

“Transformed”
By General Pastor Peter F. Paine
Sunday, September 24th, 2017

Pray with me, please. God Almighty, we thank You for the opportunity we now have to come and to hear Your Word. As the person presenting this today, I ask that You would speak through me and that I would stay out of the way, speaking only what You would have me to speak and nothing else, and certainly nothing less. I ask You to bless everyone that hears this message today, that we would hear from You in a way that is life changing. We thank You for this in Jesus name and the church said, "Amen." And the church said, "Amen." And the church shouted, "Amen!" Amen.

I love you, I love you; it's good to be here with you this morning. I thank you for your warm welcome and your prayers and your love. The message that I feel like God has laid on my heart today is really a continuation, I suppose, of what I started to preach last week. I think the two messages really come together and make one message. The title of today's message is, "Transformed," and my prayer is, today, that you will hear something in the message today. It might be the small still voice of the Holy Ghost as I share a Scripture or a story, or maybe it's something I say, or maybe it's the Scripture itself that will allow you to say, "That's what I needed to hear, right now, at this point in my journey of life." My prayer today is that all of us, whether we're just now investigating the claims of Christ and we haven't accepted the Lord yet. If that's you here today, I hope you will hear this as an invitation for you to say yes to the one who shed his blood at Calvary, to the One who paid the price for your sins, for my sins. For the Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Amen? And I want to tell you something: If you don't know this today, let me be the one to tell you today, or among those that tell you today, you need a Savior, we all need a Savior, you don't want to die and not have a Savior. That's a great way to start a message, isn't it? If you don't have that, you won't be ready for that time, and it's going to happen to all of us. As far as I know, the mortality rate around the world still hovers around a hundred percent. We're all going to die. No one's getting out of here alive, amen? I said that, partially as a warm, fuzzy invitation and partly to stick my finger in your face, if I can do that, and say, don't die without salvation, you don't want to be there. Is that fair? So the title of the message today is, "Transformed," and I'd like to start in the Book of Romans. In the Book of Romans, we have people who have come to know Christ, but they don't know exactly how to serve him yet. They're learning how to serve Christ, but they're still mixing a lot of their old ways. They're still mixing a lot of things that they grew up with, and maybe that sounds familiar to you today. "You know, I want to serve Christ, but I grew up believing this, I grew up believing that. I never heard this. I never heard that. I was never taught this, I was never taught that." You grew up believing things. One of the things I grew up believing that I found out isn't true, is that people are basically good; human nature is basically good. I really understand that statement, and I understand that there is a context, perhaps, where there's some truth in that. But the reality is that the Bible teaches us that the heart is desperately wicked. That our human nature is not God's nature. So there's a war that we're going to have to fight for all of our life here on earth. And that is, are we going to yield to God or yield to ourselves? Are we going to be like the world, or are we going to be like Christ? It's a challenge that we have all of our lives. It gets easier in portions of our life. It gets tougher in portions of our life. When we struggle with illness, when we struggle with challenges, when God doesn't seem to be playing fair, it's harder to have the smile. Sometimes it's like, "Where are you now, God?" I want to talk to you today about being transformed and my prayer is I can give you some tools, so that when you get in those valleys of life that you can use those tools to get back where you need to be. My prayer today is that I can leave you with something that is useful on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday and Saturday and back

into Sunday. My prayer is, today, that I will give you something that will help you to live the life that God has intended for you to live. I am going to ask you a question and if you want to answer in the affirmative, say, "Amen." How many of you believe that God has a life for each of us that God has intended for us to live? I really believe that. And we don't know exactly all of what it will look like but we know that that life consists of being Christ-like. That's why they were first called Christians at Antioch, because they were like Christ. Those that followed Christ were like Christ, and that's why they called them Christians. I want to be like Christ, how about you? I want to be like Christ. When I have a problem in my life, I want to solve it with Christ's direction. I want to have godly direction on how to solve problems, how to face challenges, how to deal with tough situations, how to receive praise when it comes. You know, we not only have to be like Christ when we're struggling, we also have to be like Christ when we're on victory road. Sometimes we seem like Michael Jordan and it seems like we can't do anything wrong. But even Michael Jordan had losing times. In fact, there's a YouTube video and I believe the name of it is.... It's a YouTube video, and he talks about all the times he failed, for some reason the title of it is escaping me. Not defeated, but it's something like that. And he talks about the shots he missed, about the times that he had the winning shot in his hand at the last second of the game, and his team gave him the ball and he missed. And he said, "And that's why I'm a winner." Because of all these times that he tried and failed, but he got back up and he fought again, and that's the way I want to live my Christian life. Not never making a mistake, not never slipping and falling, but every time I do, to get back up and say, "What do I do now, Christ? Lord, what do I do now? What would you have me to do now?" So let's read these first two verses of Romans chapter twelve, together, and think about what they mean to us today. And if this sounds a little familiar from last week, I've already acknowledged that it is. But we're going to pick up there and then go on to our toolbox, that's available to us, so that we can see how it is that we can live a victorious life and be transformed. Romans twelve and one:

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed...*

How do we do that? by the renewing of your mind. We need to be transformed every day. And, in First Corinthians chapter thirteen, we read these words. And Apostle Paul is writing to the churches in Corinth, and he says that there's something really powerful that will transform us. There's something really powerful that will change us. Anybody know what it is? It's love, charity. Absolutely. Love will change us. Now, I want to speak for just a moment to anyone who's been married more than five years. If I ask you is 'love' a verb, is 'love' an action word, or is it all about feelings? If you've been married more than five years, you can say it's both. Sometimes you just do love, you don't feel love. I am going to say that again. Sometimes you just do love, you don't feel love. You do the right thing because it's the right thing. You love your parents because they are your parents, you love your children because they are your children, and you love your husband because he's your husband, you love your wife because she's your wife. Sometimes you just do love, you don't feel love, and, sometimes, you—and, it's great when you feel love. When you feel love, it's easier to do love. But, we're not called to do love when we feel love, we're called to love all the time. Does that make sense? I'm okay, if you challenge me and say, "I don't think 'do love' is good English." No, but it's a great message. And you know exactly what I'm trying to say, I know you do. Because it's important that we get it, and that we live it, let the church say, "Amen." So, First Corinthians, chapter thirteen, now we're in verse four. And the word charity here, by the way, is really a powerful word; it's God's love, it's God's love, this isn't, you know, puppy love. And I don't have time—it's not the study today to talk about the different kinds of love, but this is God's love.

1 Corinthians 13:4 *Charity suffereth long...*

How about that? It's not a short time thing. It's not. Then I'll try it for a day, a week, a year, a month. No, charity suffereth long. You know charity is in for the long haul. Charity doesn't quit. Charity suffereth long, amen? When you can't—have you ever—in this part of the country, I'd be surprised if anybody can't answer this in the affirmative: Have you ever been in the kind of snow storm where you can't see, and you are in the car, and you can't see more than a car length in front of you? And it's like, "Where's the turn? Where's the—" I hope nobody's stopped up there," right? You are afraid to stop because you'll get hit and you can't go too fast because you'll hit something. It's one of those delicate balances. You just sort of keep going, and you hope you have the same flow as all the traffic right. You ever been in that kind of storm? You're going ten or fifteen miles an hour and you're sort of hoping everybody's going ten or fifteen miles an hour. You hope the guy behind you is not going thirty and the guy in front of you isn't going five, right? Charity suffereth long; it's in it for the long haul. You can't always see where it's taking you—that's what the analogy of the story was about—you can't always see where you're going to end up, you can't always see where the next turn is, but you've got to keep going. You've got to keep going, you can't stop and say, "Well when I feel better, then I'll love." No, love now and you'll feel better. I'll say it again: Love now. When Adam was young, I said, "Adam, I need you to clean your room, right now." He said, "When I feel better, I will." I said, "No, clean it now, and you'll feel better." Does that make sense? Debbie would be mad at me, upset with me, disappointed with me, sometimes for a good cause, and when she says, "I love you, Pete," I know what she's doing. 19:45 She's saying, "I'm going to do love right now, even though you may not deserve it, in the moment, but, I want to be together tomorrow and the next day and the next day and the next day." And it would be nice if those were brief moments, like two or three seconds long, each, but, the reality is, sometimes in life we have to suffer long. Sometimes in life we have to stay the course. Amen? We're in verse four. It suffers long. And then what does it say? "It's kind." It's kind. Did the Bible say a soft answer turneth away wrath? (Proverbs 15:1) Love is kind. It's not the kind of thing that you get to use as a club to hit someone with. Love is kind, "I'm going to love you to death." We don't get to love that way, amen? Some of us want to use our Bible to love people with. Hello? Love is kind. These are tools in your tool box, another way to think of them, as gauges on your dashboard. You know the speedometer tells you how fast you're going. The gas gauge tells you how much gas is in the tank, right? The temperature gauge tells you how hot or cold the engine is right. How's your love gauge? Is it empty? Is it full? Is it kind? Is it bitter? "I'm going to show you how much I love you." Love is kind. Charity envieth not. You go right back to the Ten Commandments, and you get an idea of what it's like to envy, and how wrong it is, and how Satan can use that to hurt you when you get your eyes looking at something that's not yours. When you envy something. "Of course, she's a good wife; look at her husband. If I was married to him, I could be a good wife too. If I was married to him, I could be..." right? Well, it's not always what it looks like. Don't envy, don't want what someone else has; want what God has for you and that may be a better situation. And, you know, as I speak that today, I recognize that there are people at places in life, and that's not where you want to be this time next year, and that's okay, that's okay; that didn't say to be stagnant, it just said, don't envy, it's okay to pursue your dreams. Pursue what you want. Did not Matthew, six and thirty-three, say, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness..." and what? All these things shall be added unto you. It's okay, it's okay to tell God the desires of your heart. It's all right, amen? but don't envy. Vaunteth not itself. Don't put yourself up higher than others. You know what Christians do? they serve. They love. They're kind. They don't put themselves above others. They serve each other. That's why Christ washed the disciples' feet. It's not so much that their feet were dirty. It was because He was going to say, "If you would be chiefest among you, let him be servant of all." Did their feet need cleaned? Sure. That was the culture of the day; they went around in sandals, sometimes barefoot. And that was the way of the day was to clean your feet as a way of welcoming guests into the home, saying

relax make yourself at home, I'm glad you're here, but it was always delegated to the junior person in the house, even among the servants, the junior servant, and so Christ did it. Peter didn't understand that, he said, "You can't wash my feet." Jesus said, "If I don't, you'll have no part with me." He said, "Wash everything," right? We shouldn't vaunt ourselves. We shouldn't put ourselves above others, we shouldn't think more highly of ourselves than we ought to. It's not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly. We're responsible for our actions. We're supposed to behave in a way that when people look at us, they know that we're a Christian. Amen? The way we drive, I have a confession to make, it's embarrassing for me to admit this, but when I was in my 20's, perhaps even into my 30's. I was a very impatient driver. And stupid people bothered me a lot. I said that to point a finger at myself, I know how ridiculous that statement is. I was pointing a finger at me when I said that. As if I am not the stupid one. I made as many driving mistakes as anybody, I'm sure. At the last minute saw my exit and had to make a quick change from the left lane to the right. Anybody ever do that, ever? How many of us have gotten mad at the other guy that did it, though? Is not, is that not the way life works? I have learned to sort of chuckle and smile. And say, "Oh, I'm glad I was at slowing down and made room for you there." I think I might have been an impatient driver because my dad was an impatient driver. He didn't have much tolerance for people who drive slow in the left lane, or, and I could go on and on and on. You get any pet peeves, anybody here, show of hands, you've got a pet peeve? I'm not going to ask you what it is. Don't worry. That was almost unanimous. All of us have got little things that bother us, don't we? But, you know what? we've got to be careful how we act. Does not behave itself unseemly. We've got to have our actions in check, no matter how we are feeling, even if somebody irritates us. We've got to have the right answer for the right moment, no matter what our emotions are. And we do have a responsibility to act in a right way. The Bible says not only to avoid evil, but to avoid the very appearance of evil (1 Timothy 5:22). We're not supposed to just avoid evil, but avoid the very appearance of evil. We're supposed to do things in such a way—And, I'm really good at it. I'm perfect at it as a matter of fact. Thank you for laughing. In fact, I said to my wife just the other day, we were at a red light and there was a crosswalk, and someone crossed in front of us, and I said to my wife, Debbie, "I want you to know, I did not even notice that beautiful woman that just walked in front of our car." She said, "I am so proud of you, Pete." But you know, I can be humorous with her like that, because she knows that she can trust me, she knows where my heart is. Amen? And, also, I didn't stare. I looked at my wife while I was saying that. We can't act in a way that betrays our belief that we serve a God who is good to us. "Seeketh not her own." Now, this is a challenge for us as Christians: don't seek your own. "What do you mean, it's mine?" No, it's to put other ways before your ways. It's to treat others better than you treat yourself. It's to care about others more than you care about yourself. You say, "Well, what about me?" God will take care of that. Really, and truly. When we put others first, God will take care of us. I believe that with all my heart. When we put others first, God will take care of that. "Not easily provoked." I won't ask for a show of hands, but maybe somebody, here today, needs to hear that one. You know what? If I'm really going to be transformed by love, that's one I really need to do. I can't be provoked. I can't be provoked. And by the way, fault finding is, at least, a first cousin to being provoked. If you find fault with people easily, if you find fault with people easily, then you're going to become easily provoked. Slow down on fault finding. Have you ever gone to a restaurant—I'm going to try to help somebody here—Have you ever gone to a restaurant with somebody and you knew know them so well, that you know they're going to find fault. They're going to turn back their silverware because it's got a spot on it. Or this coffee cup's not okay. Or you know they're going to—They're looking, when they sit down, they're looking for what it is they are going to tell their server is wrong. There's a lot of looks in the room. I see a lot of people sort of wanting to look at the person next to them, I'm seeing a few smiles. So, I think I might have hit a nerve there. You know that feeling, it makes you uncomfortable, doesn't it? To be with the person that's right? When the server comes to the table, a man or a woman, they come to the table and they say, "I have been here, seven minutes and thirteen seconds. And no one has arrived, and by the way, my fork is

dirty and I need a new napkin.” Right? I'm thinking, “Could we go somewhere else?” I'm talking about being transformed here. And I'm talking about how love transforms us. And this idea of being not easily provoked is really important. Because it really helps us to temper ourselves, we're going to read and we're going to talk a little bit more about that later. “Thinketh no evil.” Thinketh no evil. You know, there are some people who are more naturally prone to thinking evil than good, it's just the way we're wired. It's the way we're wired. Some people always see the glass as half empty. Some people always see it as half full. Some people see it both. It's just a reality of life. Some people are wired, and if you're a half empty person, you've got to work on that. If you always find fault with others, if you think evil of others, if you find it very hard to trust good intentions, if you find it very hard to trust good intentions, that's a struggle that you have to overcome. And I would encourage you to take on that challenge of letting love transform you in that issue in your life. There is a story that I've used as illustration before, so, if you're hearing it again, I apologize. But I think it really fits well, and I think it's one of those stories that if we remember it, it helps us to check ourselves. Because I told you I want to give you some tools today on how we can be transformed by the renewing of our mind. And right now in this chapter thirteen of First Corinthians—I'm talking about how love transforms us. Let the church say, amen. Okay, so the story is: there's a guy from the city he's out in the country. It's late at night and he gets a flat. And he keeps thinking somebody will come by soon to help me. But no one did. So, he starts to change the flat tire himself. And it turns out he has everything he needs, except one thing, and that's the lug wrench. He has the jack, he has a spare tire, he doesn't have the lug wrench. So, he can't get the flat tire off, and he can't put the good spare on. And waiting, and waiting, and thinking someone come by and I can borrow their lug wrench, but no one does. He sees a house, a light in the distance, so he decides to walk to the farmhouse. And as he's walking to the farmhouse, he starts thinking in his mind about city people versus country people. And he thinking this guy is going to be... he doesn't like city people. He thinks some arrogant; he thinks I make fun of country people. In fact he's gonna make fun of me. Because I'm a city person, I can just hear it now. “Oh you city people, you don't even have the tools to change a tire. Ha ha ha and you make fun of us farmers. Well, guess what? I am a farmer and I know how to change a tire, but you've got a flat, you can't even change it.” And he gets this conversation going in his head. And he's walking towards the house. Actually, he's walking faster. He's getting more upset as he goes. Finally, he gets to the farmhouse door. Knocks on the door guy opens the door. He's got a pair of bib overalls on, just like the city guy preach pictured. The farmer says, “Hello, sir, may I help you? The city guy says, “I wouldn't borrow your lug wrench if you were the last man on Earth.” Sometimes in life we do that. Sometimes in life, we anticipate a negative outcome before it even happens. And you know what our predictions are usually true. We create a negative outcome. Talking about being transformed by love. I know I've preached louder, I've preached more evangelical, but I hope today I'm preaching something that is useful. I hope I'm preaching something today that you can take with you, that will matter for you. And I might mention ten points, and maybe only one of them will hit home, but take it with you. Put them all in your tool box, you might be able to help somebody someday. Or, maybe, one day you may find yourself saying, “Oh, I didn't think I needed that tool, but I think that's the one I need right now.” Thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. You know some human beings—I'm not saying anyone in this room, probably no one in Illinois, but down where we live in Virginia, there are some people that seem to applaud when someone else gets into an accident, when someone else has tragedy, when someone else loses their job, when someone else slips and falls. There is a television show, it's America's Funniest Home Videos. Anyone ever seen it? A lot of us have. You know if it weren't for people falling, hitting heads, that show wouldn't exist. And we laugh at it, because it's funny. I have watched it, I think it's funny. I laugh at it. I get it. But you know what? that's a humorous version of how we are as people. How about the sad version? You hear somebody got fired, and you say, “He had it coming.” Why would you rejoice in iniquity? Why would you rejoice in somebody else's tragedy? Why would you rejoice in someone else having a shortcoming, a

failing? It's okay to say, "You know what? I pray that that helps them because he didn't really fully appreciate his job." That might be a true statement, but don't rejoice in someone else's suffering. Don't rejoice in someone else's iniquity. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things... how many? how much? All! beareth all things. Love beareth all things, love beareth all things, love believeth all things, love hopeth all things, endureth all things. In the first part of verse eight, it says it never fails. Love never fails. We fail, but love doesn't fail. Amen? Anybody here ever failed? Debbie and I have adopted a line, I don't know why we think it's funny. A lot of you don't know why we think it's funny. It says, "Ever been wrong? It's happened to me." Sometimes I'll be wrong, and I know I'm wrong, so that's the way I'll sort of break the ice. I'll say to Debbie, "Ever been wrong?" she says, "It's happened to me." By the way, in our house, if one of us is wrong, about ninety-nine percent of the time, it's me, and I hate that. So, I solicit your prayers, I really do. It happened just yesterday, by the way. We are in the car, and we came to an intersection, and I wasn't sure exactly where we were at. But I did know that we were supposed to turn left, and Debbie said, "No you're supposed to turn right." And I said I said this I did. I shouldn't have started this story; I wish I had kept it to myself. I said, "No, I'm supposed to turn left." She said, "No, really, you're supposed to turn right." It was pleasant, we weren't arguing, but she made it quite clear that we were supposed to turn right, and I made it quite clear we were supposed to turn left. I was going to prove to her that she was wrong. And, I said, "Okay," and I turned right. And when we got to where we were going, I said, "Oh." And I told that story so you could laugh at me. Then I can help you understand sometimes we make mistakes. And if we have a humble attitude, we're willing to, we can let love, transform us we can let love transforms. Amen? We can let love transform us, and that's my prayer today, that we'll get some tools so that we can do that.

Come with me if you would to Galatians. And, in the book of Galatians, Apostle Paul is writing to the church in Galatia, and he says some very powerful things, and we're in chapter five now, and we're going to go First Galatians twenty-two and twenty-three. And in Galatians chapter five, verses twenty-two and twenty-three, we find these words. It has to do with the spirit, and how we can have the fruit of the spirit in our life. Verse twenty-two:

Galatians 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: [That's self control. Temperance is self control.] against such there is no law.*

Does that sound familiar to the list we just read in First Corinthians thirteen verses four through eight? Very similar, doesn't it? This is love in our life, this is the fruit of the Spirit in our life, this is how we're transformed in our life. Some people say, "I want to be a Christian, just I'm not sure how." This is how. Here's a list right here in Galatians five, verses twenty-two and twenty-three of how you can check yourself. How am I doing? How am I doing as a Christian? And if you find yourself, if you rated each of these things in your life and you write them if we have the time right now, I slow way down and I would say right each of these things down on your piece of paper, and, then, next to it, I want you to grade yourself, or rate yourself, on a scale of one to ten: How much love do you have in your life? How much joy do you have in your life? I've been accused of being too happy in the morning. There's my chief critic, right there. I wake up and I say, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" And Debbie says, "I don't know. I haven't checked." She doesn't share that same enthusiasm for opening your eyes first thing in the morning. I don't know why, but I've come to believe that I don't have to rub it in, I can just accept it. Give her a cup of coffee and she is going to say to me, "Isn't it a beautiful day?" And, by then I've gone on to something else and I say, "I don't know. I haven't checked." How you doing on love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance? one to ten? Any those below a five? There's an area where you could be transformed by love in your life. Any of those below a seven or an eight? There is an area where you can be transformed in your life. I'm not saying we should be all ten, all the time.

That's probably not realistic, we're human beings, but we need to get better all the time, amen? We need to keep getting better all the time and then, if you take verse nineteen, I know we're backing up this time. And for those of you that are taking notes were going to go nineteen through twenty-one and now, look what happens here; there is an opposite to the fruit of the spirit, isn't there? What is it? The works of the flesh, which are manifest, which are these: Adultery. Adultery; you know that's something Satan has plagued human beings with since the beginning of time, it's not a new thing we didn't invent it in this generation, it goes all the way back to the beginning, Old Testament and New. You know, it's Satan something to take a gift that God intended for good and use it for evil. Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, those are all sexual sins. You think there's a problem with humanity that we're sexual beings and Satan wants us to yield to sexual sin? of course there is. Pornography alone is a multi-billion dollar a year industry. It's a serious thing. And if you say, "I don't understand why I'm tempted that way." Because you're a human being. It would be like a dog saying I don't understand why I like meat. They were created that way. We're created to have sexual desire, but Satan wants us to have it in the wrong way, not in the right way. There's a right place for that. And, if you're single here today and you're here in that, you say, "Well that just stinks," I get that. But, there could be beauty in the waiting, too. There's a reward for that. There's a gift for that. There's a blessing for that. God intended it to be good, and you know what? if we use it right, whether that's in waiting or in marriage, God can bless that and honor it, and if Satan gets his way, we'll use it wrong. Amen? And by the way, if you think that you are hiding it from God—any of your sexual thoughts or any of your sexual, immoral, impure thinking, God knows it, and by the way, if you're married and you've got those thoughts, you're hurting your marriage. If you're single and you have those thoughts you're hurting your future marriage. If you're single and you're having those thoughts and you're not going to get married; you say, "I don't even know if I'm going to, so, so what?" you're hurting your relationship with God Almighty. The devil uses that to hurt us. I'm talking about being transformed today. And you know one of the ways that Satan wants us to be conformed to the world is through those sexual sins. Can I say that in church? You bet, absolutely. If we don't say it here, where are you going to hear it? Amen? When Adam was young and I was teaching him about sex, I don't know if Adam would remember this or not, but I can tell you exactly where we were. We were at the intersection of Lewis Avenue and Dugdale coming home from Lyon school, which is where Adam went to elementary school, and I was having an ongoing, over a period of several weeks, I would take little pieces at a time, father and son talk about sex, and what it is and what God's plan for it is. And I was getting to the point where you know it's not a bad thing, it's just bad to have it in the wrong place, and there was a beautiful red sports car, it was a Firebird with tee-tops, I remember it well. And we were at the intersection at the red light there and that car was across from us at the intersection there, and I said, "Hey, Adam, do you like that car?" He said, "Yeah, that's beautiful." And I said, "Well, let's go take it." You know where I'm at in this story, don't you? He said, "We can't do that, dad" and I said, "That's right, Adam, it doesn't matter if it's beautiful. It just matters that it's not ours." Amen? And we have to just sometimes call the devil the liar that he is and say, "I'm not going to want what isn't mine." Now, put this in context: That doesn't mean you can't want a new car someday, "It's not mine yet, but I want it." That's okay. But, go right back to the Ten Commandments; you want what somebody else's? God says don't do that. Am I preaching to you today? Are you with me today? I'm giving you tools how you can transform your life and you know what? it's an ongoing battle. When you're going down the road, you can't get in the right lane and take your hands off the wheel, you have to keep steering, and that's how we have to live our Christian life. We have to keep steering. And if you're not careful, you'll be in the oncoming traffic before you know it. And, this is how we can stay in our lane. This is how we can do what God wants us to do, live the way that God wants us to live. We're in verse twenty now.

Galatians 5:20-21 *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

There's big consequences to not living godly. Romans, six and one. I think I mentioned this last week, but I told you this is sort of a continuation of the same line of teaching:

Romans 6:1-2 *What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?*

Amen? Is there grace if you sin? Is there forgiveness of your sins? Yes. Should we sin because there's grace? No. I do a lot of prison ministry. I see parents sit with their children, adult people that are in prison for murder, and you know why there they're visiting them? Because they love them, even though they're murderers or rapists or whatever. But they love them. Amen? Why do they love them? Not because of the crime they committed, but because it's their child. God loves you, and maybe somebody came today just to hear this. Yeah, you may have some baggage. Yeah, you may have some past that you're not proud of. Maybe you don't want people to ever find out some things that happened in your life. God loves you. I'm going to say it again. God loves you. Maybe you are embarrassed by something that happened in your life, God loves you. His love is greater than the shame, His love can be greater than the pain, if you let it be. God loves you, you're not defined by that. Somebody may have come to church today, just to hear that, because they needed to be reminded, your past doesn't define you. Your relationship with a living God does. Amen? I am a child of the king.

I have some doctrinal issues with Billy Graham. But I heard his son, Franklin Graham, tell a story once. And his story put me in tears and it changed my life. And I thought I want to be like Billy Graham in this story. And Franklin Graham, his son, was telling this story I heard on television. I wasn't there in person, but I actually heard him tell the story. And Franklin Graham said that when he became an adult, he said he was very rebellious. And he had just done as much as he could to run as far and as fast away from godly living, and ministry, and the life that he grew up knowing from his parents. He said, "I was out and I was doing drugs and I wasn't living right; I smelled bad and I looked bad. I would often run out of money and have to go to my parents for help." And he said, "My dad never turned me away, never refused me. Sometimes his help was tough love, and he'd say, 'I can't give you anything right now, it wouldn't help you,'" but his dad never rejected him or turned him away. He said, "There was a day when I tried everything I could to get money, I talked everyone I knew, and every door was closed, and the only place I could go was my dad. And so I went to the office building where he had his church ministries. And I went to the receptionist and I said, 'I need to speak to my dad.' Then she said, 'Well, he's in a meeting, but I'll get him for you.'" But he said, "'No don't interrupt him. I'll wait, I'll just go wait outside his office.' She said, 'No. He's in the boardroom with the executive committee. But he told me that if you ever come by, not to make you wait; that he wants to be interrupted no matter what he's doing.' Then she said, 'So, I'm going to go tell your father you are here.' 'Please don't. I'd rather wait until he's done with it.' She said, 'I can't; your father has given me strict orders, if you come, he wants to know about it right away, he doesn't want you to have to sit and wait.' The receptionist went into the executive committee boardroom, and she said, 'Dr. Graham, your son is here.' And he said, 'Oh, good, send him in.' Without hesitation, 'Oh, good, send him in.' She came out and she said, 'I'm to take you to the executive boardroom.'" Franklin said, "'Oh no, I haven't shaved, I'm not dressed properly.' She said, 'I've been given orders from your father to bring you straight in,' and she did." And when he walked in the room, his father stood and he came over and he hugged his son Franklin. And he said, "Gentlemen, would you all please stand, and make my son feel welcome?" And one by one he asked these gentlemen to come over and greet his son, and every one of them came and one by one they hugged Franklin

Graham, and Franklin said, "I was so embarrassed, because I knew how I looked, and how I smelled, and how I'd been living." But he said, after everybody had greeted him, his father said, "Excuse me, gentlemen, I'm going to spend a few minutes with my son. I'll be right back." "And we went to my dad's office, and he said, 'What can I do for you?'" Then the son had a need, and his father met it. And he said, "I've got to go back to my meeting, son," and he left, but he said, "Please stop by soon." And Franklin left, and as he told that story, he finished it by saying, "That was the day I felt, that was the day I learned, that was the day I understood, unconditional love." And you have a God that loves you unconditionally.

And, you know what? In our families, we'll get hurt by our sisters and our brothers. In our church we'll get hurt by our sisters and our brothers, even our leaders. I told a story, I mean, yeah, I asked a question, is what I meant to say, when I was Senior Pastor at our church on Belvidere street. And, I don't know, we might have had two hundred people there that day, maybe two-fifty, I don't know, but what I do know, I asked a question and I'm going to tell you what I expected, and that I'm going to tell you what happened if you're with me say, uh, huh. So, I was at this church in Waukegan. And I was talking about how even well, often well-intentioned people offend others. Have you ever offended anybody? Yep. And, so I was making the point that even well-intentioned people offend others. And so I asked the question expecting, maybe ten or twenty percent of the people there would respond in the informative. I said, "How many people here, today, have I ever offended?" And I wasn't getting a good response. I could tell people were sort of uncomfortable, I said, "Really feel free. How many people have I offended to the point where you felt like leaving the church?" And after I told them they were welcome to respond in the affirmative, everybody, both hands up—several people feet in the air. There were cars screeching to a stop on Belvidere Street, people running in from outside with their hands up. There were people coming out of homes on Belvidere Street, running into the church with their hands up. I might have exaggerated a little, but that's exactly how it felt. But, you know what? love can win that, love can overcome that. Amen? You want a perfect church? I know where it is, and I'm going to tell you. You want a perfect church? Stay saved long enough to go to heaven. Yeah, you'll find it. I'm going, I'm going to that perfect church, but until then I'll take this one, and, until then I'll take this one. Amen? You can take that to the bank, you can write that down. I want to be in that perfect church, and that's why I'm going to live right until I can get there.

I am going to close in Galatians. And Galatians, chapter six, verse one through eight. Now, I'm going to close this message by talking about the fact that here's a biblical principle that none of us can escape: we reap what we sow. If you've never planted anything, that means what you plant is what's going to come. If you plant tomatoes, you won't get corn. If you plant corn you won't get tomatoes. If you plant hatred, and envy, and strife, you won't get love, and joy, and peace, amen? If you plant good, you get good. Now, that doesn't mean some weeds won't grow in your garden. And that's a subject for another day, having the wisdom to know which weeds you have to leave 'til harvest, which ones you can pluck while they're going. That's another sermon, but you reap what you sow. Galatians chapter six verse one we're reading through eight:

Galatians 6:1-8 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Saints that should be you, that should be me. If someone's overtaken in a fault, those of us that know the Lord, those of us that know love the Lord, those of us that have been loved by the Lord. We know this is how we're supposed to act. Because, you know what? someone will be overtaken in a fault in your life. Someone will need forgiveness from you in your life. Someone will mess you up in your life, someone will let you down in your life. Somebody say amen. Ye which are spiritual restore such a one with a spirit of meekness. We just read about meekness in two different places. We're supposed to have it, church, if we're going to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. We're gonna have meekness. On a scale of one to ten, we want to be as close as we can to ten. I suggest you get all the meekness you can, because this life's going to dish out some challenges. I suggest you get all the meekness you can, because this life is going to throw some curve balls at you, some hard balls at you. You're going to get your heart broken, and you're going to get people to not only slip and fall, but trip you when they do. Somebody say amen. Life's not gonna be fair and easy all the time. But guess what? I'm glad when we get to judgment, it won't be fair, either. Because, when I get to judgment, I'm going to hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." If I got what was fair, I'd hear depart. I am going to get a better than fair deal at judgment. So, if I get a less than fair deal here... After it said in the spirit of meekness, it said, "...considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." You know what we get when we give, the way we treat others, the way we forgive others, the way we love others? Somebody said to me once, "You're very forgiving Pete, you're very forgiving Pastor," you know why? Because I need a lot of forgiveness. I need a lot of forgiveness, I know who I am. I'm not gonna get to Heaven on my own merit; I couldn't even if I tried. Yes, I want to be Christ-like I told you that at the beginning of the message, but we can't say we're saved because we're good enough. We're not saved by good works, we're created unto good works. Remember that in Ephesians it says something about good works. We're not saved by good works, we're saved by him. Amen? Are you with me, Saints? Do you know that you need to be transformed? Do you know that I need to be transformed? Do you know that none of us are perfect this side of Heaven? When somebody says, "He's perfect," no, he's not, he's just perfectly in love. Embrace it while you got it. I told Debbie I'm twice the man that she married. But you know what? she still loves me, Amen? Bear one another's burdens. It didn't say that. Oh, my goodness, are you saying we have to bear each others burdens? I've got enough of my own. I'm sorry, the Bible says you have to bear each other's burdens. We've got to help one another. Sometimes yours aren't enough. And so fulfill the law of Christ. Sometimes that's what family does. Amen? Sometimes family bear one another's burdens. Sometimes you go the extra mile for your sister or your brother when they can't, or maybe just because they won't, but we're going to cross the finish line together. Amen? Amen? For when a man makes himself to be something when he is nothing he deceiveth himself. Oh, get over yourself saints. We're not as good looking as we think we are. I'm not as good looking as I think I am, I'm not as pretty as I think I am. I'm not as smart as I think I am. But neither are you. Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone. For every man shall bear his own burden. "I thought I was supposed to bear someone else's burden." You are, and yours, too. Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto them that teacheth unto all good things. Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto them that teacheth in all good things. Some of you think Andy and Parrish aren't good enough for you to need to communicate with them or show respect. Guess what? you've got to get to that place. If you don't respect them, you're disrespecting God; did I say that plain enough? If there was any one person in this room I thought I should to say that to, I'd just pull them aside and say it, I've got big enough britches I would do that. But you know what? I'm saying it because the Spirit laid it on my heart to say it, so, take it for what it's worth. Amen? And I'll just say God is not mocked and I'll wrap it up with this; then Parrish it's yours. Whatsoever, a man soweth that shall he also reap for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh, reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Saints, you need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, we need to be careful not to let this world shake us, we've got to let God shake us. Amen? We need to be better than

we are already. And that wasn't mean spirited. I'm talking about me. We need to take—we need God to take a heavy hammer to a hard heart and be the best that we can be, be the best church that you can be, be the best sisters and brothers we can be, be the best sons and daughters we can be, be the best parents we can be, just be the best we can be, so that others can say that they know that we've been with Christ for we are like Him, God bless you.