

# Changing the Way we Think - During Challenging Times

## *"Allowing the Lord to grow the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives"*

### Roman's chapters 1 – 11

- Clear and systematic explanation of our Christian teaching – explains God's plan for humanity and why Jesus is Lord and Savior.

### Roman's Chapters 12 – 16

- Critical and practical explanation of how a Christian, someone who calls Jesus the Lord of their life, can be successful at living out their calling

### Romans 12:1 (NLT)

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

### Romans 12:2 (NLT)

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but **let God** transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

## Goal: To know God's will in our everyday ordinary lives, and to do it.

### According to Paul, two things are required:

- 1) Desire to copy the behavior and practices of the Lord and not the unbelieving world around you
- 2) Let God TRANSFORM you by letting Him change the way you THINK

Not 1-time actions, these are actions to be continually done

As our thoughts focus on Him and His will for us, as we DO His will, He grows the FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT in us:

- Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control

Transform: to "make a complete **change** in the appearance or character of something or someone."

## COMPLETE CHANGE

- Some change is fun, exciting
- Sometimes change is difficult, produces stress, anxiety, even fear
- Sometimes WE initiate the change, while some change is FORCED upon us

The change WE typically desire

- To change our CIRCUMSTANCES or to see change in SOMEONE ELSE

God seems to be pre-occupied in

- CHANGING US

**WHY IS THAT?** - Why is the Lord more interested in changing US than our circumstances?

**Sometimes God allows us to go through long seasons of challenge without changing our CIRCUMSTANCES**

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### *"Allowing the Lord to grow the Fruit of the Spirit in our lives"*

Have you experienced an "extended season" of challenge in your life?

- Many in our congregation who are going through long challenging seasons right now!
- I have some experience in this as well. There are also many examples in scripture, including:
  - Slavery in Egypt, wandering in the wilderness, persecution of the early church & throughout the ages in different geographic areas
  - David after He was anointed King, 10 years hunted by Saul

Isaiah 59:1 (NLT)

Listen! The Lord's arm is not too weak to save you, nor is his ear too deaf to hear you call.

Lam 3:22-23 (NLT)

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

The Apostle Paul pleaded with the Lord 3 times to remove a significant challenge

**2 Cor 12:9 (NLT)**

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

## Our Father in Heaven is not unaware nor indifferent

What our Father in Heaven knows is that WHAT WE THINK directly influences the quality of our lives, and the effectiveness of our witness, SO MUCH more than our circumstances.

Is it possible that the reason God does not change our circumstances as fast as we want is because He NEEDS some of those circumstances to get our attention and to change the way we think?

- SO THAT we will have what we need and not just what we want.
- Are YOU willing to let God TRANSFORM you during challenging seasons or do you just want out?

**Psalms 92:4** You thrill me, Lord, with all you have done for me! I sing for joy because of what you have done.

**Jer 29:4-7 (NIV)**

**4** This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: **5** "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. **6** Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. **7** Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."

**Jer 29:11-13 (NIV)**

**11** For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. **12** Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. **13** You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

God wants His people to receive His love, desire to draw close, ALLOW HIM to guide our maturing in Christ