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**CONFERENCE THEME: THE CROSS: EMPOWERMENT FOR
TRANSFORMATION AND TRANSITION INTO MY DESTINY (1
CORINTHIANS 1:18)**

OVERVIEW

There are three stages of salvation

1. **First stage:** A person puts their faith in Jesus Christ and is born again. He or she is now able to spend eternity with God. He is declared righteous. This is justification i.e. salvation from the penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is eternal separation from God. It is also known as the second death (Rev. 21:8). In summary, born once, die twice; born twice, die once.
2. **Second stage:** A person has been declared righteous but is not righteous in behavior or character. The soul and body are not yet saved (the person still sins through thoughts, words and actions). There is a change of position but not condition. The Holy Spirit begins to work on behavior and character to make them righteous i.e. change of condition. This is sanctification i.e. salvation from the power of sin.
3. **Third sage:** All believers are taken up to heaven to be with the Lord forever. The dead in Christ are resurrected first. The living saints are changed in the twinkling of an eye. Corruption puts on incorruption, mortality puts on immortality (I Cor.15:53). This is glorification i.e. salvation from the presence of sin (Saints depart from the fallen Earth).
4. We will mainly be dealing with sanctification which is transformation under the theme: The Cross: Empowerment for Transformation and Transition Into My Destiny. We will start at the cross because the cross is essential for transformation.

I. THE POWER OF THE CROSS

SCRIPTURES

1 Peter 2:19-24

Matthew 16: 24-26

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Cross of Christ is both a solution and an example.
- 2 The Cross is a solution to the universal human problem of sin.
- 3 Since sin is the source of all human problems the cross is the solution to all human problems.
- 4 On the cross Christ dealt with all human problems that resulted from the fall of Adam and Eve.
- 5 He solved all spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, financial and social problems.
- 6 Jesus died on the cross for our salvation, healing and for the provision of every need that may arise in life.
- 7 The atoning work of Christ covers all human needs: salvation, healing and provision.
- 8 The cross of Christ is an example to Christians of obedience to the will of God.
- 9 It is an example of how to suffer for doing what is right.
- 10 It is an example of denying oneself and dying to self.

THE CROSS AS A SOLUTION

- 1 On the cross Jesus carried all the sins of the world past, present and future.
- 2 When we confess our sins to God we are forgiven because our sins have been paid for.
- 3 Jesus carried all sicknesses and diseases in His stripes on the cross.
- 4 Jesus broke the curse of Genesis chapter 3 on the cross by wearing the crown of thorns. Thorns were the result of the curse on work (Gen.3:18). All work apart from Christ is cursed. But one has to believe and confess that their work is blessed because they are in Christ.
- 5 Jesus solved all problems of humanity on the cross.
- 6 When we pray to God to deal with our problems we are asking for the solutions provided by Jesus on the cross to manifest in our lives.
- 7 Jesus died our death and suffered our hell. He paid the penalty of our sin. We do not need to suffer eternal separation from God.
- 8 Through the finished work of the cross we have been made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21)
- 9 Through the cross we have been reconciled with God. (Romans 5:10; Col. 1:21)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSS

- 1 The cross is the central theme of the bible.
- 2 It is the centre of biblical Christianity.
- 3 The Old Testament sacrifices pointed to the cross.
- 4 The New Testament believers looked back to the finished work of the cross.
- 5 Cross is the altar of God on which Jesus shed His blood and sacrificed His life.
- 6 The altars of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Solomon and Elijah pointed to the cross of Christ.
- 7 This means that the Old testament needs to be interpreted through the cross of Christ. This is the Gospel. When we interpret a passage of Scripture without reference to the finished work of the cross we have no Gospel.
- 8 Without the cross a sermon is not the Gospel. It is just religion.
- 9 When Jesus said "It is finished" (Jn. 19:30) He had defeated three terrible enemies of humanity (i) He defeated Satan (Col 2:15) (ii) He defeated sin (Heb 9:26) (iii) He broke down the wall of separation between a holy God and sinful man (Romans 5:10; 2Cor. 1:20)
- 10 When Jesus said "It is finished" He had paid in full for the fulfillment of God's promises. They became yes and amen in Him. (2Cor 1:20)

- 11 The cross gave believers past, present and future access to the presence of God (Mt 27:51-53)
- 12 The wrending of the curtain into the Holy of Holies symbolizes access to God's presence.
- 13 Graves were opened and dead saints rose to life and were seen in Jerusalem.
- 14 They were now able to go to Paradise (cf Luke 23:43)
- 15 When Old Testament saints died they were gathered to their ancestors. New testament saints go to be with the Lord (Phil 1:23)
- 16 Faith in the finished work of the cross raises us from spiritual death (New Birth)
- 17 The Holy spirit is given to us because of the finished work of the cross.
- 18 The Holy spirit empowers us to witness and to live right i.e. Gospel minus words.(Go and preach the Gospel. If necessary use words. Francis of Assisi)

THE CROSS : AS AN EXAMPLE

- 1 To follow Christ we must deny ourselves and carry our crosses daily.
- 2 The demand to carry the cross is universal. There are no exceptions. Every Christian must carry their cross.
- 3 Jesus Christ left us an example of how to deny ourselves and carry our crosses.
- 4 As we deny ourselves and carry our crosses we are conformed to the image of Christ

DENYING THE SELF

- 1 The self is the sinful rebellious and corrupted old person.
- 2 To deny the self we must dethrone the self and enthrone Jesus as the King of our lives.
- 3 To deny the self means to put God's will above our will.
- 4 It means giving up anything that would hinder God's will (Friendships, relationships, entertainment etc)
- 5 We must forsake the world and its way of life (1Jn. 2:15)
- 6 We should refuse to obey the old sinful self with its lusts.
- 7 We must put to death self importance, self satisfaction, self defence and self interest.
- 8 It means following the example of Christ (Phil 2:5-8) (i) He emptied Himself of divine privileges (ii) He took on human form (iii) He was obedient until death on the cross.
- 9 1 Peter 2:23 Christ was verbally abused but did not retaliate. He suffered but did not threaten. He entrusted himself to God the righteous Judge
- 10 Denying the self means we choose to live in God's will and for the service of others.
- 11 We must give up the desire to be right all the time, the desire to win all arguments.
- 12 You may win the argument and lose a relationship or a soul.

CARRYING THE CROSS

- 1 Carrying the cross is an invitation to death.
- 2 The cross kills pride, the ego, the carnal life. It kills the flesh. We can repent of acts of the flesh but we cannot repent of the flesh. The flesh has to be crucified.
- 3 The cross delivers us from the power of sin.
- 4 The cross is a place of sacrifice and suffering (Jn 16:33)
- 5 Carrying the cross requires humility
- 6 We do not crucify ourselves. Other people nail us to the cross by their words, attitudes and actions.

- 7 We should let them nail us to the cross without complaints or threats.
- 8 We must be willing to endure shame, rejection, and persecution for Christ.
- 9 Carrying the cross may mean loss of friends, family, reputation, career or even life.
- 10 We should not expect to be popular.
- 11 We must expect to be misunderstood.
- 12 The cross will mean loving the unlovable and doing good for the undeserving.
- 13 It means forgiving those who wrong us even when it still hurts. We must forgive even if there is no apology.
- 14 The cross means rejoicing when persecuted (Mt 5:11-12) and not expecting sympathy (Mt 16:21-23)

CONCLUSION

- 1.Repent of not denying yourself and not carrying your cross.
- 2.Make a commitment to deny the self and carry your cross.
- 3.Make a commitment to forgive wrong doers and love the unlovable

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II. RENEWING THE MIND

SCRIPTURES

ROMANS 12:1-2

GENESIS 3:1-10

INTRODUCTION

- 1 According to Romans 8:29 God's goal is for us to be conformed to the image of His son Jesus Christ (cf 2Cor 3:18)
- 2 We are expected to grow closer in likeness to Jesus every day.
- 3 Our obedience, submission, love, service and character should increasingly resemble His.
- 4 The main hindrance to transformation is the old mindset.
- 5 The old mindset causes Christians to act in an un-Christ-like manner.
- 6 The old mindset determines our attitudes, words, and actions (Prov. 23:7)
- 7 Frank Outlaw said "watch your thoughts, they become words; watch your words, they become actions; watch your actions, they become habits, watch your habits, they become your character; watch your character, it becomes destiny."
- 8 Transformation must start with the renewing of our minds if it is to work.

ORIGIN OF THE OLD MINDSET

- 1 The old mindset has its origins in the garden of Eden.
- 2 The devil attacked Eve with two weapons namely insecurity and inferiority.

- 3 When the devil made Eve doubt God's command she became insecure.
- 4 When the devil made Eve to believe that God was withholding something from her she felt inferior although she already bore the image and likeness of God.
- 5 Insecurity and inferiority are doorways through which other human problems gain entrance.
- 6 The next weapon to enter through the doorways of insecurity and inferiority was fear.
- 7 Inferiority and insecurity are used by advertisers to exploit people.
- 8 Insecurity and inferiority can determine how we relate to money, fashion, food, education, employment, religion and our peers/friends/family/spouses/bosses.
- 9 They can be strongholds that keep us in bondage.
- 10 These strongholds are located in the mind.

THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

- 1 When Eve was deceived three feelings were formed that led her down the wrong path.
- 2 She felt that the fruit was good, she felt that the fruit was pleasant, she felt that the fruit was something to be desired.
- 3 All these feelings were lies that led her down the wrong path.
- 4 Her emotions were rooted in her thoughts of insecurity and inferiority.
- 5 Our thoughts determine how we feel. Correct thoughts produce correct feelings and wrong thoughts produce wrong feelings.
- 6 Emotions are the primary source of our motivations and energy i.e. drive us to act in certain ways.
- 7 They motivate our actions.
- 8 Wrong thoughts produce wrong emotions which result in sinful actions.

SIN AND AUTHORITY

- 1 Sin is essentially the rejection of God's rightful authority over our lives.
- 2 God had the legal right to exercise power over Adam and Eve.
- 3 When they disobeyed God's command they rejected God's rightful authority over their lives.
- 4 They lost dominion over creation because they could only exercise dominion while they were under God's authority.
- 5 We can only exercise dominion by submitting to God's authority.

TRUE REPENTANCE

- 1 Scripture commands us to repent.
- 2 This is the solution to the problem we have been looking at concerning the mind.
- 3 The Greek word for repent(metanoia) means to change one's thinking, to think differently.
- 4 To repent is to change our mind about God's authority over all areas of our lives.
- 5 To repent is to surrender all areas of our lives to God's rightful authority.
- 6 If we think in accordance with the word of God then our emotions will lineup with the word of God and drive us in the right direction.
- 7 Our new mindset will cause us to action accordance with the nature of Christ.
- 8 If we do not change the way we think about God's authority over our lives, our actions will not change.
- 9 To renew our minds we must start by repenting of insecurity and inferiority.
- 10 We must then repent of fear and other problems.
- 11 We need to ask the holy spirit to cleanse us from all sins by the blood of Jesus.
- 12 We must then surrender our thoughts, words, actins, desires and emotions to the authority of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE AND BAPTISM OF LOVE

- 1 We need to fill our minds with scripture
- 2 We must clean our thoughts daily and repeatedly(filter ideas that bombard us daily)
- 3 We must refill minds with thoughts that are clean pure, clear and holy (Phil 4:8) Listen to praise and worship music.
- 4 Do not dwell on thoughts that are contrary to the mind of Christ. Avoid watching certain programs and movies.
- 5 Confess Gods word over your life. To confess is to agree with God or to say the same thing that God is saying. When we say what God says we will see what God sees. When God spoke in Genesis chapter 1 He saw what He spoke i.e. it manifested.
- 6 When God speaks, it is called work (Gen 2:2)
- 7 To get spiritual work done in your life speak God's word.
- 8 Counter insecurity and inferiority with scripture (Ps 139:14, Ro 8:37, 2Cor 5:17, 2Tim 1:7)
- 9 1Jn4:18 Perfect love drives out fear
- 10 Ro 5:5 the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
- 11 When the disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they received power and love.
- 12 Peter and other disciples overcame their fear at Pentecost because of love.

CONCLUSION

- Let us repent of rejections God's authority over our lives.
 - Let us submit all area of our lives to God's authority.
 - Let us repent of insecurity, inferiority, fear and other sinful thoughts, actions, emotions and desires.
 - Let us ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse us by the blood of Jesus
 - Let us ask God to release the power we need to live according to his word.
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III. REQUIREMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:1-2

INTRODUCTION

- 1 At conversion God loves us so much that He accepts us we are, but He loves us too much to leave us as we are.
- 2 God begins to transform us by the process of sanctification
- 3 Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- 4 The process of sanctification sets us apart for holy use.
- 5 The Holy Spirit applies the finished work of the cross to our lives.
- 6 Transformation is holistic, it is not compartmental. It is not give God Sunday and keep the rest to yourself. It should affect every area of our lives every day of our lives.
- 7 Transformation involves complete abandonment of our thrones and the dismantling of our kingdoms.

THE NEW BIRTH MAKES TRANSFORMATION POSSIBLE

- 1 At conversion we become a new creation(2Cor 5:17)
- 2 The old has passed away and all things are new.
- 3 Sanctification/transformation is the process by which the change that has been produced within us is worked out in our daily experience.
- 4 We need to walk in the reality of the supernatural change that has taken place

- 5 Change must occur inside before it affects the outside. Surface change does not last. Surface change can be likened to ancient pottery by unscrupulous potters who covered cracks in their vessels with wax. When subjected to heat the cracks were exposed. Genuine potters signed their vessels with the words “sincere” meaning “without wax”. That is how we got the word “sincere”. The heat of persecution or trials will expose the flaws in a person whose change is only on the outside
- 6 Transformation is a lifelong and sometimes painful process.
- 7 At the end of transformation we shall be like Jesus for we shall see Him as He is (1 Jn. 3:2)

TRANSFORMATION IS A PROCESS

- 1 Transformation is not an event, it is a process.
- 2 Deep and lasting spiritual change is a lifelong process.
- 3 It involves training, testing and time. It rarely happens overnight.
- 4 Some people are dramatically delivered from drug/alcohol addiction, lust, worry or fear but for most people it is a process which takes time.
- 5 Occasionally God does grant instantaneous victory but more often He leads us through a process that requires obedience, faith, discipline and time.
- 6 God is determined to developing our hearts and our character

TRANSFORMATION REQUIRES DESIRE

- 1 We must desire change.
- 2 We must never be satisfied by what we are right now.
- 3 We must consider being like Jesus important.
- 4 We must be willing to pay the price godly. We must be prepared to do whatever it takes to change.
- 5 Desire for transformation is cultivated in prayer. Prayer acknowledges our dependence on God.
- 6 Desire for change is also developed by meditating on Christ.
- 7 We must meditate on His humility, holiness, compassion, love, obedience etc.

- 8 Our desire for holiness must be greater than our willingness to stay where we are.

TRANSFORMATION FLOWS OUT OF INTIMACY WITH JESUS

- 1 We want to please those we love and we are grieved when we offend them.
- 2 The more we love Jesus, the greater our motivation to obey Him and make choices that please Him.
- 3 Worship is an expression of our love for Jesus. The ultimate issue in life is what or whom we worship.
- 4 True spiritual change occurs when we are weaned from our love and worship of self, pleasure and the world and our hearts are devoted to Christ.
- 5 This change is brought about by spending time with Christ in prayer, praise, worship, thanksgiving, meditation and reading and studying God's word.
- 6 We must read, study and meditate on God's word at every opportunity. Spiritual hunger is different from natural hunger. Natural hunger increases with time while spiritual hunger decreases with time. The longer we go without food, the hungrier we get. The longer we go without the word of God the less our spiritual hunger becomes.
- 7 We must be doers of the word not hearers only. When we encounter something in the Word that is contrary to the way we live we must accept what Scripture says as our new direction in life.

TRANSFORMATION REQUIRES DISCIPLINE

- 1 Discipline for the purpose of godliness means consciously cooperating with the Holy Spirit.
- 2 It means yielding to the Holy Spirit so that He can conform us to the image of Christ.
- 3 We must purposely choose right thinking and right speaking (Prov. 18:21)
- 4 We will never control our mouth unless we first learn to control our mind.
- 5 We must choose life generating thoughts (Prov. 18:21)

- 6 Accountability is also necessary for transformation. This means taking ownership of our sins, mistakes and failures.
- 7 We must accept correction and rebuke with humility, receiving them from whatever source as coming from God.
- 8 We should never try to excuse un-Christ-like attitudes or actions.
- 9 We need to see God's love for us in correction or rebuke, being thankful that God cares enough to point out things that we must change.
- 10 It is the grace of God to do something wrong and get caught or be exposed because we are given a chance to make amends while it is still possible.

TRANSFORMATION IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1 Once we are born again the Holy Spirit begins to change us as we exercise faith and obedience.
- 2 We have a part to play and the Holy Spirit has a part to play.
- 3 Philippians 2:12-13 says "work out your salvation with fear and trembling...for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose".
- 4 True spiritual change is initiated and enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- 5 Transformation is a work of grace which we receive as we persevere in humility, obedience and faith.
- 6 We need to decide to work with the Holy Spirit not against Him as He begins to change us.
- 7 We must tell the Lord that we want to become what He says we can become.

CONCLUSION

- 1 Let us take ownership of our sins, mistakes and failures in prayer.
- 2 Let us ask God to forgive us and to cleanse us.
- 3 Let us make a commitment to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.