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SERIES: **The Gospel Is**
MESSAGE: **Transforming**
PASSAGE: **Romans 12:1-8**
SPEAKER: **Tyce Jensen**

Well, hello, everyone. Good to see you. My name is Tyce Jensen, and I am president of the Berean Fellowship of Churches. Lincoln Berean is part of a network of churches in the United States—we also have churches actually in South Asia, as well, and a couple in the Bogota, Columbia, area. So it's my joy to help shepherd that and lead that, and I love being part of Lincoln Berean. So I'm glad to open up God's word tonight, excited about that.

So a couple months ago, Pastor Ryan asked me if I would take the next section in Romans in October. And I said yes, and then we talked about dates and got a date that worked. And I asked him what I would be preaching, and he said, well, I'm going to be doing nine, 10, 11, and you get 12, 1 through 8. And I'm like, yes, yes, I will be ready. So if you're not familiar, Romans 12 is so rich and so good. 9, 10, 11 is so rich and good, but boy, that was a slog. Ryan did a really good job of that, but I'm excited to open up Romans chapter 12 with you all and just see what God has for us here.

So I want to start with a word you've maybe never heard of. Maybe you have heard of it, but it doesn't matter because I'm going to start with it. So here we go. The word is *syncretism*. Syncretism, S-Y-N, if you're trying to write it down in your notes, syncretism. Syncretism is when you take an old religious belief and you blend it with a new religious belief. It's when you blend old religious beliefs and new religious beliefs, and you blend them into, like, a mashup of two different things. I'm gonna come back to that in just a moment, syncretism.

I had a friend, I have a friend, he's still alive, who, in the 1970s, felt led by the Lord to go plant a church amongst a tribal people in an island in the middle of the Pacific down in Asia, Asia Pacific. I'm not giving you the name because of security concerns. He went there in the 1970s, he received Bible college training beforehand, like training in how to work in a tribe, training on how to translate the Bible, and then they went and lived there, and they began to learn the language. They began to learn the culture because they felt like the Lord wanted them to go and tell these people about the Lord Jesus and how amazing he is.

See, what they believed was what some people call *animism*. It's sort of like *polytheism*, sort of *paganism*, but it's more like *spirit*. There's more, there's spirits that control everything. And in order for me to have, like, you know, in order for the crops to grow next spring, we need to figure out the right thing to appease the spirit, some type of sacrifice, some type of payment. So it's transactional. That's how they viewed the world. It's controlled by spirits, not by the living God, but by spirits—and we got to pay them back, and we really don't understand them, and they have weird ways and stuff, but we try and figure out these ways to pay the spirits back.

So my friend learned the language, began learning the culture, and he and his wife began, and they had a team as well, another couple as well, who were believers, just began to build trust with them. And what they began to do is they began to translate the scripture into that tribe's language. They began teaching the story of God in scripture. So they literally started the very beginning of the book of Genesis, and they would say, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So listen, God created these spirits, because some of the spirits, it tells us went wayward. And the spirits that you're trying to make happy, or wayward spirits, they're not submitting themselves to the true God.

And then we begin to tell the story of how God, the one true God, created humans to live with him, in relationship with him. And it was good at first, but then the humans decided, you know what, we don't need to live in relationship with God—we don't need to surrender to God, we don't need to be in relationship with God, we can be our own boss. And then everything was broken. And the reason that your crops sometimes don't come up, and the reason sometimes that sickness happens, is because the world is broken.

The Bible calls it sin. Sin is us saying no to God. It's rebelling against God. And all of us have sinned, but in Genesis chapter 3, in Genesis chapter 3 God shows himself to be gracious, not like the spirits. See, they couldn't clean up their mess to come back to God, Adam and Eve couldn't. He showed himself to be gracious, and he offered to cover over their sin. He sacrificed an animal. And he covered their nakedness, their shame, and their guilt out of his grace. And that was a picture of one day, God was going to come and completely fix the sin problem. He was going to send his Lamb and his King to come and fix the sin problem.

And then they began to tell the story of the Old Testament. The story of humans keep going wayward, keep sinning, don't really want relationship with God. God calls this people to himself and they have some good moments, but then they have a lot of moments where they don't follow the Lord. And then they brought in Jesus, and they told them about how God was gracious to them. And Jesus was the Lamb, the sacrifice to pay for the sin of the world, and also the King. The king submitted himself to die on a cross, and those who believe in Jesus now have

peace with God. See, they never had peace with the spirits because you had to pay them. How can you have peace with the Spirit? I mean, I don't know, do I need to do more? It worked this time, but will it be enough next time? That's not a secure place. But the true living God of the universe, we can't pay him back. We don't pay him back, he makes the payment. It's called grace. Grace.

And many in the tribe—not all, immediately—many in the tribe realized that they were out of relationship with God. They were not at peace with God, and they put their hope in Jesus. They put their hope in Jesus. They became Christians, part of the people of God, but the work was not finished. Syncretism. Their muscle memory kept slipping back into old ways of thinking, old ways of thinking. So yeah, I know I have peace with God, but boy, I still, don't I still need to sacrifice a pig and take it up there this spring, to, you know, make sure we have fertility? No, you don't need to do that anymore.

Or sometimes there'd be new believers and their kid would get sick and they'd take them to the witch doctor. And the missionary's like, hold on, oh, no, no. No, you don't need to do that anymore. Now, the tricky part is for the missionaries, sometimes the answer is prayer, and sometimes it's penicillin, and that's a tricky thing to explain to them, right? But either way, like, their worldview needed transforming. It needed changing because there was still a temptation towards syncretism. When you become a Christian, when I become a Christian, it's not like immediately the way we view the world is perfectly in line with God's way of viewing the world. It's not. We need transforming. We need to be transformed.

Now, I wonder, I wonder, as Americans, if we are the first human group in history to have a completely biblical, perfect worldview—every single one of us? That's sarcasm for those of you who don't know me very well. Oh, we're tempted to forms of syncretism as well. We are. And that in many ways is what Paul is getting at in Romans chapter 12. So if you guys have them, turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 12, Romans chapter 12. We're going to start here in verse 1.

And I think that all Christians in some ways are tempted to syncretism and Paul is addressing that here. Now, in many ways, Romans 1 through 11 has gone through, in some ways, a version of what my friend told this tribe. That we all, like, have rebelled against God, and we don't really want anything to do with him, but God, in his pure grace, sent his Son to reach out to us while we were still sinners. And if we will put our faith in Jesus, we have peace with God. That's Romans chapter 5. Jesus is the propitiation, the sacrifice, to pay for our sins that we can't pay for, Romans chapter 3. And if we put our faith in Jesus, Romans chapter 3, 4, 5, all of them, we have peace with God. We have peace with God. Here, Paul's about to call that amazing journey of God inviting us into his family and us receiving it by grace through faith, his *mercy*. His mercy. So let's read it. Romans chapter 12 and verse 1:

> *1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Okay, so because of God's amazing grace, if you've put your faith in Jesus, now he invites you to—actually, he doesn't just invite you, he urges you—to present your body to the Lord, a living and holy sacrifice, which is your spiritual service of worship. Let's talk about that, the very end, a spiritual act of worship, spiritual service of worship.

Now, the old King James translated that instead of spiritual as reasonable. So there's a little bit of doubt—the Greek word is hardly ever used—what's going on there, okay? So, really, both meanings kind of overlap, and in some ways, it isn't super critical which one's right. But the one is that because of what God's done, it only makes *reasonable* sense to worship him in this way. That's one way the King James took it. Or here our New American Standard [1995] says, the *spiritual*. Because of what God's done, the spiritual way that we worship. And the idea is, spiritual, instead of like going through the motions, it's heartfelt. That's what it means here when it means spiritual. So what God is calling all of us to do is to worship him, either in a heartfelt way or a way that just completely goes right in line with the fact that he's been gracious to us. See, they overlap.

But here's the thing, that word *worship*, it's kind of weird as well, especially to an American audience, because it's almost always used for temple worship. Paul is saying the way that we worship God—again, for Americans, we don't most of us do temple worship like they did in Rome or like they did in Jerusalem. But instead, it's like this daily thing that we live out. Look at verse 1 again.

> *1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.*

Now, again, notice how God wants us to worship him by offering our bodies. And it's not just our bodies here. The idea is all of you. God wants all of you. And that's what he wants. Now, a question would be, well, how much? How often? Well, all the time. If you're familiar with Roman sacrifice or even like pagan sacrifice or even the Jewish sacrificial system, you put the sacrifice to death, and that was it. But Paul says, no, first of all, you now give yourself to God, but it's living, it's ongoing. It's a recurring process. In fact, it's to be a daily process that I surrender my life to God.

Now that right away hits at some American syncretism, okay? Wait, Christianity involves more than just praying a prayer? It involves surrender. Are you getting it? I mean, it's uncomfortable, I'll be honest. It's really clear what he's teaching right here. It's not just a one time thing. It doesn't mean we get saved again and again,

but the whole goal of the beginning of trusting in Jesus, that moment of conversion, is to draw you close to God and to surrender to him for his purposes, for his purposes. So the worship that God desires is surrender to him all the time. Let me say it again. The worship that God desires is surrender to him all the time. All the time.

Now, again, one of the hurdles that we have is perhaps if you've grown up in some type of church culture, and you hear the word music, you hear the word worship. See what I just did? If you hear the word worship, you mean, oh, yeah, that's music. That's music. Now, worship is, I'm sorry, music is part of worship. What we do, and even what you do on the, listen to on the, radio or whatever. That can be worship. Yes, it is. But for Paul and for the Bible, all of life is worship. It's not just music. It's not just one hour on Saturday nights, right? All of life is meant to be worship.

So here we got to get into the syncretism a little bit. So somewhere around 15, 16, 1700s, the European Western mind started to change a little bit, in that we began to think that there are secular categories. And what we mean by that is there's a material world in which God is not very active, *secular*. And then there's the *sacred* things, we spend a little sacred time with God, maybe a prayer in the morning, maybe some time with God's people at worship on Sunday or Saturday night, right? But then there's the, you know—most of life is just *secular*. It's material, and it's scientific, and nothing really enters into the scientific. Does this make sense? I mean, that's how we're all raised. Almost everyone in this room who is Western. We think that God doesn't really enter into the material realm very often. Hmm. Is that biblical? No, we need transforming. We need transforming.

In fact, there's nothing, nothing that God doesn't put his claim on or want to put his claim on. All of life is meant to be worship. Steak was meant to be worship. It was. Football. Oh, dear. It's sometimes false worship, but it was meant to be. You guys didn't laugh, though. That's okay. All right. It's meant to be worship of the true and the living God. My finances. I'm worshiping something with my finances. Everyone in this room is worshiping something with their finances. Doesn't mean you have to give all of your money to God, but you recognize, okay, this is all God's money. This is all God's money. Our sexuality, everything, all of the earth, is temple. If you think about it, from a New Testament perspective, all of the earth is meant to be worship.

Now one other thing for American syncretism, okay? We think that surrender to God is optional, optional. We think any type of religious involvement is optional. And in one sense, it is. But what we think is, when we think it's optional, we think, well, I'll still be just fine if I say no to this option. You know, I won't wither up and dry away—which is by the way, the biblical picture. When we're not connected to the living God, where we're not connected to his people, Psalm chapter 1, the idea is that we wither up. But as Americans, we don't believe that. We don't believe

we're going to wither up. It's optional. I mean if that works for you...I believed in Jesus. I'm going to heaven. It's optional. It works for you, good for you. But for me, it's optional. But that's not the biblical case at all. I urge you therefore, brothers, he says, he commands us, and it's God's command to us to surrender.

Now, here's the hard part. I'm going to hit this a couple times. The biblical view, which transforms our thinking in our worldview, is that surrender leads to freedom and flourishing. We sang about it this morning. We sang about, not this morning, this evening, several times. Freedom, freedom. Now think about how un-American this next sentence is. Surrender leads to freedom. Now I'm getting to the syncretism, aren't I? Surrender leads to freedom. Are you with me? But that is a very biblical message if you're surrendering to the living God. If you're surrendering to the living God and he's inviting us, all of us, to begin to live a life of daily surrender to him—offering to him, everything, offering to him ourselves, our family, our car, our time, our money, offering it to him—that's where freedom comes from and flourishing comes from. Now, verse 2:

> *2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

So, I want to define for you—I defined for you earlier, syncretism—now I want to define for you *worldview*. Many of you know what the word worldview means. Everyone has a worldview. It's your understanding and your perception of reality. Your understanding and your perception of reality. Worldview.

So for instance, if you wake up in the morning, like I do sometimes, and it feels like God's far away, that's a worldview problem. I have a worldview problem.A lot of mornings, I wake up and it feels like God is far away. Now, what's the biblical truth? Is God far away? No. But I have a worldview problem. I need my worldview to be transformed, transformed, and I also need my heart to be transformed, because I love the wrong things. I need transformation. And so let's look at verse 2 again.

> *2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

So he says conformed to this world, and that word *world* is meaning the thought patterns of the culture around us. If you were to go to China, there are certain cultural worldviews that are opposed to the gospel in ways that are different from perhaps a Western American worldview. Okay? If you were to go to different cultures, every culture has a worldview which Satan wants to keep them in to keep them from intimacy with God, and freedom with God, and peace with God. And the hard news is American culture is no different.

Every culture, by the way, I just want to speak this as well, has some beautiful things in it that reflect the image of God. But every culture also has some really broken parts of it as well. Okay? So I'm not saying that American culture is completely wicked. There's some things that are very beautiful and reflect the image of God, but a lot of it is broken or partially broken and needs to be bent back into shape by God's truth by the renewing of our mind.

Now, this word *mind*, again, for the Jewish person, the word mind was not simply facts, I need to be transformed in my facts. Okay, I know that God is Trinity. Okay, good. I know that Jesus died on the cross. Okay, good. I know that, you know, that's facts—and those aren't wrong. But what transformation comes from a Christian life is when we begin to live out those facts, and they begin to be the glasses by which we see everything.

So I can answer a theological quiz with a high degree of accuracy, and yet some mornings I wake up and, I'm going to go back here again with y'all, I wake up some mornings and it feels like God's far away. So even though I know facts about the Lord, the Lord is in this process of transforming me so that I know him. And those facts begin to be the glasses by which I see. My worldview. So that I'm not conformed to the world in its way of thinking, but I'm transformed by the renewing of my mind. And that's all of me. It's my way of thinking. It's my loves as well.

Now, this word transform, it's also used in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18. We're going to flip there in just a moment. Okay? So a question would be is how are we transformed? How are we transformed? And the exact same Greek word is used in 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18. So I would invite you to keep maybe a finger or a thumb or a piece of paper in Romans chapter 12 because we'll be back here soon. And I'd like to look at 2 Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 18. The Puritans, when they thought about how do Christians change, how are they transformed, one of their favorite verses was 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18. 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18. And it says this in 2 Corinthians 3 and verse 18, talking about Christians, those who believed in Jesus, those who have the Holy Spirit.

> *18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image* [in other words, we're being transformed to become like Jesus, transformed into the same image] *from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*

So let's read it again. How are we transformed? But we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. One of the primary ways that we are transformed is by beholding the beauty and glory and majesty of the Lord. Which is why we have to be in God's word again, again, again, because I need my view of God to be transformed. Or I need to be reminded of what God is truly like,

that he is a good father. He is not stingy. He is near. I need to be reminded of that in God's word. And when I do that, like, behold the glory of the Lord again and again and again, it changes me. Changes my heart, my loves. It changes my thinking. It changes the way I see things. Begin to be transformed.

Now, an important part here is the transformation—the ancients understood this, but for an American, we don't—transformation also best happens in community. Community. We need to behold the Lord in community. In fact, we're commanded to do it. We're invited to do it, and we're commanded to do it.

Let me give you a really quick example. I pastored for over ten years in the Berean church in Broken Bow, Nebraska. And there was one time where I was going through a particularly hard season and God had this one older gentleman in the church who was just so encouraging. And oftentimes, not every time, but oftentimes he would show up and it just was always a God-ordained time. And he'd sit in my office and he'd say, how can I pray for you?

And so one time I asked him how he was doing when he came in and I was in a discouraged spot, I asked him how he was doing, and this is what he said: I'm waiting to be amazed by what God is going to do. I mean, I was not looking at my life through God's glasses, but at that moment, his beholding the glory of the Lord showed me the glory of the Lord, and I started crying. Because at that moment, I didn't think God was all that amazing. I needed a brother to remind me how amazing God is. That's all he said. I'm waiting to be amazed by what God is going to do. Wow. See, we're invited into community. We have to have community because there will be other times people see the glory of the Lord, and they can show you the glory of the Lord in the ways that you're not feeling or experiencing at that moment. So we're called to this transformation in community.

Now, if you go back to Romans chapter 12, Romans chapter 12, at the very end of verse 2, the very end of verse 2, well, I'll read all of verse 2.

> *2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

The better word for that, *prove*, a better translation for that would be *discern*, that as we're surrendering our lives to the Lord, is, we're walking in relationship with the Lord. We begin and we're walking in community, we begin to be able to discern what God's will is, to be able to discern what God's will is. Now, verse 3:

> *3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think* [but he's talking about

> our worldview here]*; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

Paul is saying that our worldview about ourselves needs transformed. He mentions the word *think* here four different times regarding how we view ourselves. So a quick question to help unearth this for me and for you and for all of us: in your worldview, are you the main character in your story? Oh, oh, dear. Yeah. A lot of times when I wake up, the universe isn't God-centered, it's, oh dear, Tyce centered. That's syncretism. Hmm. Lord, I need my thinking to be transformed. I think too highly of myself. And we're all tempted to this, we're all tempted to this, but God is so gracious, so gracious to keep transforming our worldview.

So, interestingly, I just want to put one thing out there, and then I want to walk away from it, okay? Our culture, it is atheistic, it does not believe in God, okay? This is the story of our culture and how it views man. I just want to drop this for you. Ready? You are a worthless piece of protoplasm who only exists because of a random roll of the dice that the universe came up on snake eyes eight million times in a row, giving life to a tiny cell that eventually, completely, randomly became more and more complex until it formed life, in the perfect water temperatures a long time ago. Oh, by the way, you're the center of the universe. Do you see how those 2 don't match up at all? Right?

Okay, let's keep going. So don't think too highly of yourself. It's what Paul is saying here. Just want to give you a quote that's been super helpful to me in my life. It's from Henry Blackaby. Henry Blackaby says this: *Your life is too valuable to waste by trusting your own best thinking.* That's a beautiful and biblical way to think about it. In some ways, I can't think too highly of myself, but at the same time, I don't want to think too lowly. My life is valuable. So instead of trusting my own best thinking, I continue to let my mind be transformed by God's word, and God's word as I look at it together with other people. Don't think too highly of ourselves.

Okay, let's keep going. Verses 4 and 5. Verse 4:

> *4 For just as we* [and here he's talking about Christians, those who put their faith in Jesus, just as we] *have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

So Paul loves this metaphor. He uses it several times. He thinks of the people of God as a body. He doesn't think of it as just a random kidney rolling around on the floor, right? A kidney disconnected from the body doesn't last very long. Right? That kidney has a very important function, but it's got to be connected to the body. And so everyone in this room or who hears my voice, who's believing in Jesus, you are part of the body. You may be disconnected and withering away on

your own, but you need the body and the body needs you. And it's not optional. Look at verse 5. Verse 5.

> *5 so we* [Christians, all of us], *who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one of another.*

So in a sense, I belong to you, members of one of another, and you belong to me. This isn't very American either. We view church as, starts with an "o": optional. Optional. Yeah, I don't know. Right? So we all, and I want to have so much grace for us because God has grace for this, and I also want to acknowledge church hurt and leadership hurt—and yet the Lord can redeem that, and the Lord can help you to begin to trust again and begin to give grace again and begin to forgive. He has so much grace for that. You need to have a worldview where you have a God who has, Father who has, enough grace to teach you to forgive and to let go. It's not easy. It's a process and you need community, but you were created to be part of God's people, the Church. If you're a Christian, being part of a local church is not optional. It's like, and if you are trying to go to—you're like the kidney rolling around on the floor, eventually it withers up. It doesn't mean you lose your salvation, but it withers up. It withers up.

All right, now let's finish with verses 6 through 8 here.

> *6 Since we* [again, Christians, since we] *have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; 7 if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; 8 or he who exhorts in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

So here Paul begins to hit some of the spiritual gifts. Let's talk about that for a moment. A couple things to understand about spiritual gifts. The Bible teaches that every Christian, every Christian has gifts that are given by God, that are not just for their own benefit, but they're to bring glory to Jesus, and they're to bless others. Every Christian has spiritual gifts.

Now, this list right here in Romans chapter 12 is not the complete gifts list. You'd have to look also in 1 Corinthians 12, in Ephesians chapter 4. So I'm not going to spend a lot of time like going through all of the spiritual gifts here. Paul's main point is that God calls us to use them. He calls us to use them. That's the second thing. The first thing is that all Christians have spiritual gifts. The second thing is that God commands us to use our spiritual gifts to bless the church and to bless the world. God commands us to use our spiritual gifts to bless the church. And to bless the world. And these gifts are to be lived out in community.

In fact, as I was going through this passage a week ago with the team here, one of them pointed out something very helpful. You can't do any of these gifts just by yourself, sitting in a room by yourself, right? Think about it. You who have the gift of exhortation, exhort your cat, right? I mean think about that for a moment. Yeah? You who have the gift of service, scroll Instagram. I mean, that just doesn't make any—I'm not saying that scrolling Instagram's completely evil. You get my point though, right? God calls us to use them in community.

Now, just a real quick explanation about some of these, because some of it's a little bit confusing. Verse 6:

> *6 Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly; if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith;*

So what is going on? What is the gift of prophecy? Now, in order to, I'm going to give you my view, and they're really godly, wise and godly, Christians who disagree with me, okay? Some of you may disagree with me, and I would love to chat with you about it, love to schedule a time to chat with you about it, okay? But first we need to stop and start with the Old Testament view of prophecy. Okay?

In the Old Testament, God, he raised up men, and sometimes women—although the scripture in the Old Testament was written largely by men, okay?—he raised up men, and he gave them the words to say. Sometimes it told the future, sometimes it didn't, but the whole goal of the Old Testament prophets was to drop people's hearts back to the Lord. Okay? Now, some godly Christians say that as they look at the New Testament prophecy, they recognize, you know what? Maybe God's doesn't tell the future anymore, so prophecy must be like the preaching part of what the Old Testament. Prophets did preach and so there are some really godly and wise Christians today that say, oh, every time you see the word prophecy in the New Testament, it's talking about preaching.

Well, I disagree with that. So let's dig in here. So I would define prophecy this way: prophecy is spontaneous communication from the Holy Spirit that draws hearts to Jesus. Spontaneous communication from the Holy Spirit. And by the way, it always, if it's truly from the Holy Spirit, it always lines up with scripture. Okay? In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, someone has a spontaneous communication, it's from the Holy Spirit—the elders, the wise people are supposed to say, hmm, does it line up with scripture? In fact, 1 John chapter 4 says that we have to test the spirits to make sure that it points to Jesus.

But prophecy is, in my view, spontaneous communication from the Holy Spirit that draws hearts to Jesus. And in my view, and you're allowed to disagree with this, I call that lower case "p" prophecy. Because it's not the inerrant prophecy of the

Old Testament prophets. And I think that it still exists—lower case "p" prophecy, in my view, still exists. Okay, now let's keep going here. Again, you can buy me lunch if you're like, what the heck was that? Verse 7:

7 if service, in his serving;

That's pretty straightforward, verse 7:

7 or he who teaches, in his teaching;

Again, pretty straightforward, but every time we see the word teaching in the New Testament, it's a specifically really zeroing in on the teaching about the story of Jesus as found in the word. A simple way of saying it is *teaching scripture*. Verse 8:

8 or he who exhorts, in his exhortation;

The word exhort here, those who have the gifts of exhortation, I like to think of it as like a really good coach. A really good coach knows exactly when to say, great job, or you guys can do this. You guys can do this. A really great coach also knows when to give the swift kick in the rear, right? And we need people like that in the body of Christ. Somebody's like, oh, I like that one, that's me, right? Well, I mean, hopefully it's married to grace, controlled by the Holy Spirit, but the body of Christ does need some people to occasionally give a swift kick in the rear. It's the gift of exhortation.

8 he who gives, with liberality;

That's another word for generosity.

8 he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The showing of mercy there, that those who have the gift of mercy just have a tender heart and an ability to care for the hurting or the sick or the poor or the elderly. That is the gift of mercy. It's this tender heart for the hurting and the sick and the poor.

So I want to close by reading Romans 12, 1 and 2 again. Let's look at verse 1:

1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Does it feel like God is far away? The Lord Jesus wants to transform your thinking, and he wants to use community to help transform that thinking.

Does it seem like, you know what? I don't know. It says to surrender. You said to surrender—does it seem like if you surrender that God's not going to really take care of you? You need your thinking transformed, and so do I. Because Satan's always trying to keep me from surrendering fully to the Lord. Because part of me in my worldview and my mind is still convinced it's not going to go well if I surrender to the Lord.

Does it seem like if you follow God's plan, he won't provide for you? Then you need your thinking transformed. You need your world be transformed. And the Lord wants to do that graciously in your life.

Now, if some of you are discouraged, like, oh, Tyce, I have like twenty-seven things I need to get transformed, welcome to the club. But I want to be gracious here. Okay? The Lord Jesus, as we walk with him, he is usually not trying to transform all twenty-seven things at once. He's so gracious and kind. He's usually only working at one or two things in your life at a time. In fact, a lot of times you need community. What are the one or two things? I wonder if the Lord is working in my life, and he's so gracious and patient in that. Because Satan, now that you know that there's twenty-seven things the Lord wants to transform, Satan wants to say, you're failing at all twenty-seven, three months from now, right? But just ask the Lord, Lord, what are the one or two things you want to transform in my life? And he'll meet you there. He'll show up again and again and again. Let's pray.

Oh, Lord, how much we need your grace. And I thank you that you have so much grace. Transform our view of you to see you as gracious and never running out of grace, like we sang earlier, that you have a fountain of grace. Transform my thinking, that I would live that out. Transform this people's thinking, that we would live out, walking with a Father who has so much grace for us. We ask that, for Jesus' glory. Amen.

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