

A LIFE TRANSFORMED: PERSPECTIVE

OT: Malachi 3:13-4:6

NT: Titus 2:11-14

Big Idea: *As Christians we need the right PERSPECTIVE. We need to remember: What Christ did for us. Who we are in Christ. Where we are heading in Christ.*

As Christians, people who believe in Jesus Christ and have faith in all he has done for us, we share a certain privilege.

Listen to God's true word written in 1 Peter 2...

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

That's super encouraging and comforting. We share the enormous privilege.

We are a people belonging to the holy creator God, the one true God. He has rescued us through his son Jesus Christ.

We are his holy nation and representatives to the world around us. This means we have some responsibility.

As God's holy, set apart people we are called to live differently as we see in Romans 12...

² Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

As Christians we are called to live out what we believe. Our lives in fact should reflect what we believe in Jesus Christ.

We need to live out the transformation that has taken place in our hearts through the miraculous salvation Christ has brought us.

We heard earlier from Paul, who experienced this salvation and strives to live it out. It's not always easy though.

While we are still living in this world, we will constantly struggle to live out our faith in Christ.

But God's word calls us to keep going, to persevere and endure, because following Jesus is the best thing for us.

Over the next few weeks we will be looking at what a transformed life looks like. My prayer is that we will all grow to look more like Jesus to the world around us.

To be encouraged by all we have in Jesus and
challenged to live it out.

Tonight we start with a really important
characteristic of a life transformed. Tonight's
topic is perspective.

As we work through this topic together I want
you to think about this question...what is the
loudest voice in your head during the week?

For me the answer to that question is the world.
I'm sure it's the same for you. Think about your
average day in your average week.

For me it goes like this. I wake up and put the TV
on. The TV appeals to my worldliness through
advertising and people who seem to have it all.

Once I have finished breakfast and am ready to leave I get into my car where I put on the radio.

Once again I am influenced by the world on how I should be thinking and living through radio presenters and songs.

Once I get to work I do spend most of my day in God's true word reading it and chatting about it. But I also spend a fair amount of time thinking about admin and worldly issues.

Then I get in my car to come home and get influenced some more from the world. I make supper and watch hours of more TV and then go sleep.

Pretty much all of my 'me' time revolves around TV, that's how I relax and chill out. It's no

surprise that the loudest voice for me is the world.

Now it's important to remember that we are free to enjoy all the good gifts God gives us. We mustn't feel guilty or ashamed of them.

The issue comes in when the gifts become our idols. When we lose perspective. With worldly influence comes worldly wisdom.

Worldly wisdom in God's view is foolishness, it tells you to live for the moment. To never deny yourself anything.

The world tells you to follow your heart, to basically eat drink and be merry for tomorrow you die.

Sadly I get sucked into this lie.

I am pretty sure you guys do to. We get so caught up in this world and this life that we lose perspective of reality.

Losing perspective means that we can't really enjoy all the good gifts God has given us, because we can't fully appreciate them.

When we lose perspective the gifts rule us and burden us rather than us enjoying them. You see the problem?

As Christians, as people who live for Jesus and not for the moment we need to have the right perspective.

To do this we need to remember three things, firstly we need to remember...

1. What Christ did for us

Basically we need to lift up our heads in this crazy busy world and look back to what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Have a look at v11 with me...

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

The grace of God has appeared, it's already happened. Jesus is God's grace to our lost and broken world.

In our sin, in our rebellion, in our time of living against God, Jesus Christ was sent by God His Father to us to bring salvation for all people.

Jesus Christ came to rescue us from ourselves, from our hard sinful hearts. We couldn't love God by ourselves we needed help, we needed rescue.

Jesus Christ came to rescue us from the devil, the tempter who uses the foolishness of the world to lure us in.

Jesus Christ came to rescue us from death, something all of us fear and none of us can avoid.

That is the grace of God that has appeared and brings salvation to all people.

That's great news. That's exciting news. That's freeing news.

The world around us often places a burden on us. I don't have enough followers on social media, I don't have enough money, I don't feel safe, I can't travel anywhere this year.

I am not the smartest, I won't be representing the Proteas or Springboks in the world cup this year.

I don't have a boyfriend/girlfriend, I lost a close friend/family member, I recently found out I have cancer, my experience of people close to me is abuse and so I trust no one.

Those are heavy burdens we carry in our lives and when we fail to look back and remember what Christ did for us it's a lonely and extremely difficult place to be.

When we are overwhelmed by this world, a great reminder is to look back to the cross, the place where Jesus God's the Son died for you.

At the cross, Jesus Christ took all your guilt all your shame and all your sin. Jesus experienced

the full eternal punishment of God that we all
deserved on himself.

Jesus Christ did this so that we never have to.
That's why Jesus is able to say to us that when
we are heavily burdened to cast our burdens on
him.

Jesus Christ is able to take our worries and
anxieties and sufferings on himself so that we
can lighten our load.

Jesus Christ the God man knows what it feels like
to suffer, to be anxious, to feel betrayed and sad.

In our crazy busy world that sucks us in to the
here and now we must remember to look back to
what Christ has done for us.

Jesus Christ had brought us salvation and the offer still stands, it is for all people.

Looking back helps us to function in the here and now. You can't move forward if you are always looking back.

Secondly we as we look at the world around us we are to remember...

2. Who we are in Christ

We look back at what Christ has done for us and then when we turn our attention back to this world we see things in a new light.

We remember that this world is not it, that we have been rescued through Jesus Christ and that we have new life in him.

More than that we have a new identity, we are sons and daughters of the eternal creator and one true God.

We are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. We are no longer dead, but alive. No longer in darkness, but in light.

Look with me at v12...

¹² instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age,

It's a simple enough concept to grasp isn't it? You are no longer dead in the world, you are alive in God's family.

We are to live out who we are. It would be as weird as seeing Lionel Messi scrumming against the Springbok front row.

Or Eben Etzebeth building tiny and intricate fairy princess castles.

Or seeing Jamie Oliver as the new Ronald McDonald and pigging out on McDonald's food.

We understand the concept; we don't need someone to break the code for us.

Yet we often don't live as though we get it. We don't live out our new identity. Our lives if we are honest don't often reflect sensibility and righteousness.

In Christ we are a new creation, we are chosen people a royal priesthood. In Christ we have a glorious inheritance waiting for us that can perish or fade.

In Christ we are being kept for our inheritance.

This is glorious news, this is an exciting truth.
That's how we are to engage the world around
us.

By remembering who we are in Christ. We
belong to the almighty God, the creator of
everything, including us.

We are God's dearly loved children. When we
are sucked into the world. When we fall for the
lies of the world.

That if you work hard enough life will be easy.
That if you want to be happy you just need lots
of money or success.

That the only way to numb your pain is through
alcohol or drugs or sex. Or that your life doesn't
matter and no one would miss you if you were
gone.

That you are in too much pain and a burden to everyone around you. Remember who you are in Christ.

You are precious to God, you are loved by God. He sent his one and only Son to die for you so that you can live.

God loved you before you were anywhere close to loving him. He wants a relationship with you...for all eternity.

In Christ you have everything, every spiritual blessing. In Christ you have eternal life. Nothing in this world compares to that. Nothing.

When you are focused on this world alone you feel disappointed and empty, because we were made for so much more.

We were made for eternal relationship with our creator. Tonight as you sit here you may not have that relationship.

Tonight the offer still stands. As we saw in the previous point Jesus has died for you to give you life.

When you believe that he alone can save you and that he alone is the eternal King and your savior.

You have a new identity in him, through the Holy Spirit who lives in you and helps you live out your new identity.

You will still have struggles and difficulties, but with your new perspective things will make sense and will make things easier and more bearable.

The last comment to make on who we are in Christ is to look around. In Christ we are a body of people, we are a new community.

A diversely united community connected to each other with an eternal bond through Jesus Christ.

God's true word says that we together are the body of Jesus Christ. We need each other to help us keep perspective.

No matter how big or small the injury is, when you cut, scrape or break something on your body, or when something stops working as it should...your whole body is affected.

As God's people, as the body of Jesus Christ, when one of us is struggling we should all feel it. We should do all we can to help and encourage each other with the truth of the Gospel.

While we were still sinners Christ died for us. It's not easy to remember what Christ did for us and who we are in Christ by ourselves.

That's why God gives us each other. That's why sharing our lives with each other in different contexts is so important.

Because as we will see in my final point we are heading to eternity together.

We look back at what Christ has done for us, as we look around in the present we remember who we are in Christ and finally we remember...

3. Where we are heading in Christ

The great news is that the cross where Jesus died wasn't the end of God's rescuing story.

Jesus conquered death, three days after being buried Jesus rose to life.

After spending some time with his disciples and appearing to hundreds of people Jesus ascended to his eternal throne.

Jesus left us with the promise that he will return to take us to be with him forever.

This is what we see in the last section of this passage. Follow with me from v13...

¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.

Brothers and sisters Jesus is coming back.

It's important for us as we engage the world around us to be looking forward. To remember where we are headed.

We have a lot more awaiting us than making it to the top of our field, or having the most successful child.

We have a lot more awaiting us than finding the perfect wife or husband. We are heading to a far greater place than any country in our world.

That's because we are heading to the new creation to spend eternity with our eternal King Jesus.

No matter where you go in this world you will find heart ache, sickness and sadness. But not in the new creation.

In Christ's eternal kingdom, that is the new creation, there will be no more sickness, no more pain, no more sadness and no more death.

Because most importantly there will be no more sin. The perfection that we strive here as we fight against sin will be completed in the new creation.

In Christ and through his saving work we will spend all eternity with him without sin to mess things up.

Once again that is great news, that is exciting news. It is glorious news. I can't wait.

When we are consumed by this world and all the fake promises it offers of happiness and success and peace we will only find disappointment.

We are to enjoy the things God gives us.

But we aren't meant to find fulfilment in them.
There is a big difference there for us to see and
understand.

As we reflect on God's beautiful creation and the
many things on offer to us here, we must keep
our eye on the prize.

C.S Lewis a famous Christian thinker and author
has this great quote for us to chew on...

***It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not
too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted
creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and
ambition when infinite joy is offered us.***

***Like an ignorant child who wants to go on
making mud pies in a slum because he cannot
imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday
at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.***

Those words are quite scathing to hear. We have weak desires and are half-hearted creatures. We don't want to hear that.

But it's completely true when we lose perspective of what Christ has done for us and who we are in him and where we are headed.

When we are sucked into living for the moment and start believing that Jesus isn't enough or that Jesus can't satisfy us, this truth rings true.

Through Jesus Christ, God gives us everything we need for this life and the next. God gives us every opportunity to accept his offer.

God has spared no expense in providing our rescue and an eternal relationship with him.

It's right there in v14...

¹⁴ He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.

Jesus in his obedience and love for his Father and love for us gave himself to redeem us.

Our sin comes at a price. God's word tells us that the wages of sin is death. The price we pay for sin is death.

That is exactly what God told the first man Adam in the Garden of Eden, rebellion against God is death.

Choosing to ignore God and live your own way leads to eternal death.

Jesus dies for us to redeem us. Death is the price God requires for sin to remain just and therefore Jesus dies on our behalf.

Jesus dies as our substitute and because he is God his death is sufficient for us to be redeemed.

We owe God a debt because of our sin, sadly it's a debt none of us can pay. God therefore comes to pay the debt for us in Jesus Christ.

His blood is sufficient for us. The payment of Jesus Christ's blood is acceptable and therefore frees us from eternal death.

As we strive to live transformed lives in our world we must have the right perspective. We must look different to the rest of the world.

We have so much to look forward to.

We are people belonging to God, chosen to do good works.

We need to have the right perspective as we engage with the world around us.

When disaster strikes, we lose our job, have a huge fight with a loved one, are facing death...it's not that we don't get sad or angry...it's what we hold on to.

Remembering what Christ has done for you. He gave up his eternity to be a mortal man that suffered and died for you.

We remember who we are in Christ. We have a new identity, we are sons and daughters of the only eternal God and together we are the body of Christ our King.

We remember where we are heading in Christ.
We have an eternal home spent in perfect
relationship with our eternal King.

Our eternity is waiting for us it is guaranteed.
When we have the right perspective how we deal
with those real life issues should and must look
different to the rest of the world.

That's our first encouragement and challenge in
our 'a life transformed' series.

As we head out tonight and into the week
tomorrow let's strive to keep perspective in a
world that lives for the moment.

Let us remember what Christ did for us, who we
are in Christ and where we are headed in Christ.

Pray.