

## Pastor Lloyd's Sermon Notes 5 July 2020

### YOU ARE ON A LIFE JOURNEY OF CHANGE!

**2 Corinthians 3.17 - 18** *'For the Lord is the Spirit and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord who is the Spirit – make us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.....'*

Whether you realised it or not, when you became a follower of Jesus, you embarked upon a lifetime of change. God loves us too much to leave us the way we are; not for change's sake but into the likeness and shape God wants you to be. But I wonder if you have ever thought just what kind of change this might be? How this happens? Is this something that happens whether or not we participate? Does it happen overnight, or is it a slow change that is almost imperceptible?

When I travelled the world a lot in the 1990s, my kids were teenagers and when I was coming home, they would wait with eager anticipation to see what I had brought back for them.... it was the age of labelled gear. I would bring home these copies of Nike shoes or T shirts... each with the image stamped on it. It was cool to have the right labelled clothes. Then it was jeans...504 with zip, not buttons! So much for the labelled generation....then labels were not so cool, or prominent!!! The label had to be there but kind of hidden and only small....You see labels and image was the thing. The Bible verse I read speaks about us being stamped with God's label or image.

And if you were asked to describe that image, what you would say?

Do you remember the story in the Bible where the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus by saying - should we pay taxes to Caesar? Jesus asked them a question – whose image is on the coin? Caesar's they replied....then *"give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God!"*

Like today, the coins then had the imprint of the ruler on them. Understanding the imprint of God in your life, the loss of that image and recovery of that image will help you face life... it will help you understand why people do evil things, where goodness and compassion come from, it will help you understand this war that goes on inside of each of us...but most of all, it will give you hope that inside of you God is restoring and building you into a person with very powerful capacities and strengths. This image of God was imprinted on us when God made us – *'So God created man in his own image he created him, male and female he created them'* Genesis 1.26-27 So here's the next question – if you are created in God's image, in what way do you reflect that imprint? *In what way are you a reflection of God?*

### **MADE IN GOD'S IMAGE**

I'm going to give you FOUR ways in which we are made in God's image.

#### **1. God is a Relational being (Relating)**

The story of the Bible is God seeking out his creation for relationship.

Friends, that is why we have a longing for an authentic relationship!

That's why the deepest needs within each of us are met by relationship!

We are built to relate to one another and to God our creator.

#### **2 God is a Rational being – (Thinking)**

*Ps 139.17 How precious to me are your thoughts O Lord! – How vast the sum of them! Romans 11.34 'Who has known the mind of the Lord or been His counsellor? God has a thinking capacity and so do you! God plans and purposes things. This great capacity to think and rationalise comes from God.*

### 3. **God is an Emotional being** (Feeling)

God Feels – joy and sadness, from the story of the Lost prodigal, to loss of a wayward nation, *Ps 149.4 'For the Lord takes delight in His people!... 'O Israel How can I give you up'?* (Hosea) Do you remember the agony of Jesus in the Gethsemane garden or as he looked over Jerusalem, or as he wept at Lazarus's grave?

### 4. **God is a Volitional being** (Choosing)

*John 15.19 'You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you go and bear fruit'. Isaiah 41.8 'But you O Israel, my servant Jacob whom I have chosen...*

These four form the basis of showing us who God is....and through these four capacities, *he shows his character* - love, grace, forgiveness, mercy, longsuffering..... etc.

We are relational beings – long for relationship.... We are rational beings – we think stuff out...capacity to learn, modify. We are emotional beings – we... feel stuff... We are volitional being – choose the course of our lives

We are powerfully and wonderfully made. In Genesis, when God made us in his image and put this imprint on us, what did he say.... this is VERY GOOD...*but not for long*.....because what we did is, we took this image and used the very thing he gave us to choose against him. You see, in each of these four areas, we are damaged and broken.

### **LOSS OF THE IMAGE**

*Instead of worshipping God and longing for relationship, allowing those emotions to so love God and having this volitional likeness, we chose to go it alone...and became glorious ruins.* There is still something glorious about us because we are made in God's image – but the image is damaged. Now here is a very important point....and it's the reason why people still love and forgive and show compassion even when they are not believers.

*This image is not totally lost.* It is marred, blurred and bent out of shape. This image is still carried by people when they are of different cultures, different faiths, or no faith at all....people can be loving, forgiving and show compassion.....we don't have a mortgage on these because they are what God has given every breathing soul. And inside us, we long for relationship so we hop from one to another seeking fulfilment which can only be truly found in knowing God. We run after significance and seek promotion in career, status and financial security instead of understanding that our sense of worth comes from knowing God, and wealth only masks deep longings for a time. We keep choosing the wrong things and allowing our feelings to dictate the direction of our lives. We can even choose evil and kill and maim innocent babies and God will not stop us....because he has given us this freedom to choose.

### **RECOVERY OF THE IMAGE**

*2 Corinthians 3.18 And the Lord who is the Spirit – make us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image*.....What God wants to do is to recover his image in us.

*Romans 8.29 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son*....

Now, this happens in two ways....let me illustrate it like this:

When I learned classical music, I played a lot of sonatas; in particular, Beethoven and I loved the way, for instance; the Moonlight Sonata has three distinct movements. The first moody, the second playful and the final is dramatic. Each contributes something to the final glorious climax. What God does in our lives comes in TWO movements

## **PART 1 - Immediate – at the cross of Calvary**

I take on a significant recovery of the image of God when I receive Christ.

We are reconciled to God through Christ.

An immediate and complete change takes place...

We are reborn into the Kingdom of God

We are forgiven and cleansed; we are transferred

We are justified and a transaction that takes place at the cross.

Our names are written into the Book of Life...

In a moment of time, this is effected when we make our own what Jesus has done.

## **PART 2 - Gradual - On the Calvary Road – present and continuous**

It is this second movement that takes time.

2 Corinthians 3.18 '*changed from glory to glory*' – transformed... day by day

Colossians 3.5 '*Put to death therefore the old life you used to live*'

Colossians 3.7 '*You used to walk in these ways*'...

Colossians 3.10 '*Put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator*'...

This is where we learn fresh ways of relating. We begin to tell ourselves the truth...thinking is saved and then our emotions are being restored as we learn to handle deep longings and thirsts and bring them under the authority of scripture. Lastly, we choose to become a disciple of Jesus – keep choosing His way, as painful as it is at times. And friends, this likeness of God, this designer's label takes a lifetime to recover....from the glorious ruin we were. It takes time to break away from the old life, from bondages, addictions, relational and emotional attachments and the types of lifestyles that are contrary to God's purposes...

Yes, it begins by ....inviting Christ into our life... - immediate

But it is walked out by our daily choices...gradual - keep choosing,

What did Paul say to the Corinthians believers who came from such an immoral, self-indulgent, sleazy lifestyle....*and 'Such were some of you'... but you were washed, cleansed, sanctified.*

Let me finish with a way of illustrating this.

Digital (*Mobile Camera - take some photos of the people*) Is this a true image? – Yes, it is, taken at a point in time, it's instant, accurate, fixed. That's similar to what happens when we pray to receive Christ into our lives. At a fixed point in time, something happens. We are born into God's family. You know the day, the date and the time. But that's just the start of your being saved.

Dark Room printing of a photo of a negative – Many of you will remember how photos used to be printed in a dark room with a special red light. The image would be shone onto special paper and this would then be bathed in a special liquid and very slowly, the image would come. When it was fully developed, you would then fix the image by another liquid...and hang it up to dry. That's the process of recovery, the same as God is doing in us; it takes time.....his image is coming slowly.....taking shape. He is fixing us inside as we become more and more like Christ.

Several years ago, there was a story in the British newspapers that told of Queen Elizabeth II commissioning two portraits of herself. One by Annagioni, the celebrated Italian artist and the other world-famous photographer Karsh of Ottawa, Canada. Both were beautiful, but the marked difference was the way they were produced.

Here are some famous photos taken by Karsh. When asked to take a portrait of her majesty, he arranged one sitting and, when ready, pressed the button on his camera and in a moment, he had the exact likeness...!!! *Quick, accurate and perfect.* But for Annagoni's, numerous sittings had to be arranged at the palace. The queen posed for the artist who stood before her with palette and brushes, and touch by touch, the paint was transferred onto the canvas. From his genius, the royal image emerged...here is the finished portrait..... both true images...but how differently they were produced. Is one preferred over the other? No, both are awesome.

I am amazed and grateful that in the twinkling of an eye, I am changed and I, like you, walk the Calvary Road...knowing that in me...the imprint of God is being formed inside me.

Yes, we are glorious ruins, put right with God, on the road to recovery...

And I look back and say – well, I'm not what I was... equally, I'm not what I will be...and the recovery of the image of God continues....until the day I take my last breath. You are on a journey of lifelong change.