

Transformation of Lives – Transformation Series #1

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Text: John 11:1-44

NOTES:

A. Introduction:

1. We've been on a journey of clarifying our mission & purpose as a church. Our mission statement, introduced some months ago: "Joining God in transforming our lives, neighbourhoods, nation, the world."
2. Boiling it down, we could say the mission of our church and personal lives is captured in one word: TRANSFORMATION.
 - a. Transformation in the Bible: the concept of "metamorphous." **Pastor Derrick:** *"When we experience the reality of the Holy Spirit and the power of God's word and family, we are being transformed. It starts when we come to Christ and continues lifelong."*
 - b. To *metamorphose* is to change nature, become utterly and completely different. When we enter a partnership with God we experience a change of heart, thoughts, priorities, how we live life in whatever our role: husband, wife, student, boss, etc.
 - c. Transformation in the O.T.: Ezekiel 36:25—not a ritual but a prophetic word of the day God would transform hearts.
 - d. Transformation in the N.T.: Jesus taught it—"You must be born again"—John 3:3-7; Paul taught it—2 Corinthians 5:17.

B. Lessons from the raising of Lazarus – John 11:1-44:

1. **Death is the human condition.**
 - a. John 11:17: Bible time Jews believed that after 3 days of death the spirit was permanently locked out of the body. Therefore Lazarus being brought back to life after four days of death was particularly unlikely.
 - b. John 11:21: Death brings confusion, bewilderment, questioning God: "Why am I going through this? Lord if You had been here."
 - c. Romans 6:23 – Death comes because of sin, introduced to the human race by Adam & Eve. It's the great equalizer. Death brings hopelessness, despair, physical separation.
 - d. John 11:29 – Death smells (See 2 Corinthians 2:14-16).
 - e. John 11:25 – Jesus brings life. Pastor Derrick: "Whatever you're facing, it's not too big for God. Jesus brings light into darkness, hope into hopelessness, life to death."
2. **Transformation comes to individual lives.**
 - a. John 11:33 – Nothing can separate us from Jesus: "Where have you laid him?" "Come and see."
 - b. John 11:35 – "Jesus wept." Why? Because He loved Lazarus so much? Because He was moved by His mission and that they failed to see the Life-giver in their midst?
 - c. John 11:40 – Belief leads to seeing the glory of God—His power, character, mercy, life. Pastor Derrick: "Believe and trust, however the dark the circumstances, whatever the decay looks like."
 - d. John 11:43 – "... said in a loud voice" really means Jesus yelled: "Lazarus come out!" Right then everything dead came to life—the metamorphous moment. Similarly, each of us was dead but through the Bible, a message, a song, etc. we have heard an responded to Jesus' words of life.
 - e. Transformation Weekend (October 27&28) is a weekend to explore this metamorphous life, this life of transformation.
 - f. When we face the possibility of actual physical death, like pastor's family did after a recent accident, the impact of Jesus being resurrection and life comes home in a new way.
3. **We are raised to a mission.**
 - a. John 12:9-11 – Lazarus becomes a testimony of God's grace and the catalyst for many to believe in Jesus.
 - b. Similarly, we go from tomb to testimony, to tell people in our sphere of influence what we've seen, heard, and felt about how we've gone from death to life in Jesus.

DISCUSSION:

1. Look up the dictionary definitions of "transformation" and "metamorphous" ("metamorphosis"). How do these words relate to our lives as believers in Jesus? How is transformation described in the Old Testament? The New Testament?
2. How have you experienced death? Share your stories. As Christians, we experience physical death along with everyone else, so what did Jesus mean by what He said in John 11:25,26?
3. Why do you think Jesus wept (John 11:35)? Why did He pray before raising Lazarus (John 11:41,42)? What did Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus prove? What impact does this story of Jesus' life have on you?
4. What was the result of Lazarus' death-to-life experience for Lazarus? For Jesus? What ministry implications does having a spiritual death-to-life experience have for us?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for sending Jesus because of and through whom we can go from death to life and have the assurance of life beyond our physical life on earth. Help us to continue to be open to transformation, our hearts changing ever more from stone to flesh, through all our days on earth. Amen.