Transforming Word — Delivery Transcript

Romans 12:2 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 14, 2024 · *This is the Way*

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All right, well thanks to the team for leading us in worship. If you have your Bible, we're going to be in the book of Romans, so you can turn there. If you have a Bible, and if you don't have a Bible, that's alright. There might be one under the chair in front of you, and if there's not, come let me know at the end of the service and we will get you a Bible. We don't want you to not have a Bible. And we'll also have one up on the screen.

So and most of you have a screen probably in your pocket. You can just pull that up and look at the Bible on that as well. Although it's really difficult if you start reading the Bible on your screen and then you get a notification on your Facebook or your Instagram and then you get over there you stop listening and I can tell what's going on from up here. So I know how things go. We have typically as a church we preached through books of the Bible and we had been going through the book of Genesis and we stopped, pressed pause during the month of Advent to talk about the kingdom of God and what it looks like.

And how to bring it down on this earth. And kind of in a continuation of that as we begin the new year, I wanted to talk about the kind of people we want to be as Broadview Baptist church. I don't do this very often, but every now and again I think it's good for us as a church. To just kind of press pause and have a family discussion about who we are. And you're at this church for a reason. For those of you who are not first-time guests, the reason you're here if you're not a guest and you keep coming here is because there's something about what God's doing in this church that you're attracted to.

And healthy churches have a life-giving culture and healthy cultures are c are created by healthy values. The values of a church are what create the culture of a church. The values of the people in the church are what create the value of culture of the church. And so we want to be a word-centered church. We want to be a church that's grounded in the word, but we also need a culture that's grounded in the word. And so we're looking at these values in our

church that we aspire towards and I think to some degree reflect and how they are expressed in God's word and how we might grow in them in 2024.

2024 I think is going to be probably just as crazy as every other year with maybe an extra ounce or two added in. And so before we talk about what we're going to do, and I'm sure you've got plans individually for what you're going to do the better question to ask and answer is who are we going to be? And as a church we've expressed that under five different sentences. I've talked about them the last two weeks and we'll talk about them two more weeks. Number one, we want to make Jesus known wherever we go.

Number two, we want to foster encounters, tangible encounters with the living God. Number three, the one we're going to look at this morning is that we teach the Bible here at this church, but we teach biblical truth. For the purpose of seeing transformed lives. And then we, fourthly, build communities to serve like Jesus and then we welcome people as they are. I'm very excited to teach the other two of these or teach the fourth one. Taylor will be teaching the fifth one. But this morning we're talking about Bible teaching. And if there's one thing that Broadview historically gets known for or talked about, it's that it's a Bible teaching church.

And pastor David pastor here for 30 eight years he was a expository Bible teacher and because he taught me everything I know about pastoring, that's what I am too. So I just teach the Bible and try to make the main point of the sermon the main point of the text the reason we teach the Bible, though, is not just so you would grow in your knowledge of who God is, it's not to kind of broaden the well of your knowledge base, but to rather deepen your love for the Lord Jesus.

It's about seeing your life changed. I think we all know churches that teach and preach the Bible and the people in those churches really know the Bible, but they're not very loving and they're not very godly. And those kind of churches don't have a life-giving culture. We want a life-giving culture, which means our method of teaching the Bible and our goal in teaching the Bible is to see people's lives transformed. And I want us to look at what that transformation looks like, why it matters to God in the relationship between transformation and Bible teaching out of Romans chapter 12.

Last week was all about offering our bodies to the Lord. This week is going to be more focused on having our minds renewed. And it's important that you never just read a Bible verse. Greg Koukl used to talk about that. When he said never read a Bible verse, he wasn't saying don't read the Bible. He was just saying never read a verse of the Bible. Outside of its context. And Romans 12, 2 is the one verse we're looking at, but it has a context of this rich theology that Paul has been building about the gospel and how salvation works.

From Romans 1 to 11. And when you get to Romans chapter 12, it's all about brass tacks. It's very practical now that you understand what salvation is and how it's received and how the Holy Spirit works. This is what it looks like to live a godly life individually and in the context of the church. And he starts out in Romans 12. 1 by saying, in view of God's mercies offer your body as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to the Lord. Then he says in verse 2, which is what we're focused on this morning.

Is to not be conformed to the pattern of this world, but to 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 one of those verses that says a lot with just a little bit. I think these this verse answers and raises and answers four really important questions about the Christian life. Namely, what does God want? Where does that happen? How does it work and why does it matter? And so I just kind of wanted to take us along on a Bible study.

If you were with me on my office on Monday morning and we're getting ready for the sermon and we've laid out this text in front of us. How are we going to make this text into a message? These are the kinds of things that I would be doing. And when I read that passage, those are the words that come to my mind. What does God want? He wants transformation. Where does transformation happen? It happens at the level of your mind. How is your mind transformed? How is it renewed? If you look at the context, it is done through this process of living a righteous and holy life.

And then finally, why does it matter? Because we want to know God's will. I think everybody, if you believe in God, you want to know what does God want from me, what is his will for my life. And you being able to discern and prove God's will is fundamentally linked up with you're living a holy life and having your mind renewed through the Holy Spirit. So what does God want? Where does it happen? How does it work? And why does it matter? God wants your transformation by you rejecting conformity to the world, surrendering your body to God, and then r being renewed in your mind.

So when he says don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, what I always think about when I think of conformity is changing your behavior to imitate somebody else. I when I was growing up going to school I had those friends who when they were around certain kind of people they would act a certain way and then when they were around a different group of people they would act a different way. Did anybody else have friends like that? Maybe you were that friend. I guess I was that friend to a certain degree.

I was real good at blending in with wherever I was I'm also bad about imitating people that I like. So if I hang around somebody I like and I'm around them a long period of time, I'll kind of take on their mannerisms. I also do this when it comes to television shows I really enjoy, like on Netflix. One of the it's mine and Audra's anniversary, so I was thinking about this

morning when we first started watching Netflix together, there was this show popular on Netflix called Lie to me. Anybody ever seen Lie to me?

It's a show about some guy he's like really good at reading body language and so he can tell when you're lying. And it's a really interesting show. I don't know that I should recommend it because I can't remember if it was bad or whatever, but He had this really punchy British accent and his partner was a girl and so he would always be like Hello Love. Hello love. Hello, love. And for whatever reason I thought, well, I want to do that. And so I started talking that way to Audra. Hello, love.

Hello, love. Hey, love. And I kind of thought it was endearing or whatever. And one day she's just like, all right, you've got to stop doing that so when I think don't be conformed to the pattern of this world, that's what I think personally. It's imitating, it's pretending, it's being something and someone that you're not. And what is the world? Well, the world is not just the physical earth. Obviously, this is the world, but that's not what he means. When John 3. 16 says, God so loved the world. He wasn't just talking about the physical planet. He's, I think, the best way to understand the world in Romans 12, 2 is to think of it in its in its opposite. What is the opposite of the world in my thinking would be the kingdom. It's the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is the domain in which Jesus Christ rules as King. And so when we pray your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven, what we're really praying is God help us to submit to your authority in these domains of my life.

In any domain in which Jesus' authority is being submitted to as King, that is a domain in which you will begin to see the kingdom. Well if that's the kingdom of God, then the world is its opposite. The world is any domain in which the kingdom—any domain in which the authority of Jesus is being resisted or rejected, and that's the world. And if you think of it in that light, what you begin to understand is that the world is not any one person or sphere. It's really any system or sphere or worldview or domain or even an ideology that rejects the authority of Jesus.

And there's all sorts of that kind of stuff at work in and around us. And Paul is saying, don't conform your behavior to that. Don't conform your behavior to those ideologies, don't conform your behavior to those kind of systems and institutions, don't conform your behavior to those kind of people. Now that doesn't mean you can't live in the world. Jesus said if we're in the world, we're just not of the world. Yeah, you're probably maybe you can be in government or you can certainly participate in politics, but just don't do it in a way that rejects the authority of Jesus, is what Paul is saying.

You can be rich, you can run a business, you can make lots and lots of money. Just don't do it in a way that is like the world, that rejects the authority of Jesus. Because you belong to somebody else, and that's not who you are. You've surrendered your body to the Lord as a

living sacrifice. So don't conform. Don't imitate that. Now there are people who will say, yeah, but and even ministries as a pastor you kind of pay attention to what people do in other churches, and there are philosophies of ministry that say yeah we shouldn't be like the world in terms of their s immorality, but we can kind of be like the world in other ways, kind of reject the authority of Jesus a little bit so that we'll be better at outreach, for example.

So that we'll be more culturally relevant. So that we won't be so offensive to our culture. We've got to kind of be like the world in certain respects. And people use that to justify. I think they'll the three things that I see most commonly used is cultural relevance, personal indifference, and being anti-legalism. And I've talked about these in different ways and at different times, but this idea of cultural relevance is that we'll be better at outreach if we just kind of be like the world. And this happens at an individual level too.

Maybe you're like, I know I shouldn't be dating him, but maybe I can bring him to Jesus. Or I can bring her to Jesus. And it almost never works. Unless you get married, then the godly partner has a way of winning over. Not saying you should marry your un Christian boyfriend by any means. I'm just saying I've seen that work a lot of ways. Cultural relevance is something we should desire and reaching the culture is something we should desire, but we shouldn't do it in a way that rejects the authority of Jesus because the very essence of discipleship is leading people to submit to the authority of Jesus.

This other idea of personal indifference is like, well it doesn't bother me, so I don't think it should bother us. It's not personally I'm okay if they do that or live that lifestyle or if they kind of have that ideology and it's kind of like godless in some ways, but I'm cool. You know, it's not my thing, but it's their thing that's a justification for willingness in the church. It's a bad justification because what matters the most isn't what you think. In fact, what you think is probably third on the ring of the ladder.

It's what God thinks first. What does my neighbor think second? And then what do I think? So your personal indifference, that's good for you, but it doesn't mean it's a justification for worldliness. And then anti-legalism, this is a dressed-up theological argument that that people, preachers who focus on your behavior and say you should stop doing this and start doing that and you should really protect the purity of your life. Those guys are just getting the gospel wrong. Because the gospel is all about God's grace. We're saved by grace through faith.

It's not of our works, and so this whole preaching on your behavior is not preaching the gospel. We need to preach the gospel and stop preaching against these sinful lifestyle decisions. And I just think that's a misunderstanding of legalism. Legalism is not teaching on the importance of purity. Legalism is a specific heresy that says you cannot be reconciled to God unless you adhere to certain moral standards in the Mosaic Law. It's this idea that, yes,

you're saved, but not by grace alone. It's God's grace plus adherence to these Old Testament legal requirements.

And I don't hear anybody teaching or preaching that. So can people be a little bit overly traditional and fuddy-duddies, yes, but there is no New Testament gospel that cares not about how you live. The biblical gospel cares a lot about how you live your life. And if you really truly taste the goodness and grace of God in your life, it will change you. There is no concept in which you kind of pray a prayer when you're young and get your fire insurance from hell and then go live however you want to live and I and I have security of Once saved, always saved.

That is that that is foreign to the New Testament gospel. Certainly here in Romans 12, too. There is no justification for worldliness. In fact, there's strong warnings against worldliness. Galatians 6:7 says, don't be deceived. I love that because it's like this is an area where we can get deceived. Don't be deceived. God is not mocked. Whatever person sows is what he's going to reap. 2 John, or 1 John chapter 2, verse 15. Don't love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father isn't in him.

In other words, it's like loving the world actually displaces love for God in our hearts. So when we think we can kind of be mushy middle and ride the fence and it'll be okay, whatever that thing you're doing that's adopting the world is actually displacing love for God in your heart. And then James comes right out and says it's enmity with God. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. So this is kind of like mushy middle. We can be like the world and unlike the world is foreign to the New Testament.

And then back there are warnings against worldliness. So Paul is saying don't conform don't pattern your thinking after that. Don't I know it's popular psychology, but it doesn't mean it's going to be good psychology. I know it's popular in how to help the poor, how to structure our political agenda, but it's not how the kingdom works and so you don't need to fashion your life after it. Having said that, and I think I've pushed back against that pretty hard, I do want to push back the other direction. Because there are people who will say, amanda what I just said, and those young people, they're just the worldly, and they need to they need to start living right.

And probably so, but there's another extreme on the other end where people equate trendliness with worldliness. And trendliness is not worldliness. Okay, trendliness is trendliness. The best example of this I know is like what churches get all worked up about what a person wears and the music, a style of music that a church maybe adopts. Oh them drums, those drums, rock and roll, drum music, there's going to bring the devil into the church. That's just a trend. And biblically I don't know how you can make a case against any instruments.

There's all sorts of grounds for using all sorts of instruments to give praise to the Lord. Now. Is there certain types of music that leverage that genre to worship Satan? Sure. But you got to separate the trend from the sin, okay? It's very important. There were church traditions that wouldn't allow women to wear jeans, dresses only. Why? Because well back in that culture a dress signified a certain kind of a purity or a righteousness, but the culture changed because the trend changed. Just because the culture changed didn't mean the culture is wrong or unbiblical.

What is worldliness? Worldliness is not trendliness. Worldliness is rejecting the authority of Jesus And so where there's trends that are not rejecting the authority of Jesus, I think it's important that we allow room for that because we do want to reach the culture. We don't want to be unnecessarily offensive. We want to sit right there where God sits, rejecting conformity to the world and embracing submission to Jesus' authority in all things. So if I could summarize Romans 1 and 2, Romans 1 is all about surrendering yourself to God, and Romans 12, 2 is about separating yourself from the world.

We're to be surrendered to God and separate from the world. And when we surrender to God and we separate from the world, we put ourselves in a position to experience transformation. And that's what God wants. God wants our transformation. And the thing that the word that he uses when he talks about being transformed is the where we get our English word metamorphosis. I always think about do you guys remember the Dana Carvey movie Master of Disguise? Did anybody watch that? I love that movie. You remember what he says before he becomes another person?

Become another person, become another person, become another person. Then his voice begins to change and his body kind of shorts it like warps into these different things. That's what I think of when I think of transformation. Romans 12, 2. You literally become another person. It's not that you're changing your behavior to be like someone else that you're really not. Whoever you are is literally becoming something different. You are being transformed. What an amazing thing that the old you can be gone and this new you can come about. This new you that is fashioned after Jesus Christ, that you can get rid of those things that you hate about yourself, those struggles, those sins, those orientations, those inclinations, that that can actually can stay behind and you can press into a new life where you are totally new.

That's what the gospel does. It transforms us into what? Well, Romans 12. 2 doesn't say what it transforms us into, but Corinthians, 2 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul fills in the gaps. It's I think a helpful cross-reference for us when he talks about transformation, he says the way it works is kind of like we're looking at a mirror. And as we're beholding the glory of the Lord in this mirror. That process of beholding God's glory actually begins to change us into the image of Christ. And he says it changes us from one degree of glory to another, which means it's not instantaneous.

You don't become perfect overnight, you don't overcome those struggles overnight. And it's not something you do and your own strength, it's something that the Holy Spirit does in you as you behold the glory of the Lord. So as it's like you're beholding God's glory, and I think this happens through the Word because the Word reveals Christ, and when you see Christ, you see his glory. And as you surrender yourself to God and you're beholding the glory of the Lord This supernatural thing is taking place in your life where the old you is dying off and going away and this new you is being formed, and it happens progressively by glory to glory to glory through the Holy Spirit.

That's transformation. You're being transformed. How? By the renewing of your mind. That's interesting. So the sequence. This I think isn't very well understood. I think a lot of us assume I can change the way I live if I'll change the way I think. Anyone ever heard that? Read that? Sounds like some of you can read on a coffee cup at Mardell's. Change the way you think, change the way you live. That's not what Romans 12. 2 is saying, at least not from my perspective. That's not what 2 Corinthians 3. 18 is thinking or saying.

If you follow Paul's argument, the order is first surrender to God. Offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord. That's not about thinking, that's about behavior. He's saying reserve the members of your physical body for righteousness instead of sinfulness. Live holy, be holy. Stop drinking, stop cussing, start blessing, start growing, give life instead of cursing. And then don't be conformed to the pattern of the world. Again, it's all about behavior. It's not about your thinking. And it is in living a certain kind of lifestyle, that is actually the mechanism that transforms the mind.

And so it's not you change the way you think to change the way you live, you actually change the way you live to change the way you think. Which is so counterintuitive, but it's obviously true. In fact, I know it's true because Paul has been using this logic in reverse to talk about sin. And early on in Romans chapter 1 when he talks about people's minds being warped and them rejecting the Lord, it's the thing that's causing their minds to be warped is their lifestyle. In Romans chapter 1, you've got these people who are suppressing the truth.

How are they suppressing the truth? Because of ungodliness and unrighteousness. And it's their ungodly living and their unrighteous living that is actually doing something mentally. They're suppressing the truth of God and their mind is being warped by their behaviors. In the same way, if you keep following his argument, they kind of escalate from nasty behavior to nasty behavior to nasty behavior. And as the behaviors grow in their intensity, so also does their thinking. To the point that at the very end it says that God, because they didn't see fit to acknowledge God, he just gave them up to what?

A debased mind. It's not that the debased mind caused their unrighteous living. It's that their unrighteous living caused their debased mind. So you don't change the way you think to change the way you live. You change the way you live so you can change the way you

think. There's some kind of something about the way God has wired us that if we'll actually yield our bodies to sin, it takes our mind along with us. But if we'll yield our bodies to righteousness, so also will it take our minds along with it.

This is New Testament ethics as well. When the Bible talks about forgiveness, it doesn't say wait until you feel forgiving. It says you grant forgiveness before you feel it. And it is in granting the forgiveness that creates the feeling. It's kind of like going to the gym. If you ever woke up in the morning and thought, I really don't want to go to the gym today. I've been feeling that a lot here lately, if I'm honest. But when I'm on my game, when I'm doing the right thing, what do I do?

You just go anyway, right? And what happens when you show up and you do what you're supposed to do, your mind begins to change. And you start thinking, huh, I'm glad I'm here. I'm glad I came today. Because something about doing the right thing changes your thinking. And that's what Paul is saying here. If you'll surrender your body to God, offer your reserve your body for righteousness. It'll begin to change you, specifically by changing the way that you think. Now, when it says be transformed in the renewing of your mind, your mind is not just how you think intellectually.

It's a catch-all term. It means your will, your hopes, your dreams, your desires. All of those things in you that are not physical. Those things begin to be transformed so that they begin to look and feel like the dreams and the hopes and the desires and the loves of Jesus Christ Himself. You're being transformed into his image. You're not going to look physically like Jesus, right? You're not going to get middle Eastern skin tones and long hair and blue eyes. I'm just kidding, Jesus didn't have blue eyes, but you're not going to transform physically.

One day we'll be transformed physically. We'll be getting a glorified body and resurrection. Hallelujah. Amen. But that's not what's happening now. What's happening now is you're being transformed in your thinking to love like Jesus loves and to speak like Jesus speaks and to think like Jesus thinks by the Holy Spirit as you begin to live as Jesus lived. So what the reason I'm emphasizing this is because how you live matters. How you live matters to God And there are there is this tendency, especially in Christian world, well I'm saved by grace, and I can kind of, you know, God doesn't really care that I sin because I'm not saved by my behaviors, I'm saved by his grace.

That's true. You're saved not by your behavior, but by God's grace. But it is not true that he does not care how you live. He absolutely cares how you live. And it doesn't determine whether or not he loves you. But it does determine whether or not you see him. And it does determine whether or not people see him in you and through you it does determine whether or not you feel a communion with the Lord, whether you enjoy the Lord, how you live has a dramatic effect on those experiences in the Christian life.

And so of course it matters how you live. And when you begin to understand that, then righteousness kind of has a better feel for it. It's not some legalist, traditionalist, fuddy-duddy. Trying to rob your joy. It's your heavenly father saying, I want you to, I want to bless you. I want you to enjoy me. I want you to live the abundant life. But you've got to be changed in the way that you think, and the only way I can change your thinking is if you start doing what I've asked you to do.

Now. What does God want? He wants transformation. Where does it happen? It happens in the mind. How does it happen? It happens through a holy lifestyle. Why does it matter because that's the way that we discern or prove the will of God. So there at the very end, that little word discern is the Greek word dokimazo. It's translated differently based on your translation. Some say discern, some taste say test and approve, some say prove. The reason it's all across the board is because it's one of those words that is really heavy.

It's one of them fat words, you know, it's got a lot of meanings in it at the same time. Some of the things that I discovered in doing a little word study on it carries the idea of recognizing something for what it is. Demonstrating or kind of proving that truth by putting it to the test and then affirming it or commending it. By displaying it to others. So we don't have an English word that says all of that, but that's what this Greek word is saying. And so I want you to kind of think of when you th when you read discern here in Romans 122, think recognize the will of God, demonstrate the will of God, and affirm the will of God.

I'm going to recognize it as good and acceptable and perfect. I'm going to demonstrate it as good and acceptable and perfect. And I'm going to commend it or affirm it as good and acceptable and perfect. Now, when people think about the will of God, the first thing that they normally think about is, should I marry Tim or John? Should I go to this college or that college? Do we stay in Abilene or do we move to the Metroplex? And I'm not saying God doesn't have a will for those things, but I think that will of God is secondary to his primary will, which is your sanctification.

In other words, God wants you to be a certain kind of person before you get all wrapped up with what he has you do as that person. First second first Thessalonians chapter four something or another says this is the will of God for you, your sanctification. So what Paul is saying is you won't even be able to determine. The will of God if you're not living a certain kind of way. But to the degree that you begin to live as Christ has structured you to live, it is to that degree that your mind is going to be transformed so that on these matters of life where you're not sure, is this God, is this not?

Is this what God wants? Is it not? When you live a certain kind of way, it actually puts you in a position to be able to nail God's will instead of getting it wrong. And so an opportunity comes your way. An idea is presented. I think we should do this in the church. Well, is that going to be good or is that going to be bad? Is this something God wants or something he

doesn't want? He's saying if you're living a sinful, ungodly lifestyle, trying to discern that matter, you're going to get it wrong every time.

Because your mind isn't renewed. But when your mind's renewed, you'll be able to not only recognize it's what God wants, you'll be able to prove it. You'll be able to demonstrate it you'll be able to show others this is life-giving, this is wonderful, this is of course this is what God wants. How could you not see that this is what God wants? That's Christian maturity. Christian maturity isn't like knowing a lot of Bible facts. Christian maturity is being able to live in this world with all of its crazy and being able to discerningly say that's from the Lord and that isn't.

This is helpful and that's not helpful. This will bring God glory, that will not bring God glory. And it's listen, it's complex. You need wisdom, but the way the wisdom comes is I'm s arguing wrapped up in how you live your life. Transformation. And in 2024, I don't think there's any better skill you can have than to say that's from the Lord and that isn't. This is godly and that's not godly. It will really help you flourish in your Christian life when you know how to discern God's will. And this phrase good and acceptable and perfect, that's not words we use all the time.

The way I think about it, if you do a little word study on those words, it's being able to affirm the truth of God's will, the beauty, a goodness of God's will, and the beauty of God's will. Truth, goodness, and beauty. It's not just that it is, it's that it is good. And that when you when you receive it into your life, it actually brings things to their proper conclusion. It is it's perfect. It is the Greek word telos. It means bringing things to where they're supposed to be, it'll perfect them. It'll beautify the world if we do it this way. And of course that's what we want for our life. That's what I want for you as your pastor. I want you to be able to discern the will of God. And so what does any of that have to do with teaching the Bible? Okay, if what does God want? He wants your transformation. It happens up here. But the way that it happens up here is through what you're doing with your hands and your feet and your lifestyle. It's important that you live a righteous life because it's that righteous life that God uses to change your mind.

And when you're able to think the way God wants you to think, you can prove his will. And that's what we all need, living in a world full of crazy, is to know what is and is not from the Lord. So what does that have to do with teaching? Well, it has everything to do with teaching because Bible teaching is how people see the mercy of God in Christ. Bible teaching is how people are challenged and convicted to do this and not do that. There's something about what the Holy Spirit does in preaching.

I'm not reading your emails. The Holy Spirit's reading your emails. I'm just letting the text say what the text wants to say and God through his word convicts you and motivates you to want to live differently. The Bible talks about the Bible as being inspired by God, profitable

for teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness. So it's how we know God intellectually. It's how we see the truth of the gospel. Philosophically and intellectually, but it's also how we're encouraged and motivated to live differently. And when you let the Bible speak for itself I believe it's inspired by God in a way that when the Bible speaks, God is speaking, and when you see the truth of the Bible, you're actually seeing Jesus.

Because there is no real distinction in my mind between the living word and the written word. The written word is how we know the living word. Jesus is the living word. The Bible is the written word. The way we know the living word is through the written word, and we should always think about them as being linked together. I'm not saying the written word becomes a living word. I'm saying they're by God's design inextricably linked so that the way we come to see, love, and treasure Christ is by coming to see, love, and treasure Christ as He is explained and displayed in the Scripture.

There's one passage of Scripture that I think captures this idea brilliantly and it's right after Paul talked about transformation in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, when he says we are looking in the mirror, beholding the glory of the Lord, and we're being transformed from glory to glory to glory. Right after he talks about that He talks about teaching the Bible. And he explains a phrase that we use around here called "the Word does the work". The word does the work. So here's, I want you to read this passage and I'm going to explain it and then we're going to close out our time.

He says, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we don't lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful underhanded ways. Look at this. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word. In other words, I don't misrepresent the text. I let the text speak for itself. By an open statement of the truth, we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake for the God who said, let light shine out of darkness has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So here let me summarize Paul's argument. I know that's a lot of words, so let me just try to simplify it. Paul is saying, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers. So there is spiritual blinders on people who do not know the Lord.

And the devil's really good at it, and the way that he does it is by getting us stuck in sinful patterns of behavior that that turn off the light spiritually speaking. But what Paul is arguing is when I preach the word, when I let the word shine supernaturally through the word, our Heavenly Father is turning on the lights. He's removing the blinders. He is displaying the

face of Jesus. And when people see the face of Jesus, when they see the glory of Jesus, that's when the transformation happens. That's when they're transformed, glory to glory to glory.

So this is why Paul says, that's why I don't pervert the word. That's why I don't do a sermon on ten ways to be more romantic with your spouse. I'm sure that's interesting, but that's not necessarily letting the Bible speak with the Bible it's not necessarily letting the Bible say what it wants to say the way it wants to say it Paul is saying, when you let the Bible say what it wants to say the way it wants to say it, the Bible shows Jesus. And when people see Jesus, the blinders come off and the lights turn on and they're changed.

Here's a little—this comes from a book called dying to preach by Stephen Smith. It's a book for preachers, but it's so helpful to me. You've got God. That we need to be reconciled to God. You got Jesus who is the image of God. He shows us what God looks like, thinks like, feels like, acts like. Then you have people down here who have the blinders on. So people cannot see Jesus or God because of the blinders. So Paul is saying when the word is preached, the Holy Spirit uses the word.

The word does the work to take the blinders off the people so that through the word they begin to see Jesus. And in seeing Jesus, they are transformed or changed into the image of God. Because they become in the image of Jesus who is the image of God. Does that make sense? And so the most important thing I can do as your pastor is to let you see the word, to let the word say what the word wants to say in the way the word wants to say it. This is why we're committed to expository preaching, which just means the main point of the sermon is the main point of the text.

Because you don't need my wisdom or creativity. You need God's word. And so my main job is to die to myself, to kind of get behind the you ever hear Taylor when he prays, hide west behind the cross. Here what I wasn't that about. High both behind the cross. Across back there. He's again the baptistry was no, that's not what he's saying. He's saying, no. What don't let west be center stage, let Jesus be center stage, and the way Jesus is center stage is when you let the word do the work.

And when you let the word do the work, Jesus takes center stage, people see Jesus, their blinders come off. They say, I want to be like Jesus. I love Jesus. Jesus is beautiful. I'm all in. I'm done living in sin. I'm done living this life. I want the new hope, a new future. That's what happens with good Bible teaching and preaching. And that's why we have a value of teaching biblical truth, because the word does the work. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God. To sanctify or transform the people of God into the image of Jesus Christ.

So here's what I want you to do as we bring things to a close. I want you to leave here knowing how you live really matters to God. That it's not what's up here. God doesn't care what you know. He cares about your love. And Jesus says if you love me, you'll obey my

commandments. And so if there's a sense in which you're kind of like, whatever Jesus, I'm going to do this my own way, then you can't honestly say you love him. And he wants your loves. And so I just want to challenge you to stop dismissing your sinful behavior as it's not that bad and it's okay and I still have God.

Of course you do. You're reconciled, you're eternally secure in Jesus. Don't doubt your salvation. Don't hear me say that. But you are not living the abundant life. There is so much more. It is so much better. But how do you change? How does the gospel change us? It changes us in the word. The word does the work. And so I'm not saying go stop whatever you're doing overnight. I just want to challenge you to begin to commune with Jesus in his word. I want you to go buy a book from Mardell's that's going to teach you more about the word.

I want you to change the way you're living, and I want you to dive deeper and deeper into scripture. And if you're not in a small group, go get in a small group with a great Bible teacher. And if you're not coming to church on a regular basis, start coming to church, not because of the people you'll see or the music we sing, but because of the word that is preached. Because we will teach and preach the word, and the word does the work. And if you'll do that you'll begin to have your mind renewed.

And if you can have your mind renewed, you'll be able to determine, because every mature Christian can, that's from God and that isn't. This is helpful and this is not, and that's the thing you need most. In two thousand and twenty four. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time in your word. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that even as we were gathering around the scripture this morning and trying to understand it that you did. You showed up. You were here. You were center stage. And I just pray that that dynamic that we've been talking about this morning would take root in our life and that our lives would be different.

As a result of encountering you in your word. Pray for our church family that we would continue to be a church that Teaches and preaches biblical truth that we wouldn't apologize for it as it grows increasingly unpopular in our culture to be centered on the word. Would you help us to stand fast to stand firm and to hold fast, to not back it down an inch. Not because we're want to debate or because we insist on our own way, but because we know that is how life is found. We know that that the Spirit of God uses the Word of God to sanctify your people into the image of Jesus.

And so help us to hold firm to those convictions in a gracious, winsome way. And we pray that the people of Broadview Baptist church would be transformed, that we would be renewed in our minds. That we would have a church full of people who are mature spiritually. Not because they know a bunch of Bible facts, but because they wisely discern. This is what God wants. This is where God is taking us. This is what it should look like. This

isn't what it should look like. But I sense you are wanting to take us into a unknown future that is good and acceptable and perfect.

I think there are things you're wanting to do in and through our church that are amazing, new things. But we'll never see it and we'll never go if we don't have our minds renewed to discern what is and isn't from the Lord. So would you accomplish that in us as a church family? And for every individual person and every individual family, I pray the same that they would confidently walk into the future that you have for them. Because they have committed themselves to surrendering to God, separating from the world, and having their minds transformed by the glory of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.