think about. Is our inner world, the motivations of our hearts, the deepest longings and fears, or maybe our deepest fantasies, do these look like the inner world of Jesus Christ?

Or are they more shaped by the longings, the desires, the fears, and the ambitions of our culture and our world around us? By the mercies of God, do not be conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed into the image and the likeness of Jesus.

Okay, so that's the big idea. Now the question is this, how does that actually happen? How do we go about that? And there's lots of answers, but today I want to look at just three of them.

And they're three things that all kind of happen simultaneously at the same time. It happens by the mercy of God, by the renewal of our minds, and thirdly, by seeing and savoring Jesus.

[15 : 55] Okay, so let's dive into that. Firstly, by the mercies of God. I don't know if you noticed this, but look at the way that Paul writes the sentence. Paul doesn't say, don't conform to this world, but transform yourself to look like Jesus.

Okay, he almost says that, but he doesn't quite. He says, don't be conformed, rather, be transformed into the image and the likeness of Christ. What's Paul saying here?

He's saying, this radical transformation that takes place as a result of the gospel is not something that is done by us, it's primarily something that is done to us.

Okay, do you see the distinction there? Do not be conformed, but be transformed outside of yourself by the mercy and the grace of God. This is one of the key distinctions between the gospel and formal religion.

Every religion of the world will tell you, you need to change, you need to transform, you need to improve yourself. I remember a few years ago, someone came to our community group and she was in the process of becoming a Christian and her friends couldn't believe that she'd go to a Bible study on a Thursday night.

[17 : 08] And so I said, what on earth are you doing going to a Bible study on a Thursday night? And she said to them, well, you know, kind of see it as a self-improvement project. She was early on in the process of understanding the gospel.

But friends, that's not what the gospel is. The gospel is not a self-improvement project. Paul doesn't say, don't conform, but improve yourself, transform yourself. Paul says, by the mercies of God, let your own heart be transformed.

Every religion will tell you, seek to improve yourself, to transform yourself, to fix yourself. Moral religion will tell us, see Jesus as an example and then sort yourself out until you can be like him. The gospel tells us that transformation is not something you achieve, it's a gift that you receive by the mercies of God. Transformation of our hearts and our minds, our identities and our joys is not something that comes from within us, it's something that comes from outside of us and changes us on the inside out.

And so listen to how Paul says the same thing in 2 Corinthians. He says, we all, those of us that are followers of Jesus, beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus are being transformed by him into the image of Christ by one degree of glory to the next.

[18 : 30] This comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. This happens as we yield ourselves and give ourselves to God. So here is my life and offering of worship. Friends, every religion of the world will give you instructions how to save yourself, improve yourself, fix yourself.

Jesus says, come to me and let me change you, let me transform you, let me fix you. Jesus says, the problem is far more fundamental than self-improvement.

Jesus says, you need to be rescued, saved, transformed and renewed. And that's what the gospel does. Okay, so the first thing is this, by the mercies of God. Second thing is this, by the renewal of our minds.

Now we're going to spend the most time on this. This is a little theological, so you're going to need to follow with me, okay? So, look at what Paul says in our passage here. He says, do not be

conformed to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your minds. By the renewal of your minds. Now why does Paul say that? What's wrong with our minds that our minds need to be renewed? Well, we tend to think that the problem with our world and the problem with ourselves is generally that we don't understand enough.

[19 : 46] We don't have enough education or enough information. And that if we can just fill our minds with the right information or the right education, we will be able to solve the problems of the world.

When we were living in South Africa before Hong Kong, this was the great argument to be the problem to racism. Everyone said, listen, South Africa, we are a racist society. The problem is we don't have enough education.

We don't know enough. But friends, you and I know that education is not going to solve the racism of our hearts, right? The Bible says, the Bible has a far deeper analysis of the problem of our minds. Scripture says the problem with our minds is not just that they're finite, it's that they are fallen. Okay? It's not just that our minds are dull, it's that they have been darkened as a consequence of sin in our heart and in our world.

Our minds don't see the world as God has designed them. We don't think accurately. Okay? So, listen to how Paul describes it in Ephesians chapter 4.

[20 : 48] Paul says this, Now I say to you and I testify on the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do. So that's another way of saying don't be conformed to the patterns of this world. In the futility of their minds, they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts.

So look at what Paul says there. He describes our thinking as becoming futile, darkened, ignorant, not just because of lack of education but because of the fallen world, the state of our hearts has corrupted our thinking.

We don't see the world as God wants us to see it. Rather, he says, verse 21, be renewed in the spirit of your minds. Now that's almost identical to Romans 12.

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Paul says in Ephesians, be renewed in the spirit of your minds. Now what does Paul mean by the spirit of our minds? What he means is this, that our minds, our thinking, has a worldview.

It has a posture. It has a mindset or an attitude about it which conforms to the way of our hearts. Romans 1 says the same thing, that our minds as a result of our fallen nature has become darkened, foolish, and futile.

[22 : 12] And Romans 1 says this, one of the consequences of this is that we have exchanged what is true for what is false. We honor and exalt things that are false and we diminish things that are true.

We are confused about the way that the world works. And Paul says the same things here. Our minds aren't just computers processing information. They have a worldview, an attitude, a posture that needs to be renewed and redeemed, that needs to be transformed and come into line with what is true.

Okay, are you tracking with me? I said this was a little complicated. Are you following it? Okay. Do not be conformed, be transformed. How does this happen? One way is through the renewal of our minds.

Now, we're going to go one step deeper, okay? You're going to have to follow here. How does that happen? Well, there's two ways, two things that happen simultaneously.

Look at what Paul says here. Do not be conformed to this world, be transformed by the renewal of your mind so that by testing or discovering you may discern or know for yourself what is the will of God is good, acceptable, and perfect will.

[23 : 26] Okay? So let's come back to the question we said in the beginning. How many of us here have faced a situation where you've got a decision to make? Job A or job B, job C? God, what is your will?

If only you'll tell me your will. How do we know what God's will is? As a pastor, that's one of the most frequent requests I get, okay?

Please come and pray for me. I need to know God's will. Give me a sign, okay? Look at what Paul says here. Paul says, the normal way that the Christian discovers God's will is not normally through a supernatural sign, writing on the wall, a prophecy, a dream, a vision, or a revelation, even though

all those things do happen, and they do happen, and I've had them happen.

Okay, not the writing on the wall. That hasn't happened to me. But those other things have happened. Those are good. But the way, the main way that we know God's will is not through some supernatural revelation, but rather, the usual way we know God's will is having our minds and our thinking and our worldview renewed by the gospel, and then as we live that out and act it out, we discover God's will in the process.

Okay? So this is actually how we discover and walk in God's will. Not by supernatural revelation primarily, but through testing or discovering God's will as we allow our thinking and our worldview to be renewed and shaped by Him and the gospel, and as we live that out and take a step of faith trying to live the gospel-centered life.

[25 : 02] Okay? So, hopefully this will make sense in a few minutes. Now, just by the way, I am a charismatic. I do pray in tongues.

I do believe in prophecy and visions and dreams and all those things. Those are good things. They're in the Bible and we should pursue them. But here's the key. Many Christians want a crystal ball.

And God often, we want a Christian ball so that God will tell us what to do. Take path A, not path B. But God wants to give us a renewed mind and a transformed heart, not just a crystal ball answer. Does that make sense? And so we come and say, God, I've got a job A, job B. You just tell me and I'll know your will and then I'll walk in it. Your good, pleasing, and perfect will. But God doesn't want to give us a crystal ball answer.

He wants to give us a renewed mind and a transformed heart. And so that's why he says, I want you to trust me. And here's the reason why. If God gave us a crystal ball, something that would just magically tell us His will in each and every situation, that wouldn't require a transformed heart at all.

[26 : 11] In fact, so deceitful is the human heart that what we would end up doing is we would use God for our own glory. Say, okay, God, what is the answer? Take path A.

Great. Now I can take this job and I'll be more happy, more comfortable for my glory. We will use God rather than serve Him. But God wants a transformed heart and a renewed mind.

God wants us to know His will. He's not trying to hide it from us, but He wants us to discover it as our hearts and minds are renewed according to the gospel as we come to Him and trust Him.

So let's look at this verse once again. Do not be conformed to the patterns of this world. Be transformed in the image and the likeness of Jesus by the renewal of your mind so that by testing or discovering you may discern for yourself what is the will of God, His good, acceptable, and pleasing will.

So, here's one more question and I'm going to give us an example. The transformed life, does it primarily happen through theology or pragmatics?

[27 : 22] Some of us, and I'm one of these people, I just want the theology, right? Just tell me what to believe and I'll sort out the practicalities. Some of us don't really care about the theology, just tell me what to do, right?

Tell me what God's will is so I can walk in it. The answer is it happens through both. As our minds are renewed according to the gospel and as we practically live that out, we discover God's will, our minds get renewed and our hearts get transformed.

It's kind of like a bicycle, right? You've got these two things at the same time. Renewed theology, renewed mind, living according to God's will. Renewed mind, living according to God's will. So let me give you a practical example of how I think this works out.

Let's say, for instance, my marriage to Claire is characterized by defensiveness, outbursts of anger, and frustration on my behalf, okay?

So I'm a husband that Claire's always walking on eggshells because whenever something happens, I freak out and I'm defensive and I'm always angry with her and I'm always convinced it's her fault, right?

[28 : 31] I have a friend like this. This week he told me I've been married twice, both to the same person. The first half of our marriage was horrible. God changed my life.

The second half of the marriage has been glorious, right? The first half of my marriage, he said, well, I was always angry, I was always defensive, always frustrated, and I was convinced it was always my wife's fault.

So let's imagine that's our situation. Now, hopefully, you can ask Claire later. Hopefully that's not the case in our home. If it is, Jesus changed me, okay?

So let's say my home characterized by anger, outbursts of frustration, defensiveness, and I'm convinced it's her fault. And one day I'm reading my Bible and I read Ephesians chapter 5 and the penny drops.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. And suddenly I realize, oh my goodness, Christ's love for me is so tender He's so patient.

[29 : 32] He's so gentle. Jesus is so long-suffering with all the rubbish in my heart. Jesus doesn't point His finger at me and tell me I'm a dirty, rotten scoundrel.

He welcomes me with arms. Jesus floods me with unbelievable grace. How selfless and tender is His love for me. How great is the mercy of Jesus.

And then I think about how selfish and self-centered I've been in my relationship to Claire. And so my thinking, my worldview gets renewed according to the gospel.

And I realize I've been a rubbish husband. And I say, I don't want to be that kind of husband. And so some kind of transformation takes place in my heart according to the renewal of my mind by the mercies of God.

And so then the next time I mess up and Claire says, hey, you said you were going to do this rather than saying, well, do you know what you did wrong?

[30 : 30] Because I've been transformed, I catch myself and I say, Jesus help me. And I say, you know what, love, you're right. I said I was going to do that and I didn't. I'm sorry.

Please forgive me. And Claire falls off her chair because she's never experienced a husband like this. And suddenly over the next few weeks and months my heart starts to change because actually it's nicer living in a home like that.

And Claire starts to transform because she's not so defensive wondering about her husband that's always going to lash out at her. And suddenly I actually realize it's quite nice to be a nice husband. And actually sometimes we learn to laugh about the mistakes that I make rather than accusing her. What's happened there? By the mercies of God my thinking has been renewed my heart has been transformed okay it's the bicycle as I start to live that out my thinking gets renewed I start to live that out more my thinking gets renewed and my heart gets transformed by the gospel.

Does that make sense? So here's what Paul's saying as our thinking is renewed by the gospel by the mercy of God we start to believe that we live it out we walk it out we test it we discern for ourselves what is God's will we discover the beauty and the pleasure of God's will which then renews and revitalizes our mind and our thinking we walk that out we discover the beauty and the pleasure of God's will that renews our thinking we then walk it out and our hearts get transformed.

[32 : 04] Friends God's will for our marriages and our parenting for the way we handle money and sexuality and work for our attitude to the poor and the way we handle and steward the environment every aspect of our life God wants our thinking renewed according to his will to be shaped by the gospel by the mercies of God do not be conformed be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Okay practically let me give us two very practical applications of this okay the first one is this if you're a Christian this morning even if you're not a Christian okay you must get into scripture every single day don't let a day go by without getting into memorizing knowing feasting on God's word and here's why because every day our minds are being renewed according to the worldview of our culture you go to the office your colleagues the news Bloomberg the boss they are all conforming our thinking to our culture saying invest in this fund more money you'll be happier rah rah rah rah and unless we are day by day being transformed by the truth of God's word we'll be conformed by the patterns of this world friends can I say this if we think that one hour a week on a Sunday morning coming to church is going to be enough to transform our minds and to transform our hearts we've lost the battle there's no way that one hour a week on a Sunday morning is going to stand up to 80 hours a week in the marketplace friends every day get into

God's word let God's word renew your thinking according to the mercies of God and transform your heart so that we're not conformed to the patterns of this world but transformed to the likeness of Jesus I had a whole lot of examples of that but I'm going to leave that here's the second one parents and especially Chris and Sam and Nando and Emmanuel and who else am I leaving out Peter parents don't just focus on your kids education education is a wonderful thing it's a great gift from God I'm busy trying to grind out theology degree at the moment education is a good thing but what Paul is telling us here is education is not going to be the tool to redeem our world we don't just

need our minds aren't just computers that need more information our minds need to be renewed according to the gospel and so parents can I plead with you teach your children the gospel make sure that you're praying the gospel for them that you're washing them with the gospel you're flooding them with the gospel parents demonstrate the gospel live out the gospel let your kids see and experience and taste what it lives what it feels like to live in a home that is shaped by the mercy of God let them see you confessing your sin and saying sorry to your wife or your husband or to your kids and can I just say while I'm on this men especially you men you the head of your home you the leader of your family you take the initiative to shape your home and your family according to the gospel and the mercy of God make sure your kids don't just fill their minds with a great education let their minds be renewed according to the mercies of God so that our kids will want to see and know and taste the will of God his good pleasing and perfect will all the days of their lives okay is that alright okay so how our hearts transformed by the mercies of God by a renewed mind thirdly by seeing and savoring

Jesus and this is really quick we write at the end look again at 2 Corinthians chapter 3 with me this is the corollary verse to Romans chapter 12 Paul writes this and says we beholding the glory of the Lord Jesus beholding means to see and to savor to see with the eyes of our heart we beholding Jesus are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to the next so how does transformation happen by seeing and savoring Jesus friends can I ask you are you beholding are you beholding the wonder of Jesus friends are we as a church shaped are we a church that is seeing the infinite glory of who Jesus is are we beholding how wonderful he is are we delighting and rejoicing in the mercy of God in the work of Christ are we day by day morning by morning in the busyness of life in the rush of life in the pressures of life are we beholding and being mesmerized by the wonder of Jesus

Paul says that as we see Jesus and what he did on the cross as we understand the mercies and the grace of God Christ will transform our hearts more and more to become more and more like Jesus friends in view of his mercies in view of Christ's unceasing grace in view of his never ending mercy to us in view of his unfathomable tenderness and his astounding sacrifice on the cross do not be conformed to the patterns of this world to the decaying suicidal death patterns of this world no friends be transformed into the image of Jesus by the renewing of your minds by the spirit so that by testing and living the gospel shaped life you may discover for yourself what is the will of God his good pleasing and perfect will let's pray together in fact maybe we can just take a few moments just to respond in our own hearts in prayer what does it look like for us to respond to

[38 : 37] God's word this morning for some of us it might be praise and adoration God thank you for your incredible mercy I can't believe it a sinner like me that you would die for me Jesus your mercy is amazing praise you God for some of us it's going to be reflection confession repentance for some of us we need to say God actually my life looks more like the world than you my thinking my world view is conformed to the ethos of this world more than the gospel Jesus I'm sorry come and change me come and transform me from the inside out for some of us friends it's trust and obedience we just need to live out what he's told us to do we need to say no to that sin and yes to Christ what does response look like for you Lord

Jesus Christ Lord Jesus Christ heavenly father holy spirit three in one God we are astounded at who you are and your incredible mercy thank you for your unceasing grace love your indescribable love for us God thank you for the gospel Jesus thank you that you don't just save us and then you leave us to our own devices you continually work on us reforming us shaping us helping us renewing us ransomed healed restored forgiven thank you Jesus come and continue to transform our hearts God won't you shape us individually and as a church to be more like you Jesus may we be transformed more and more to the image and the likeness of Christ

Holy Spirit I pray come and work on our hearts now lead us to repentance lead us to faith in you help us to trust you to love you to obey you to have our lives shaped by you and by the mercies of God we pray in your awesome and your wonderful name amen