

Series: **Transforming Faith** – week 6

CDOBC – beginning on 7/3/16

Today's Title: **"Faith + Godliness"**

August 7, 2016 ~ 2 Peter 1:6

OBJECTIVE: To help people understand the true nature of godliness is a heart transformed into the heart of God.

Opening Prayer

Just to be clear...this church is not about 'religion'.

I do not encourage you to be more 'religious'.

In fact, I plead with you to reject 'religion'.

Reject the rituals and rules which make a good impression, yet never touch your heart.

'Religion' has been defined as *people trying to reach God on their terms...or People trying to do things to earn God's forgiveness.*

For centuries people have been making their own rules when it comes to God.

They may accept a great deal of what the bible says...but they add to it...or they leave certain parts out which make them uncomfortable or would require a tremendous overhaul of their own life. What's left is 'religion'.

This church is about...is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel of Christ tells us how we can be reconciled to God through the death and resurrection of Christ.

The gospel is about the truth of Christ - the bible - transforming our mind and heart so it is in-line with the mind and heart of God.

It's not about impressing other people with how committed we are or how disciplined we are in our faith.

It's about trusting in Jesus Christ.

It's about realizing we are unable to please God or live good enough lives apart from His love, grace and truth being active in our life.

I always chuckle under my breath - and at the same time have a feeling of sorrow when I hear people say Christianity is a 'crutch' for those who need help in life - for those who need something to help them get through each day.

I chuckle because those statements are made in tremendous ignorance of what the Christian life involves.

I have sorrow because they are probably saying these things because of the Christians they have known in their life or Christians they have observed.

The people in your circle of influence - your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers - how would they describe your Christian life?

- Would they know you are a Christian?
- Would they have a favorable impression of Christ because of your relationship with them?
- Would they say you live a godly life?

Turn in your bibles / tap on your device to **2 Peter 1:5-6**

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness...”

Today, our focus is on godliness.

As Peter begins this letter, it’s clear he is writing to Christians (1:1), and he is telling followers of Christ the importance of adding these 7 things to their faith.

He’s also mentioned godliness in vs. 3:

2 Peter 1:3

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence...”

This is encouraging because it tells us becoming more godly is possible! God has given us “all things that pertain to life and godliness”.

The birth of a baby is one of the great moments in the life of the parents. We celebrate our birthday for the rest of our life - but shortly after a baby’s birth, parents begin to do the necessary things which will help their newborn baby grow.

They don’t want this little infant to stay a little infant!

They work hard and sacrifice to make sure this little boy/girl will grow.

If there isn’t growth - that is a major problem.

When you first put your faith in Christ - you’re a newborn baby (spiritually speaking).

You have a new life in Christ...Day 1.

Now it's time to begin growing. Here are 5 simple steps to help you know how to grow in your faith.

First growth step: Baptism. Your public stand for Christ.

Second growth step: begin learning God's Word - begin learning what the bible teaches.

Third growth step: Join a small group - begin developing meaningful relationships with other Christ followers who can help you grow. Healthy and meaningful relationships with other Christians who can rejoice with you in the wonderful times of blessing - and they can hold you up and weep with you when life is full of pain and difficulty.

Fourth growth step: Serve in a ministry. Put others first! Don't live just for your own interests...but look to serve the interests of others. (Phil. 2:4)

Fifth growth step: Share the gospel with those who don't know Christ...those who are 'religious'.

These 5 steps are a simple pathway which should give you an idea how a Christian progresses in their life.

But these steps are not growth in themselves.

Godliness is not achieved by doing the right things or by going to church every Sunday or by serving or by sharing the gospel.

Adding godliness to your faith is much more difficult.

On Friday we watched the opening ceremonies of the Olympic games in Rio.

The elaborate choreography and decorations of the opening ceremonies are not the essence of the Olympic games.

The athletic competition is the essence of the games.

No matter what country or what policies a country has, their athletes are just like athletes from other countries - competing as teams or individuals.

The sacrifice involved for an athlete to become an Olympian is mind-boggling. The training and discipline (physical, mental and emotional) is amazingly difficult and demanding.

Look at what Paul told the younger pastor Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:7-8

“Have nothing to do with irreverent (godless), silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.”

“godliness is of value in every way” both in this life...and “the life to come.”

But notice...it takes training!

It doesn't happen automatically because you go to church...or you give your tithe...or you pray...or you're in a small group or you serve...

And Paul warns Timothy not to get distracted - not to take his eyes off the prize - “Have nothing to do with irreverent (godless), silly myths.”

Don't focus on godless things...focus on God's Word.

But this takes training! The Greek words for "train" (vs. 7) and "training" (vs. 8) is *gumnaze* and *gymnasia* - from which we get our words 'gymnastics' and 'gymnasium'.

Training is hard work...but anything worthwhile is!

So... what does godliness look like?

How do I know if I'm adding godliness to my faith?

Turn to **Luke 18:9-12** and we'll see what godliness does not look like...and what it does look like.

9 He (Jesus) also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: **10** "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' **13** But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' **14** I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

A godly person is humble.

Compare the two men and their level of pride.

The Pharisee...the religious guy - is arrogant and looks down on everyone else.

The tax collector has a clear understanding of his sin in light of God's holiness. He's not comparing himself to other people...he's comparing himself to God.

The Pharisee is standing and praying thinking he's the jewel of God's creation and all the other people in the temple are worthless failures. The text seems to indicate the Pharisee is standing in a prominent place - a place where others would see him praying.

The tax collector has slipped into the temple - hoping to be unnoticed - realizing the focus is not on what other people see, but on what God sees.

The tax collector doesn't look up to heaven because he is aware of the holiness of God, which is why he asks for mercy.

The Pharisee doesn't seem to think he needs God's mercy. (Sermon on the Mount - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." **Matt. 5:3**)

A godly person is humble in their spirit.

A godly person does not judge based on what someone looks like.

The second thing to note is the Pharisee's judgment of what everyone looks like to him. Everyone else is lower than him - less holy, less righteous. The Pharisee is making judgments simply based on what people look like.

A godly person doesn't judge people by their outward appearance.

1 Samuel 16:7 “Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.”

The tax collector wasn't there to look at the other people - he was there to repent and seek God's mercy.

The other people weren't his focus - God was his focus, and he judged himself on comparison to God's character - not the character of others.

The problem is we see danger in others - but fail to see the most dangerous person...our self.

We pose the greatest danger to ourselves.

Your heart poses a great danger to yourself - if your heart is set against God.

The human heart is capable of great evil - evil which seems to come out of nowhere...is coming from within our own heart!

Don't look at others and point your finger at them and think they are the problem. I know it's easy to do - all you have to do is watch the news and the 24 hour news channels and you will see a parade of people where it's really easy to point your finger at and say, *“They're the problem! If we could just get rid of them - silence them - then we could fix what's wrong with this country!”*

Sure...they may not be helping things...but 'religion' causes you to point fingers - godliness causes you to look in the mirror.

Romans 10:2-4

“For I bear them witness that they (Jews) have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Zeal...passion is good - especially if you have zeal or passion for God.

But zeal or passion without knowledge - without the truth - leads to ruin. (See 2 Peter 1:3)

Spiritual activity does not make someone godly.

Godliness is not about activity.

Morality and ethics is a result of godliness, not the way to godliness.

Notice how much the Pharisee was doing.

He was spiritually very busy. In fact, he was busy beyond the guidelines of Scripture.

In the O.T., there was one day of fasting each year (Day of Atonement). This guy was fasting 2x / week!

In the O.T., those in Israel were required to tithe on what they had earned...not their possessions. This guy would tithe not only on his income, but on everything he owned!

But he didn't become more godly in all these spiritual activities because He was doing them to impress others. He was 'religious' - not godly.

A godly person understands their righteousness comes from Christ.

The Pharisee was not begging for mercy - the tax collector was.

Do you think you're righteous and look down on others who are different from you?

Yeah...but Steve, my sin is not always on purpose and I'm not intentionally evil like other people!

What was Jesus' response when He saw the masses of people?

He had compassion on them because they were lost in their sin - like sheep without a shepherd. (Mark 6:34)

Godliness is when the truth and grace of Christ transforms and changes your heart so your heart and mind are in-line with the mind and heart of God.

When this happens, your morals and ethics will also follow God's truth - but your heart is the true place where godliness is added to your faith.

Apply it...

Put your faith in Christ - reject 'religion'

Admit your sins

Believe in Jesus as your Savior

Commit each day to Christ

Allow God to transform your heart and mind through
His grace and His truth.

Close in prayer