

The Messenger

The Atlanta Church of Christ

in Gwinnett

Spiritual Transformation

Repentance: "Metanoia"

By Kendall Knight

When I started studying the scriptures in the spring of 1994, it was a very hopeless time in my life. I needed a spiritual overhaul, a spiritual transformation if you will. The scripture that comes to mind is **Roman's 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."*** The Latin word for repentance is Metanoia, which means a return to right understanding, and to recovering one's mind as it were from madness. My mind was filled with madness prior to becoming a Christian.

I believe that there will always be a process of spiritual transformation needed. Remember that Paul was speaking to the Roman Christians when he encouraged them to transform their minds. I believe that right now in our fellowship spiritual transformation, the renewing of our minds, is needed. It has been very evident in the work that is being done by our leaders. The character of the Apostles, 1 Corinthians, and Acts classes are very powerful. The madness that has filled God's churches over the years is denominations, or the lack of authentic application of the scriptures.

The word of God is alive. **Hebrew's 4:12** tells us that ***"the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating as far as to divide soul, spirit, joints, and marrow: it is a judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart"*** (Holman Translation).

(continued on page 4)

Elders

Steve Galbreath
Alan Rouse

Evangelist

Richard Alawaye

Women's Ministry & Welfare

Sarah Alawaye
Roxanne Galbreath
Sherry Rouse

Teens

Todd and Tracey Reynolds

Deacons

Birt Anglin
Peter Berry
Steve Collier
Danny Emmett
Bill Francis
Patrick Freeman
Glenn Hayes
Kendall Knight
Karl Lynn
Russ McGarr
Jeff Mueller
Todd Reynolds
Todd Shultz
Dan Stehr
Ken Watson

UPCOMING EVENTS

May. 11 – Mother's Day

UPCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

Ron Drabot, Charlotte, NC

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

It's Not My Problem 2
 Women's Corner..... 3
 Family Groups & Deacons Directory 4

It's Not My Problem

By Alan Rouse

One of the most important and most often ignored passages of scripture about Christian unity is found in Romans 14. That passage teaches us how to handle differences of conscience among Christians.

The differences Paul addressed in Romans 14 were not minor. These were topics on which each party was "fully convinced in his own mind." The matters were so significant that "the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats." The two points of view were diametrically opposed, and the stakes could not have been higher. Violating conscience would bring condemnation. The controversy was a dilemma with eternal consequences.

The profound solution that the Holy Spirit provided through Paul's letter consisted of three parts:

1. Accept one another anyway.
2. Do not violate your conscience.
3. Do not cause your brother to stumble.

It seems to me that Christians are much more focused on #2, and less on #1 and #3. People go to great lengths to avoid complying with #3, because that part requires us to give up our rights for the benefit of our brother.

Romans 14:20-21 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

We hate the idea of giving up our rights. In our effort to avoid that, we sometimes go to ridiculous lengths. We argue about whether a matter is disputable or not. (Think about how silly that argument is!) Or we argue about who is the "weaker brother". (What difference does that make? Regardless of whether he is the weaker or the stronger brother, I should not do anything to cause him to stumble.) It seems that any argument will do, as long as it results in me keeping my rights.

Another curious argument that is sometimes employed is that a brother's conscientious objection is not valid, because his conscience is improperly trained – and therefore that we do not need to take his conscientious objection into consideration. Of course it is true that a person's conscience can be founded on

faulty understandings. But he is still obligated to abide by his conscience. In the example of Romans 14, the brother who would not eat meat had a conscience that was improperly trained on the subject. Yet he would still be condemned if he ate. And the brother whose conscience was correctly trained was still commanded not to eat anything that would cause his brother to stumble. The fact that his brother's conscience was improperly trained was not relevant.

In the general case, both parties must admit that their consciences are fallible. Even the inspired apostle Paul acknowledged that about his conscience:

1Corinthians 4:4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

So we really don't always know with certainty which party has an incorrect view. We don't know who is the weaker brother and who is stronger. And again, that really isn't relevant to my responsibility toward my brother. In either case, I must accept him, and not cause him to stumble, while still following my own conscience personally.

The command to accept one another rests on the foundation of another command, the command to love one another.

1John 4:20-21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

When we argue and look for loopholes rather than giving up our rights for the benefit of our brother, we are not loving our brother. (Romans 13:10 Love does no harm to its neighbor.) Why are we willing to do something that puts our brother's soul in jeopardy? Protecting my brother's conscience really is my problem!

We need to mature to the point that we will gladly give up our perceived rights in order to protect the consciences of our brothers and sisters. Let's not make excuses and let's not look for loopholes. Let's love one another.



The Christian Way (Pt.2)

By Sarah Alawaye

I want to thank you all the sisters for reaching out to me in kindness and deed during the death of my father, and not just during my time of need. I thank you for the way that we strive to reach out to each other in meeting each other's needs. Thank you.

One thing I have been reminded of during this time of mourning, as a sister shared with me, is that suffering brings a certain spiritual maturity and holiness, if while going through it, we strive to imitate Jesus' reaction and heart while he hanged on the cross. Suffering, pain, adversity, helps us have an eternal perspective. I think this is gained when we stay in the Lord, through prayer and his word and let people in on our pain.

Let us look together, at the way Jesus responded when he suffered on the cross, and let us imitate his heart, knowing that when we do so, we will draw closer to him.

Luke 23:34 *If anybody who has a right to be angry and react however way it is Jesus, for He had no sin, made no mistake, had done nothing wrong and yet His Heart was, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing"!*

"FORGIVE"

It is the giving up of resentment, indignation, or anger against another person for a perceived offense, mistake, or hurt. It is a ceasing to demand punishment or restitution! It is the releasing of the person or situation into God's hand.

Colossians 3:13 *This is God's way. He tells us the kind of heart we ought to have; to bear with each other, forgive and have an unconditional heart! We can have different responses when we are hurt or feel wronged: anger, resentment, become self preserving. We can feel self pity, be a victim, frustrated, irritated, and have a spirit of revenge because feelings are hurt, etc.*

I look at my heart: 18 years later, I still am learning this in one fashion or another, in different ways at different moments, under different circumstances. I could be wrong but even as I age, this seems to get harder with each successive year! (It could be my defensive perception). But I see God reaching my heart, training my heart through the different issues to teach me to be unconditional at heart, for that is the goal. Not an easy feat, but achieve it we must, through Him and His ways, through prayer and by His spirit. Jesus' heart: "Forgive".

"THEM"

There are lots of "Thems" that we have to forgive: The daily "Thems" - husbands, children, co-workers, people we are in daily contact with. Life long "Thems" - family, friends, those inside and outside of church. Through life issues, circumstances or situations that seem never ending, our heart's attitude ought to be that of forgiving, a letting go and letting God.

Question: Sisters, who are your "Thems"?

Hebrews 2: 5-11

Jesus was made perfect through what he suffered.

Romans 8:17

Suffering is a normal part of Christian life; it has a goal - to forge our hearts to be like that of God's in order to share in His glory!

"FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO"

The consequences of "either/or" are enormous!

If we do not acquire the heart of God by embracing His process, we will become bitter old women and miss out on heaven, and worse, we teach our children the same.

James 2:12-13 *Mercy triumphs!*

Mathew 11:28-30 *God says come to me. Gods heart is that of mercy, he says to learn from Him.*

1 Peter 2: 21-25 *It takes incredible humility to let people insult you. But Jesus entrusted himself to God, who is just, and He has left us a way for us to follow - His way, not ours, that can easily be influenced by emotions, fear and bad memories.*

I believe embracing Jesus' heart, his unwavering true view of His father in the midst of pain and suffering, and allowing our hearts to be fashioned to become like His, is The Christian Way.

God bless you.

Spiritual Transformation

(continued)

Jesus has called us to authentically love one another (**John 13:34-35**). ***"I give you a new commandment: love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for another."*** The only way that we will see the tremendous growth in our fellowship is to love one another. Reaching out to the lost effectively means that we will love each other more deeply and sincerely. Unresolved conflict and conflict avoiding are only going to hurt God's church. We need to transform how we see each other. It is very important to love the difficult and love the easy. This will help to avoid the cliques that Satan will use to slow down the work of God.

We need to spend more time together across the fellowship, love and invite people into our homes outside of our normal sphere of influence. What we notice from Acts is that the disciples spent a lot of time together. **Acts 2:42-47** defines how devoted to one another they were. As a result the Lord added to their numbers daily. I believe that we all want to see more lost souls become Christians in Gwinnett County and all over the world. Therefore, we must change how we see each other. Head knowledge is good, but without action, it is dead. **James 2:14** says ***"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says, he has faith, but does not have works? Can his faith save him?"*** **James 2:19** tells us that the demons believe that there is a God as well. My point is that faith and deeds must work together.

Our leaders recently prompted us to ask ourselves a very powerful question: "What is going to matter in 100 years?" At the end of the day the only thing that will matter is if we going to be in heaven with Jesus, and how many people will go with us? We have to transform the way we see the lost. **Matthew 35-38** tells us that Jesus was helping and healing people. He saw them as harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He tells us that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. We, however, are those workers and must see the fields as ripe for the message.

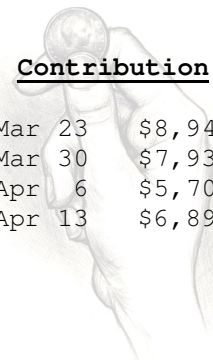
I have decided to transform/repent in this area of my life. I want to be in at least one new bible study this quarter with someone who wants to know the real Jesus. I have made it a focus of mine to reach out to more people. I know that some of us are involved daily with seeking and saving the lost, however for many of us, like myself, it has not been our focus. Pray to God to lead you to a soul searching for Him. My encouragement to all of us is to make it a goal to find one new relationship this quarter and get into the bible with them. It will be very encouraging to see another person getting to know Jesus.

Acts 3:19 says, ***"Therefore repent and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out so that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*** Times of refreshing are just around the corner, if we would only repent! (Metanoia).

Deacons Directory

Karl Lynn	Single Parents	770-978-4747
Ken Watson	Benevolence	678-376-2677
Peter Berry	Benevolence	678-376-1878
Patrick Freeman	Kingdom Kids	770-921-1811
Glenn Hayes	Kingdom Kids	770-985-6921
Dan Stehr	Visitation	770-925-2943
Bill Francis	Visitation	770-806-8645
Todd Reynolds	Middle School	770-682-0027
Russ McGarr	Middle School	770-381-5045
Steve Collier	Teens-Parents	770-717-5784
Danny Emmett	Hope, Events	770-985-4542
Todd Shultz	Communications	770-277-4276
Birt Anglin	Ushering	678-849-0180
Jeff Mueller	Order of Worship	770-492-0544
Kendall Knight	Music Service	770-972-6887

Contribution



Mar 23	\$8,942
Mar 30	\$7,934
Apr 6	\$5,703
Apr 13	\$6,891

Family Group Leaders

Peter & Nancy Berry	Suwanee	678-376-1878
Steve & Barbara Collier	Lilburn	770-717-5784
Jim & Chandra Dew	Lilburn	770-330-3479
Danny & Cynthia Doble	Lilburn	770-931-0601
Audie & Jackie Flowers	Snellville	770-277-5749
James & Quiana Martinez	L'ville	678-985-5511
Alvin & Beatrice Modest	Snellville	678-344-0061
Jeff & Jessica Mueller	Tucker	770-492-0544
Ricky & Bridgett Roberson	Snellville	770-879-0868
Joseph & Lisa Washington	L'ville	678-407-0306
Ken & Kat Watson	Suwanee	678-376-2677