
The Transformed Life: The Power of Transformation

Rob Rogers July 3, 2022

Introduction

First things first, I want to recognize the incredible work of all the staff and volunteers for the absolutely incredible week of VBS, the HS and MS camps. The stories of God's love impacting the next generation of leaders, influencers, world changers are absolutely incredible. So thank you to every single one of you that poured your life into these kids.

Also, I just want to celebrate the fact that we've had a rotation of pastors and leaders hosting the services on Sunday mornings. There is something so beautiful and healthy about having a plurality of voices during weekend services and we're going to keep that rolling.

I also want to recognize the incredible teaching we've received from Pastor/Elder Dave Buehring over the last four Sundays on the Transformed Life: Process, Priority, Proof, and Purpose. If you've missed any of the last 4 weeks, I want to encourage you to go back and listen because the encouragement and admonition he's given us are absolutely crucial for the body of Christ today.

Lastly, I want to publicly celebrate what God-fearing people have been fighting for, praying for, for half a century... the overturning of Roe v Wade / Casey v Planned Parenthood. This is a huge victory for the protection of the innocent and unborn... and the atrocity of abortion that has marred the image of God on humanity for the last 50 years.

- As you know, the decisions surrounding abortion has been pushed backed to the states, and the officials we elect to public office — the work is not over, but tomorrow we celebrate the freedom we enjoy in this country, and because of the overturning of Roe V Wade—millions of babies will now have the **freedom to LIVE!** It's worth pausing to thank God for this historic moment in the life of our country.

To recap—what we've been walking through this summer is the three specific parts of how we're defining a disciple.

A disciple is someone that is **following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus.**

The Gospel Centered life (following Jesus)

The portion we've been in, **the Transformed Life** is all about being changed by Jesus.

What we'll officially be launching into next week is **Life on Mission**. Being on the mission of Jesus.

Process of Transformation

But first, one of the things I want to talk a little bit more about is what Dave outlined for us as the process of transformation.

Revelation – Obedience - Transformation

“OBEDIENCE IS THE ENGINE OF TRANSFORMATION”

PERSONAL: A few weeks back I was on a zoom call with Pastor Myron, and a long time GC member and another follower of Jesus in West Bengal, India. He was sharing with us what's happening over there in the body of Christ, he said this, "The very first thing we teach whenever someone surrenders their life to Christ, is not the five ways to live your best life, or how to get God to answer your prayers, or attend services somewhere... that's not an option for a lot of them. The first thing they're commanded to do *"go and share with five people you have relationship with about your commitment to Jesus. Share with them about what Jesus has done for you. Write their names down, go share with them, and come back tomorrow and let's talk about it."*

- You know what that is? **Obedience-based discipleship.** *And obedience is the engine of transformation.*

What's happening in West Bengal as a result of this practice in the last five years, just simply by this being the *first* thing they're commanded to do after coming to Christ and being baptized... 200,000 people have come to Christ in the last five years, and they are on track to add another 200,000 in 2022 alone. *And every person who brings someone they know to Christ, takes responsibility for discipling that person...*

- They are a day old in Christ and they're already sent out to disciple people to Christ, and disciple people in Christ.

So the excuse, "Well, Rob I've never been disciplined." Neither have they!

Are you following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and on mission with Jesus in community with other people? "Well yeah" then you're being disciplined. Do you have people in your life that are pursuing Jesus with you? "Well, yeah." Then you're being disciplined. And if your answer is no—then let's go! Make the changes you need to make in order to turn that frown upside down!

- I'm just going to remove all the excuses today. 😊

And as the new believers in West Bengal have shared Christ, some people have rejected them, mocked them, beat them, imprisoned them, persecuted them. And then there are others who they've shared with who have received the message of the gospel and have experienced their own radical transformation and carried the good news of Jesus to the next five people.

The byproduct of that level of eager obedience to Christ is an exponential multiplicative movement of disciple makers spreading across the country.

Well, Rob it's different in America.

- No, it's not. We just tell ourselves that so we don't have to do anything with what we already know! We make excuses because we're scared of experiencing social persecution... and do you know what that really means? It means we're ashamed of the gospel. It means our fear of man is greater than our fear of God.

This is why Jesus is constantly telling us things like...

Matthew 5:10-12

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

John 15:18, 20

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you... If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

1 Peter 4:12-14

*"Beloved, **do not be surprised** at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you **share Christ's sufferings**, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are **insulted for the name of Christ**, you are blessed, because the **Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.**"*

Expect it. Don't be surprised by it. And rejoice in it that God has counted you worthy to share in Christ's sufferings!

Some of us are actively sharing Christ with others in a variety of ways... keep it up. *For others of us, I'm convinced that our complacency around this specific area of obedience to Christ is the primary reason we're not experiencing more transformation in our lives personally.*

PERSONAL: I was a heroin addict. I know there is a Fentanyl, opiate epidemic sweeping across our country and has been for quite some time... that has impacted millions. For whatever reason, God saw me, and plucked me out of that life, plopped me in middle TN in 2004 with a couple of Christians in Kingston Springs, TN. Looking back, God had been leaving me bread crumbs all along the way—and when Bill and Stacy Spencer opened their home to me, opened the Scriptures with me, and we began pursuing Jesus together—I was delivered from my addiction in an instant.

After years of rehabs, and secular programs, and counseling and psychiatry... As soon as I began learning the truth of who Jesus is, I was delivered from all my cravings, all my desire to use. Let me tell you from personal experience, the power of God is real. He can change and transform anyone and everyone who seeks Him—and no one is too far out of His reach.

- What the Word of God makes very clear is that He's a God that came for the outcasts, the broken, the weary, the abused, the addicted, the oppressed, the lonely, the sinful, the rebellious, the screw ups, and the nobodies. If that's you today—let me tell you from experience —you are not alone. He sees you. He loves you. He is so for you that you can't even fathom. You're in a room full of screw ups that have been rescued by the God who is love itself. And if you say, "Rob, I wasn't a screw up!" Yes you were, you just don't realize it yet.
- And for anyone who seeks him, seek Him with all your heart and you'll find Him. It's a promise. And He WILL redeem every heartache, every pain, every trauma, every ounce of sorrow, all the brokenness of your past. If you'll give it to Him, He'll take it and use it for your good and the good of those around you. That's the kind of God He is.

My story of transformation doesn't end with no longer being a heroin addict. How lame would that be? I once was a heroin addict, now I'm not. The end? Lame. That was the starting point.

The thing that accelerated my transformation, the thing that was like jet fuel in the process of God sanctifying and changing my life was exactly what the new believers in India are doing.

Just a few months after surrendering my life to Jesus... two other punks just like me moved into the Spencer's house, and my friend Adam, who'd recommitted His life to Christ, and I were expected to disciple these two other guys. I was a two-month-old Christian. I knew almost nothing about the Bible. I hadn't been to seminary. I was an uneducated, fresh off of heroin, baby Christian...

I guarantee you, for those of you making excuses about not being able to disciple others because you haven't been disciplined—your starting point is probably a bit further along than mine was.

But what ended up happening as we all pursued Jesus together... is we ended up discipling one another. They would have questions that we'd have to find the answers to. We'd all go digging into the Word to find the answers. Discipleship is not top down, it's not primarily educational—discipleship is primarily relational. it's shoulder-to-shoulder. It's face-to-face. And the only expert is Jesus!

What also ended up happening during that time is—immediately after surrendering my life to Christ, was going back to the people I used to run with in my heathen days, and sharing how Jesus had delivered me. None of them really wanted anything to do with me after that point... the wrote me off as one of those crazy born-again Christians, and that was that.

But, within a year of finding Jesus, because of what God was changing in me, and my bumbling attempts to lead them to Christ—my sisters, my parents all surrendered their lives to Jesus.

So why am I sharing this with you?

Not because I did anything great. I'd already proven what I do with my life when I'm in charge. But because when we let go of our lives, hand over the reins, and God calls us to share with others about what He's done in our life—when you obey Him in the call of disciple-making, it's not just FOR others. It's FOR YOU! It is like pouring jet fuel on your own transformation journey. It accelerates your own sanctification like nothing else.

“ForWilco”

So here's what we're going to do....

Today, we're launching the “ForWilco” campaign—to come along side of you and help you live on mission, pour jet fuel on your own transformation process, and obey Jesus in His invitation to share the good news with others.

The purpose is to spark simple conversations with people in our community that are far from God—to point to the truth of who HE is, and His love for them. To help them see the goodness of God and tear down the lies of the enemy.

Lies like:

- *I'm alone.*
- *I don't matter.*
- *No one cares about me.*
- *I'm unlovable...*
- *I'm an accident.*
- *I have no value.*
- *If I were to disappear, no one would notice.*
- *What I think and feel aren't important.*
- *God isn't real, and if He was, there's no way He cares about me or my problems.*

There is a pastor in Atlanta who coined this phrase, *“for far too long, the church has been known by what it's against. **We want to be known by what we are for.**”*

And we are for our community, for Williamson County - ForWilco. 😊

We want to empower you to engage in this work in a really simple, organic way....

We've got t-shirts, stickers, and cards for you, with a phrase on it: **“You are incredibly loved and have tremendous value.”**

We're also going to have a large banner with that phrase on the side of the barn where the Drive-In banner was. *(great photo opportunity)*

The idea is—that you'd wear a shirt, put a sticker on your water bottle, or car, or whatever—and pass out these little cards *(shout out to Karen Kingsbury for the idea)* to spark a conversation with someone about who they are. That they are seen and known by the God who loves them.

This isn't just to spread good vibes or a little positivity, but to speak to the core of who people are and how God sees them. Because, without Jesus, positivity and optimism is a wish without warrant. There's no substance to it without Christ at the center.

And just to be clear: we're not secretly hoping this will get a bunch of people in the building. We want to get a bunch of people connected with YOU as a follower of Jesus, regardless of what local church they end up connecting with. The Church is infinitely more than what happens on Sunday mornings.

So, we've got a TON of shirts for you that are designed to spark conversation with people in the community—for those that see you when you wear it, “that you are incredibly loved and have tremendous value. That you are treasured by the God who created heaven and earth!”

Imagine with me for a moment. *What might happen in you, in your family, if you began to have these simple conversations with people in the community... if you took these little cards with you wherever you go, and asked God to reveal to you who HE wants you to encourage? **What might you see God do through you for the sake of others!?***

Imagine if all across Williamson County, we're all wearing these shirts, and sparking conversations that matter, allowing God to use us, to speak through us to someone that needs it! You NEVER KNOW what God might do through one simple conversation with a stranger, or a neighbor, or a coworker, or a cashier, or a server!

What might happen in Middle, TN, *if people all over Williamson County began to believe that they are seen, pursued, and loved by God!?* If there was a wave of people that began to believe that they have value, that they're not here by accident, and that God has appointed them to this specific time and place for a purpose much greater than themselves? What stories of life change and transformation would begin to pour in to this place!

If we'll step into the risk... if we'll press forward... if we'll as Pat Lencioni says, *enter the danger...* not only will we witness life change and transformation in others—**but we'll see ourselves being made more and more into the image of Christ in the process.**

Discussion Questions

1. Are you currently “being discipled” by someone — or are you currently “discipling” someone? If not, why not, and what will you do about it?
2. “Obedience is the engine of transformation.” How does obedience-based *discipleship* transform your life?
3. Who do you think you can share some of your “ForWilco” swag with?
4. Which of the last five sermons on the Transformed Life has meant something especially meaningful to you — Process, Priority, Proof, Purpose, or Power?
5. **What did the Holy Spirit reveal to you today?**
6. **How are you going to obey this in your life? (practical, measurable)**

NOTES