

Hearing for Transformation

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the transformative power of saturating our minds with God's Word, leading to a reframing of our thoughts, speech, judgments, and responses. It highlights the importance of living in God's Word daily, not just visiting it occasionally, to truly become disciples of Christ. The process of being fortified with the spiritual nutrients from the Word of God leads to a new creation in Christ, where old habits fade away, and a Christ-like nature emerges. The sermon also stresses the need to be led by the Holy Spirit, allowing God's presence to guide and strengthen us in every aspect of life.

Scripture: Romans 12:2, John 8:31, 2 Peter 1:3, Ephesians 3:16, Romans 8:5, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:16, Philippians 4:7, Galatians 5:22, John 14:26

Topics: "Transformation through God's Word", "Living as Disciples of Christ"

Description

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Transcript

Allow it to so saturate the way we think. Literally, it begins to reframe our thought process. Like a set of reins, it begins to hold it in, to rein in the way we think.

Another way to look at is the word frame, like diaphragm. That diaphragm is that external area that controls our breathing. When we begin to have God's Word saturate our mind in this way, it literally frames in the way we think.

And if God's Word begins to frame the way we think, it begins to affect the way we speak. It begins to affect the judgments we make. It begins to affect the way we respond.

We still can't control the things that happen to us, can we sometimes? But you know what we can stop doing right away? We can stop responding in the wrong way that makes matters worse. And immediately begin to experience the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds. The self-control of the Holy Spirit, meekness and lowliness and gentleness and kindness, all as a result of the Word of God inside of us, is

begun to take a grip on the way we think.

And the tighter grip the Word of God has on us, the more we're living under. We're living under the Word. We're obeying the Word.

Now Jesus said this, if you abide in Me. There's another place He called it, if you continue. It's the same word, it's just translated different in our Bible.

In John chapter 8, you've heard this, when the Jews, Jesus was talking to the Jewish leaders, He said, if you continue in My Word, then you are My disciples indeed, and then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. I'm going to break that statement down. If you continue in My Word, it's the same word, abide.

If you live in My Word. Now here's a word picture, because I thought, how do I explain this in a word picture for you? You're visiting here. You live at your house.

Visiting the Word of God is not going to fix you. You can visit and now and then subject yourselves. I'm visiting a place where I'm exposing myself to the Word of God.

That's different from living in it every day. Men go to work, they spend some time there, but they don't, well some whites think they live there, but they return home. They come home, it's where they live, and until you and I are living in the Word of God, we're not true disciples.

We're just visiting. You may be open to it. You may be interested in it.

You may see that it'd be helpful, but the person who lives there means they actually interact with the Word of God every single day. They're surrounded by it. It is a daily part of their life, and that is what Jesus said.

Only those who are living in, dwelling in My Word continually are My real disciples, and only those living with My Word in that way actually come to know the truth. You don't realize that you can actually hear in a visiting way. Like for example, you can visit regularly.

If you visited my house once a week, would I tell people you live there? No. You just visit regularly. If I visited your house, you're not going to tell people I live there.

You're going to say, I visit there. It's my question to you. I know you're visiting here.

You're here visiting, and I thank you. Some of you are members of this church. Many of you are, but my question is, do you see the difference? Do you live in God's Word, or do you visit it? Is it with you all the time, when you drive? Are you thinking about God's Word? Are you thinking about God's Word, whatever you're doing at work, gentlemen or ladies, whatever you're doing? You know, God's Word and His presence and fellowship can be with you in all that you do.

Even when, and I'll say this, because we live in the real world, even if your conscious attention is on some responsibility, you know what you can do in those situations? You do what you do as under the Lord, and you seek to do it well to be a good testimony. So even though your mind is on specifically fulfilling your teaching children, or you're cleaning a building, or you're straightening the kitchen, or you're, whatever you're doing, you're doing what your boss tells you. Subconsciously, you're doing it as under the Lord.

And even in that, you're, even though your mind is focused on what's at hand, you're still doing it with the same purpose you live your life. It's, it's, this kind of person grows into a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, that develops the type of mind that Paul describes in Romans chapter 8. Romans chapter 8, the first part of the chapter, Paul said, the way we walk is determined by what type of mind we have. That's what he said.

The person who walks according to the flesh, that's the type of mind he has. The flesh is still the one that's had the greatest influence over the way he thinks. The person who walks in the Holy Spirit is a person who the Holy Spirit and God's Word has had the greatest influence over the way he thinks.

Because our walking with the Lord is by faith, it's a choice. He's, we're never going to walk, wake up someday and suddenly the divine force field has us in his traction, you know. What is it, the old Star Wars, they had these tractor beams that were some, someone else, some other force had you in their tractor beam and you couldn't get away.

God doesn't do it that way. We choose. But a person can so develop the mindset from living in the Word of God, from thinking about the Word of God so often that he's placing himself under the Word of God to the point where it's the way he thinks.

I'm going to live my life today seeking to do the will of God, seeking to serve the kingdom of God. And you, it, it be, what, what happens is it becomes natural. It becomes your new nature.

This is what the scripture describes when it says if anyone is in Christ, if you're really dwelling in Christ, if you're living in the Word in this way, you're dwelling in it. If anyone is living in Christ in this way, he is a new creation. Old things pass away and all things become new.

So let's ask ourselves this question. We know that you, that people can be in church their entire life and not be a new creation. How do we explain that? They're regular visitors.

They spend time, a little bit of time with the Word. They're exposed to it a little bit, but it's never come the way they live. It's not become the way they think.

It doesn't control their speech. It doesn't control their thoughts. It doesn't control their responses.

Now, might they be a Christian? They may be. Maybe they're one of those that we talked about over the last several weeks. Maybe they are an infant.

They were born again. At some point they had an encounter with the Lord and they became a Christian, but they've just never grown because they don't, they don't have the Word of God in them like the person who is growing. Remember what we talked about last week? The key to growing up in your salvation is craving the pure spiritual milk of the Word so that by it you may grow up.

See, in God's Word, God's Word is fortified with all kinds of spiritual vitamins and minerals. Grace, mercy, peace, kindness, understanding, wisdom, self-control, humility, all of these beautiful spiritual virtues are impregnated in the Word of God. And just like a cereal that in wheat itself or what other type of cereals are made of, it doesn't have all the essential nutrients and vitamins and minerals that you need.

So a cereal company can add those elements, those nutrients and those vitamins and those other essential things to the cereal. And what do they say? This cereal has been fortified, fortified with these

things, meaning they have put the essential vitamins and minerals and nutrients into the cereal. This is what Paul talked about in Ephesians chapter 3. He was praying for the Christian church there that they would be strengthened with power.

The word strengthened there I like to describe as fortified with power because you need it. I need to be fortified. I do not have strength in my natural self to just do the things that would be pleasing to the Lord in every situation.

I'm still human enough that if I was not being fortified, I can get down in the mouth. I can get critical. I can get ugly.

I can get mean. Ask my wife. I'm not saying I was this week.

I'm not saying I was this year. I'm just saying she's lived with me and seen the difference in me without fortified, being fortified. And when I am being fortified with this beautiful spiritual graces that God can strengthen us with, she loves it.

She does not mind at all when I'm being strengthened with gentleness and strengthened with kindness and strengthened with lowliness and patience and strengthened with love. She doesn't mind it at all. It's something I seek.

I'm not trying to earn my salvation. It's something that I realize fortifying when we are being fortified with these spiritual graces from the Word of God and the Spirit of God working in us as we're seeking to live in them. And we're seeking to make sure that they become a very part of the way we live our lives.

It's just beautiful. It makes such a difference that the Bible says it's like a star shining in the universe. It's just, it's beautiful.

Surrounded by darkness, but it's full of its own dynamic energy that is giving off natural light. This is the process I desire and the Lord desires for every single one of us. That each of us grow.

How we grow? We start listening very carefully. You listen, you focus and pay attention whenever the Word of God is there. Like during this time, during a Sunday school, even if during a conversation with the brother and it's a spiritual, it's a spiritual conversation and there's help being offered by God.

You listening carefully and then you take what you hear and it and you spend extra time with it. Remember, we talked about that called meditation. You chew on it again.

You go over it again because you don't want it. You don't want to just visit with it. You want to make sure that the spiritual nutrients and vitamins that are in that word become deeply a part of the very way you live your life.

Now, my brother, Rudy, I love him dearly. Here's what he would tell you. Read, read, read, read, read, read, read, read, read every day.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. We got it. But here's what I've learned.

The reason people don't do that is because they don't have a vision of what it is they're looking for. You didn't you don't realize that what Paul said, that these words, all scripture has the very breath of God in it.

Amen.

And you know what the breath of God is? It's the source of all spiritual nutrients. In the Spirit of God is His wisdom, His kindness, His goodness, His gentleness, His long-suffering, His patience. It's all there in Spirit.

It's spiritual food, it's spiritual life, and it's spiritual power. And those that are fully taking it in, the old natural self that dominated appetite, natural desires, and the things that come with it, anger, selfishness, irritation, all those things in the natural, as you become stronger and stronger, fortified with spiritual things, the old begins to pass away. And new things become spiritual.

You begin to become strong in Spirit. And you begin to walk in the Spirit. You become sensitive to the things of the Spirit.

You begin to be led by the Spirit, governed by the Spirit, protected by the Spirit, guided by the Spirit. You become spiritual. No longer an infant.

Now you're understanding. You're seeing things clearer. Your decisions are better.

You don't fall into the same traps. Old habits are gone. You're slower to speak.

You're quicker to listen. And you're especially slower to become angry, because you're being fortified. You develop an ability, growing spiritually, to begin to be able to lay hold of things.

We sing that song today, lay hold. To lay hold of the fact that God has given us everything we need for life and godliness. This is from 2 Peter chapter 1. But it's all through the New Testament in reality.

It's all there. God has given us everything we need to live the kind of life He desires for us in Jesus Christ. It's all there, already given.

You know how, you know what, you know why many of us are not fully taking advantage of that? We don't know Him well, personally. We do not realize. A lot of us know Him as the person who died on the cross for us.

You got that. No one should take that away. He was that.

You know Him as the person born of the virgin, who lived in Palestine, who had His ministry and was arrested and died for you and rose again. You know Him in that way. But you do not know Him as the life-giving Spirit who lives in you, so that He can be with you every single where you go, to help you in every single challenge you face, giving you counsel, giving you guidance, strengthening you, living His life in you and with you, so that you can literally learn to draw from Him every, every bit of His strength to support your weakness, so that when you're feeling tempted, when you're battling some irritation, when you're growing weary, when you're in danger of caving in to something unkind or something that will make a bad decision, you learn to walk with Him.

You draw from Him. He's with you. He's not like He's some outer space someplace.

He's with you. And He's not some museum, in some museum, in a case. Some people, some people live their Christian life.

And you know what Jesus is for them? Jesus is that person in heaven, in that glass case. And they just worship Jesus. He is so wonderful.

He was so perfect. He was so good. But in museums, there's one, there's signs everywhere.

What do the signs say? Don't touch. That's not Jesus. Jesus is literally God, touchable.

For everything about God, all of His goodness becomes tangible, touchable, usable to us. That's Jesus. That's why He told His disciples.

Even though He says, I go to prepare a place for you. This is strange. How can you go and prepare a place for us and then say at the same time, lo, I am with you always.

How can He be there and be here? How? Because now He's the life-giving Spirit. Spirit is not limited by a physical body. So now Jesus and the fullness of God, every grace of God, all the divine nature of God, all that God desires you to experience, all of His goodness is with you in the form of the Holy Spirit, making every grace that's in Jesus Christ available to you every single moment of the day.

And that's what we need to grow up into. That's what we're seeking to understand. Now, why wouldn't that be so easy? Why wouldn't, oh, that's simple enough.

Why, why wouldn't that be easy for all of us? Because God has an answer for an enemy. And if God is our Father, that enemy is our enemy. And what do you think that enemy's number one purpose is going to be for us? Is it not going to be to prevent us from coming to understand how much God has for us? How much grace is available to us? How much help there is.

And don't you think He's going to come up with whatever strategy works for you? If you're a workaholic, it'll be work. If you're a yardaholic, it's going to be your yard. You know, if it's TV, it's going to be, whatever it is.

He doesn't care what, it's whatever works for Him. The purpose is to keep you and I from destroying ourselves by discovering all the fullness of God that is in Jesus Christ. That's His purpose.

Because as we discover that, as you discover that Jesus Christ is with you and that His Word, His Word is full of every spiritual nutrient and vitamin and key element that will dynamically strengthen and fortify you to where you can live in a way that you are, you are a new creation. The old person literally fades out of the picture and out of this old person comes this brand new, dynamic, Christ-like individual. The same name, but a completely different person.

That's what the world doesn't see enough of. The world sees people who come here, but they look too much like the same person they were everywhere else. And that's not the intention.

And somewhat, that's the fault of church leadership. Because it says that God gave leadership in the church so that the body of Christ would be built up for the equipping of the saints. I want you to be equipped.

And you know what, you're never, here's what the equipment is never going to be. The equipment is never going to be, I'm going to be with you all the time. That's not going to happen, is it? It hasn't happened yet and it won't be.

You can't have the pastor with you all the time. You can't have the Sunday school teacher with you all the time. It doesn't need to be.

You have the Lord Jesus Christ with you all the time. The equipping is to help you realize who all the things you do have. It's learning how to use what God has already given you.

It's learning what the equipment are. The younger generation knows this more than the older generation. There are certain things that your phone has the capacity to do, but can't do unless you do something first.

You have to obtain something. And you have to obtain a program so that, and that program will enable your phone to do something you're desiring it to do. How many of us know what I'm talking about and can do that? Okay.

Some of you know, what do you do? Where do you go? You go to this thing called the app, the app store, because someone has created something already fully able to do what you're desiring. And all you have to do is log on, type in the name and do what? In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Install.

Let me tell you, even to the greatest app that has ever been is named the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God's app. It's what it is.

All the fullness of the Godhead, all of his divine attributes, all of it. All he's waiting for you to do is install the son in you. Install him, let him live his life in you.

Learn to let God's Holy Spirit do the dynamic work he desires to do. And part of that very critical process is hearing. And the reason, the reason hearing is involved, it's a very broad term.

It's how you give conscious thought. It's how you listen so that you can think. And here's what God wants.

He wants you to hear, listen carefully, think about it and install, install, hold it, take it in. He wants you to hear and then guard it, guard it, keep it. When that process begins to take hold of a person, transformation takes place.

Paul described it in this way and I'll close with this. Paul says in Romans chapter 12, do not be conformed any longer to the pattern of the world. The world operates on its program.

It's got a program it operates by. It's a sinful, evil spiritual program it operates by. But instead, don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by, what is the by? Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

In other words, download all of your thoughts, all of your thoughts all of God's spiritual graces into the way you think and into your heart. Be reprogrammed. Are churches trying to brainwash people? Well, if you think your brain's dirty, don't you want it washed? You know, if you think the world's going to give you a clean brain, you don't want the thing coming.

Yes, God's word is cleansing, but the things it will cleanse you from are not the things that will take things from you. The things that God's word will cleanse you from are the things that are harming you or the things that are hindering you.

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