

Moved by Transformation

by Stewart Ruch

This sermon encourages listeners to commit to living fully scriptural, fully sacramental, full of the Spirit, and experiencing the fullness of salvation, leading to transformation and a deeper relationship with God.

Duration: 19:14

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 2:42, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:22

Topics: "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the four ways that the earliest Christians embraced a life of transformation. These four ways are fully scriptural, fully sacramental, full of the Holy Spirit, and the fullness of salvation. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on which of these four areas Jesus may be inviting them to grow in. The sermon emphasizes the importance of the scriptures in catalyzing transformation and calls for a singular and passionate devotion to these four aspects of the Christian life.

Transcript

For the last several weeks here at Resurrection, we've been on a kind of four-week, five-Sunday journey, preparing for today, which is called a Commitment Sunday, as God has been teaching us and leading us into a new season of vision here at Resurrection. And several weeks ago, I described it to you all, this new vision, this new direction God is giving to us, in the way that it's very similar to what happens when a new friendship might come into your life, or a new business relationship, or like a new child. I talked about the way in which a vision is like a new life given to a community, given to a family.

And we've really sensed that God has given a new life and is calling us into a new place through His Son, Jesus Christ, here at Resurrection. For years, we have followed what God called us to, which was building a sanctuary of transformation. And we now hear God giving us, not getting rid of that life, we love that life, we love that vision, but a new vision to equip everyone for transformation.

And what you can immediately hear when you hear both those phrases is they have the word transformation in utter common, one with the other. Indeed, if these are like two children, they both have the same last name, transformation. One's named building a sanctuary, and one, the new one, the baby in the family that's changing everything for our family, is named equipping everyone.

If Res was to have a last name, it would be transformation. This has been our sense of passion, our sense of calling, our sense of biblical alignment around this call to the work of transformation. Over the last few

weeks, I've actually explored with you this phrase equipping everyone for transformation.

We looked at what is the biblical meaning of equipping. We looked at what it means in the Bible to say everyone. And I'd like to conclude this morning on our Commitment Sunday with a biblical picture.

It's a picture we're given actually of the earliest church, a biblical picture of transformation. I not only want you to see this picture of transformation, but I actually want to teach from the Acts chapter 2 passage that was read, the four S's that lead us into transformation. The four ways that we see in this earliest church, in these earliest Christians, as they're embracing a life of transformation, the four S's that will lead all of us into the same life of transformation.

Okay, so here's your application. Here's the application of my teaching up front. You don't have to wait till the end.

All right, up front. This first application is for all of us that are here, whether you're visiting Res or been here for 20 years. And that is as I'm teaching on these four different S's, fully scriptural, fully sacramental, full of the Spirit, and the fullness of salvation.

As you hear these four different S's that lead us into the life of transformation, what of the four, what one of the four might Jesus be inviting you into greater growth now? I don't want any overachievers choosing two. All right, just choose one. But what of the four might the Lord be calling you into greater growth, greater commitment, greater risk in this life of transformation? Fully sacramental, fully, excuse me, fully scriptural, fully sacramental, full of the Holy Spirit, the fullness of salvation, specifically the salvation of others.

Verse 42 of chapter 2 of Acts, it begins with a really important verb, and the verb does define and focus us as we learn this passage, and they devoted themselves. That's a very rich word in the original language, and it has to do with a singular, passionate focus. To devote themselves was to singularly and passionately focus their lives.

It's what all of us are consistently needing to go back to and refresh. What's my singular focus? What's my singular passion? And if we say scripturally, it's the life of transformation, my own life of transformation, and participating in the life of transformation of others that God is touching and moving, then we are devoted to transformation. We devote ourselves, we focus ourselves, and these four S's then follow.

The first, the call to live fully scriptural lives. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. Now, we know what the apostles' teaching was, because in this same chapter, Acts 2, we were given an example of exactly what the apostles were teaching, and we have to get it throughout the book of Acts, and then we get it in the chapters and books that follow the book of Acts and go prior to it in the New Testament.

We get their teaching. At the heart of the apostles' teaching is they were taking what would be called the former covenant, the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures that they had learned, and they were taking these scriptures, they were teaching these scriptures, but they were teaching how these scriptures fulfilled Jesus Christ, who they had now witnessed, lived, died, resurrected, and set the power of the Holy Spirit upon them. All these things they were prepared for in the Old Testament.

Jesus is throughout the Old Testament, and they're now fully bringing this revelation that God has given them, all based in Scripture, and they're teaching out of that. So they're teaching Jesus died. They're teaching His resurrection is real, and He truly rose from the dead.

They're teaching the Holy Spirit has descended upon us, and they're saying, in light of God, be God, repent, turn your life to God. It's a simple, clear message, and they will teach on that over and over again in letters and writings that were collected as the New Testament. To be fully scriptural is to live our lives with incredible joy and relief under the teachings of the Bible, in the teachings of the Bible.

Think of the scriptural life and your relationship to the scriptures like having the most amazing parent you could imagine. Think what it'd be like to have a parent who is utterly imaginative, very creative, but very, very clear, engaged in your life, concerned about your life, but not over-controlling, knows you really, really, really well, and yet has the big picture as well for your life, has lived more life than you have, has gone farther down the road than you have, and is able with love and gentleness, but clarity and firmness to issue warnings, don't go there. You don't want to go there.

That won't lead you to the fullness of the life God has for you. Imagine a parent like that. Imagine a parent like that guiding you.

Imagine a parent like that directing you. Imagine spending a half an hour, 45 minutes, an hour, every morning with that parent as you go through your day and say, ah, this is what I'm carrying. That parent's there for you.

That's the gift of the scriptures. The Bible is like a parent like that. The Bible knows your heart.

The Bible knows your sin. The Bible knows your potential in Christ. The Bible knows what paths to avoid, and the Bible knows the straight and narrow path of joy and power in the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is like having the most amazing parent you could imagine. That's what it means to live in obedience to the Bible. When we can understand it that way and engage the Bible that way, why would we not want to obey what's given us here? My boys regularly kick their soccer balls from our yard over our fence and into the street or into the neighbor's yard across the street.

Happens regularly. And I regularly, if I'm home and I see that happen every time, poke my head out the door or if I'm in the yard, stop for what I'm doing and say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Before you sprint across the street, would you just stop and make sure that there aren't any trucks barreling down Elmwood Avenue? And then when you get the soccer ball, would you mind not punting it from the middle of the street but maybe walk across the street, again looking carefully, and bring it back into the yard? Now, do I do that because I'm just a cruel parent? I hate my kids.

I don't want them having fun. I don't want them risking things. Is that why I do that? Or I do that because I actually understand that automobiles are very, very heavy.

And when they move at a velocity, even at 20 miles per hour, they can really hurt people if not kill them. So I provide guidance. I provide direction in a micro example like that.

But it's the Scriptures that provide both micro and macro. The Scriptures catalyze transformation in our lives because they draw us out of our sinful, myopic, narrow lives into joyful, vast Bible lives. So to live fully scripturally is to live the life of transformation.

They devote themselves not only to the apostles' teaching. That's what's given to us first. But they devote themselves to the fellowship and to the breaking of bread.

In both cases, a definite article is used. The fellowship. The breaking of bread.

Definite so that we get a definitive understanding. This is not just a fellowship. This is the fellowship.

That word's a great word. It comes from a group of words in the original language. It talks about participation.

It talks about sharing. It talks about a deep life engagement. The fellowship.

The sharing. The participation. They devoted themselves to the participation in the church.

What you have there is the church and the breaking of bread. What we call holy communion or the Eucharist, which means the thanksgiving or the Lord's Supper. Here we see that they're being transformed by being fully sacramental.

Let me explain that word. What does that mean, sacramental? Very briefly and simply, it means that matter matters to God. The sacramental world, the sacramental understanding is that God has taken matter.

He took matter like a tabernacle when they were in the desert in the Old Testament. So they had a sense of the presence of God with them in a tangible way. God used all kinds of symbols and ways of communicating with his people so that they would know how close he wanted to be to them.

This is primarily expressed in the miracle of the word become flesh of Jesus being fully God and fully man. God comes to us in a human body. It's fully sacramental.

Matter matters because he wants to communicate to the individual and the human being, I have come close to you. I have come into your world fully. I am with you.

To live fully sacramental lives is to be transformed by the absolute and utter biblical revelatory fact that you are never ever alone. That's what the fully sacramental worldview says is that you live your life in the church, from the church, for the world, to reach the world, but in the church, the gift of the church. That's the fullness of the sacramental life.

That's key to our transformation. You cannot live church virtually. You can't live stream church.

You might think you're doing it, but you're not live streaming church. It's sacramental. The matter matters.

The people next to you right now matter. It matters that we're in a space right now, in a time, in a place, together. It matters because it speaks a word to our independence, and it speaks a consolation to our isolation.

It's at the core of our sinful lives, the isolation. Matter matters. Fully sacramental lives transform us.

It matters that we can receive and meet Jesus in the bread and the wine, his real presence that matters to our life change. And then they devote themselves to the prayers. They devote themselves to the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs are being done through the apostles. The fullness of the Spirit. The third S in the life of transformation, to live lives full of the Spirit.

Again, we have another definite article. Really important that the translation you work with includes that definite article, the prayers. Scholars of all kinds of traditions actually agree that in this case very likely the reason that the writer, whose name is Luke, uses a definite article because this refers to liturgical prayers.

It follows logically because these were men who were raised in synagogue prayers, where there was a liturgy, there were written prayers, temple prayers. We know they were going to temple regularly. So there's the work of the prayers.

But what are the prayers? What is the gift of the liturgy? But the ministrations of the fullness of the Holy Spirit drawing us into the life of prayer. Drawing us into the life of communication with God. Now they practice liturgical prayer.

They also practice extemporaneous prayer. Spontaneous prayer. We see both happening within chapters of each other in the book of Acts.

At the heart of it is the life of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The ministry of the Holy Spirit. And now the life of the prayers and prayer comes this life of wonders and signs.

This is quoting actually from the book of Joel, which said that when God comes in power and in His Spirit there will be wonders. You will wonder and awe at the power and the presence of God. And there'll be signs to help direct you and guide you and show you that God is present and that God is real.

That's the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural life given to us in the Holy Spirit. This catalyzes transformation. And see how broad and beautiful and diverse it is? From ancient prayers of hundreds of years that are filled with the Holy Spirit, the spontaneous moments in the Spirit, to supernatural signs and wonders.

All for transforming our lives. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will take the ministry of Jesus, the work of Jesus, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, and minister it. Make it alive for us today.

What the Holy Spirit does is bring the kingdom of God alive. All summer long we listened to a band that my oldest son introduced us to called Jude and the Lion. We listened to it a lot.

I now know their songs very well. Lots of road trips, lots of Jude and the Lion. And we learned all their songs and we really enjoyed them.

They're a bluegrass, newgrass band. And then I found out this fall that they were visiting the Wheaton area, so I got tickets for our family to see Jude and the Lion. For my eight-year-old, he'd never been in a kind of specific live concert.

He comes to res every Sunday, which is like a concert, all right? But he'd never been like in a specific live concert with a band. And I'll never forget, Jude and the Lion walked out on stage. They sang their first song, which is an amazing song, and I looked over at my eight-year-old and he was literally like this.

And he didn't, I got worried, he didn't stop doing that for two minutes. It was like, I know these songs, but I didn't experience it live. It's live music.

Well, that's just a minor analogy to experience what happens in the kingdom of God when the kingdom of God is ministered to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. It's like going from listening to the kingdom of God on Spotify to the kingdom of God live. That's what the liturgy does.

That's what our prayers do. That's what the life, the supernatural life of signs and wonders does, is it brings the kingdom of God live, which is what we all hunger for. And we all deeply need to enter into the fourth S, which is the fullness of salvation.

As they lived lives that were fully scriptural, lives that were fully sacramental in the church and Holy Communion, lives that were full of the Holy Spirit, out of that then we see the result of that, the gift of that, the fruit of that, is that the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. We're being transformed so that we have a transforming influence in Jesus, in the Spirit, upon others. Our transformation leads to the transformation of others, the fullness of salvation, the coming to Christ of those who are far from God.

That's why we regularly have people tell their transformation story here at Res. It is part of what changes us. It's part of what transforms us.

Even last Sunday, we had a new brother, new family here at Res, and he shared how for 20 years he was searching and seeking after God. And there was one word that he had used in his search for God. It was the word transformation.

He wanted to be transformed. It didn't come from a Bible study. It just came from God planting that word in his head.

And he came here, and he heard that resurrection was all about transformation. And it clicked, and it locked, and he entered into the fullness of the gift of salvation. Yet that's not a part of your life, participating in some way in someone else's salvation journey.

Whether or not you actually see them cross that line into the fullness of salvation, if you're not participating, then you're missing a key catalyst for life transformation. What one of these four might the Lord call you into? And then in a final application, for those of us who are regular members, regular attenders and members, I want to put before you the biblical picture and the biblical process of transformation. Because this morning we're going to commit our money and our hearts to the work of transformation here at Resurrection.

I want you to have before you that biblical call. This is what you're giving to. As you fill out your commitment card in several minutes and bring your commitment card forward to our altar, this is what you're giving to.

This is the aspiration of resurrection and our aspiration to be fully scriptural, fully sacramental, full of the Spirit of God, with the fullness of salvation given to us as God's gift. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28797.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stewart-ruch/moved-by-transformation/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net