

House On The Rock Life Group Study outline 2024

March: Transformation

Outlines for the month

Week 1: Transformed in Speech

Week 2: Transformed in Character

Week 3: Transformed by the Cross✓

Introduction

The altar was a key part of worship in the Old Testament. It had one purpose – to be the place where holy sacrifice was transformed from a physical quantity to a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God. Fire was a mark of God’s acceptance – as we could see from the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel (1 Kgs 17). However fire was also the agent of transformation. While the altar itself was unchanged by the fire, the offering had to be, in order to be acceptable to God.

We find altars at key points in the bible. There was an altar Genesis 3, when the lamb was sacrificed to cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness. We see another altar in Genesis 8 after the great flood. We see the same with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the kings of Israel and so forth. Each time a Godly altar was built, it signified a need for transformation by fire.

Our greatest transformational moment was established in time 2000 years ago. There, at the altar of the cross, all of mankind was offered the chance of a fresh beginning with God. The cross reveals to us the character of God: His love for lost sinners and His perfect justice meet at the cross. If we want to grow in our love for God, which is the first and greatest commandment, then we must be growing to understand and appreciate of the cross, which shows us His great love. If we want to grow in godliness, we must grow in understanding the significance of the cross. If we want to experience transformation, we must begin at the altar of the cross. But in the same way that the offering is not acceptable until it is transformed by fire, our transformation is not acceptable until we experience resurrection in Christ.

Pilot text

Acts 9:5 [NET] 5 So he said, “Who are you, Lord?” He replied, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting!”

Phil 3:10-14 [NET] 10 My aim is to know him, to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to be like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained this - that is, I have not already been perfected - but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are

behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, 14 with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

The pilot text points us towards certain changes that result from our transformational experience of Christ.

- **Our pursuit changes.** In Paul's first encounter with Christ on the way to Damascus, he did not know who Christ was. His question was "who are you, Lord?" By the time he was writing this letter to the Philippians, the evidence of his transformation from Saul to Paul was his change of pursuit from chasing men to chasing God. How do you pursue God in practice?
 - a. Recommit to consistency in personal prayer
 - b. Study the bible through this year. If you are interested in a bible study challenge to read the bible from cover in **90 days**, sign up [here](#).
 - c. Serve God through serving others. If you would like to find out how you can serve in the church, click [here](#)
- **Our focus changes.** Paul did not claim perfection and we certainly cannot claim it either. But, like him, when we trust Christ we have a single, all-absorbing focus: "one thing I do". Like a runner in a race, we focus on our destination, putting away what is past and focusing on what lies ahead.
 - a. Put away past accomplishments (in so much as they get in the way of your focus), past failures and past wrongs done to you. If you are harbouring resentment and/or unforgiveness towards anyone, let it go.
 - b. Actively (everyday, in the place of prayer and medication) remind yourself of your spiritual goal to be like Christ. Every day, commit to progressing on that race. When you make a mistake, pick yourself up and continue the race.

For more information on this topic read bible.org.

- Questions for discussion (use scriptures to support your position):
 1. How would you advise a Christian who said that he/she didn't feel worthy to pray?
 2. Someone says, "Knowing God sounds like a difficult process. Why can't it be easier?"
Your response?
 3. Discuss: Is it wrong to focus on how Christ can help people with their problems rather than on sin, righteousness, and judgment?
 4. How can people who are busy with their jobs, their families, and all the other responsibilities in life stay focused on keeping Christ's purpose as their purpose?