

## A life of transformation to the praise of God

### 1. Intro

- It seems us Aussies love seeing a good transformation take place in people lives
- Only have to look at the TV shows that are on today to see that's the case
  - Better Homes and Gardens > transform ppl's homes and backyards
  - Biggest Loser > transforms ppl's overweight bodies to healthy fit bodies
  - Bachelor > single man to married man
- Same is true when we go to a fancy dress party
  - Put on a costume, a hat or a wig and all of sudden you're transformed into a new person
  - I recently went to an 80's party as Warrick Caper [SLIDE]
  - Put on wig and Liam's footy gear and I was completely transformed!
  - It was like I was a new person > people didn't recognise me
  - I had hair!
- When God grips your heart with the truth that Jesus Christ died on a cross to pay price for your sin ...
  - That brings about the most profound transformation in a person's life ever
  - They become a new person in Christ
  - And that leads to a transformed life
  - Their new identity leads to a new way of living that will be evident
- Just as we see a transformation in people's back yards or body shapes on TV ...
  - So you and others will see a transformation in your life as you follow Jesus
- Since Ch 2:11 Peter is encouraging the Christians he's writing to encourage them to live lives that reflect their new identity in Christ

- He started his letter reminding them that as a Christian who's been born again
  - Into a living hope of eternal life and a wonderful salvation
  - Transferred from death to life > not received mercy > now received mercy
- That truth changes things
  - When you understand the gospel it changes everything
    - Thinking
    - Action
    - Outlook
    - Priorities
    - Language
    - Cares & concerns
  - Everything gets transformed
- The principal he started with in 2:11-12
  - Abstain from sinful desires
  - Live such good lives among the pagans that they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us
- The church / God's ppl are living in a hostile world
  - World is opposed to Jesus and therefore opposed to his ppl
  - But in the midst of the culture of opposition, hostility, persecution
  - Church is to be like a city on a hill
  - Like a lamp on a stand ... shining out as a beacon of godliness and light and life to a dark world that doesn't know Jesus
  - Meant to be attractive and good and draw those who don't know Jesus towards it ... like moths to a light
- So Peter wants to remind and challenge the Christians he's writing to ... to be that city on a hill ... be that lamp on a stand
- He wants them to live lives transformed by the gospel ...
  - Transformed lives in an unbelieving world

- Transformed lives in a servant-hearted church

## 2. Transformed lives in an unbelieving world (1-6)

- Peter starts off on v1 [SLIDE]
  - *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*
- He's carrying on from passage we looked at last week
  - 3:18 where he outlined how Jesus suffered and died ... the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God
  - He carries on that theme of Jesus suffering by saying ...
    - Just as Jesus suffered ... so you too be prepared to suffer
    - Have the same attitude as Jesus and be willing to suffer for what is right ... which is the gospel
- When Peter says ...
  - *because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*
  - He's not saying that Christians never sin
  - Rather, their willingness to persevere in Christian living, even in the face of suffering, is evidence that they've made a decisive break with sin in their life
    - If you're willing to suffer for a cause ... it's because you believe in that cause
      - 40 hour famine > endure the hunger to raise money for ppl in need
      - 21 yo Terry Fox ran a marathon a day across Canada to raise awareness for cancer [SLIDE]
        - You'll only do that and endure the pain / suffering / death because you believe in that cause
- This is Peter's point ... you're willingness to suffer for Christ is evidence of your faith in him ...

- Your 'direction of travel' has changed
  - You no longer live to gratify your human desires and passions
  - Instead you're now living to please God
- That results in criticism and suffering from unbelievers
- Your willingness to suffer therefore shows your faith in Christ is real
  - and if you're in Christ ... you've done with sin because Christ paid for it at the cross

**[SLIDE]**

- v3-4 explain what that reality looks like in more detail
  - <sup>3</sup> *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do-- living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.* <sup>4</sup> *They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.*
- The Christians that Peter is writing to are living transformed lives
  - Before they knew Jesus ... their lives were just like the pagan neighbours
    - Debauchery, sexual immorality, drunkenness, carousing, idolatry
    - Go to any party on Fri or Sat night around Sydney and that's what you'll see
- And now because these Christians
  - have Jesus as Lord
  - new direction they're heading in life
  - living so that God's will be done, not their own will and desires
    - It clashes with their unbelieving friends and family
- They're no longer doing what they did in the past
  - They're abstaining from sinful desires and living good lives among their pagan neighbours
- And so the un-believers ridicule and persecute them those who are now Christians

- In v5-6 Peter says ... don't worry about that
  - They'll have to give an account to Jesus who will one day judge the living and the dead
  - So persist in living transformed lives
    - confident that God's final judgment will come to those who persecute you and
    - He will vindicate you and your submission to Christ
- v6<sup>1</sup>
- **Application**
- When you become a Christian ... life changes
  - You died to sin and living for yourself
  - You have a new Lord > a new master
  - You've changed direction you're heading in life > that's what the Bible calls repentance
    - Not just saying "sorry God" ... actual change of direction and intent
  - Life is no longer shaped by our sinful desires
  - Instead we pray to God ... 'you will be done'
  - It's God's will we live for
- And this goes against the flow of how the world thinks and acts
  - Unbelieving world wants nothing to do with God
    - "God I want your stuff ... but I don't want you"
  - Wants to be masters of their own destiny and not be answerable to God
- But the two can't be blended
  - We can't have two masters

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<sup>1</sup> Here in 4.6, Peter is explaining that the coming judgement was part of the motivation that caused the Apostles and others to preach the good news of Jesus to those Christians who have now died. The Apostles preached to them (while they were still alive), in order that even though they would die physically they might live new resurrection life. The point then is to encourage embattled Christians, and to assure them that their faith, despite their rejection by unbelievers and the death that has overtaken some of their fellow believers, has not been in vain. Rather, the same judgement that will require an account from the opponents of Peter's readers, will also result in the vindication of all Christians – even those killed for their faith. Just as Jesus was killed in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit (3.18), so too will be the experience of His followers.

- Those ways of your old life ...
  - Don't stay there
  - Don't head back there
  - Don't let those things characterise your life any more ... because that doesn't reflect who you are in Christ
    - You're an adopted child of God now
    - He's made you holy through the precious blood of Jesus
    - You've been born again ... you're a new person now
  - Don't go back to you old ways
    - Drunkenness
    - Idolising money, homes, family
    - Watching porn
    - Gossip and slander
  - God has transferred you from death to life ... so be transformed in the way that you live among your unbelieving neighbours and friends
- **Illustration – Chuck Colson [SLIDE]**
- In early 1970's Charles Colson was an adviser to President Nixon when the Watergate scandal happened
  - The affair began with the arrest of five men for breaking and entering into the Democratic Party headquarters at the Watergate hotel complex in 1972
  - The FBI found out the burglary had been sanctioned by the Committee responsible for Nixon's re-election
- In the midst of that Chuck Colson tried to cover up the incident to help protect the President
- During his the time of his indictment and trial, Colson was given CS Lewis' book Mere Christianity ... and he became a Christian
- But many the press and the public ridiculed him

- Thought it was a conversion of convenience ... to help him get off or be shown leniency in his trial
- Cartoonists had a field day picturing a cover-up by this once hard man of Nixon's staff who'd miraculously become an instant saint
- But the reality was, the truth of the gospel truly did transform his life
  - Despite advice from everyone around him not to ... he changed his plea from not guilty to guilty to his charges and was sentenced to prison
  - His new identity in Christ was bringing about transformation
  - In prison he started prayer groups
  - Upon release from prison founded Prison Fellowship which is now US largest ministry to prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families
- A transformed life in an unbelieving world, it will lead to suffering and ridicule ... but God will vindicate those who are his

**[SLIDE]**

- When you
  - Devote your Sunday mornings to church rather than something else
  - Spend your wealth for the good of the gospel rather spending it all on yourself
  - Stand up for a moral issue that the world is opposed to
  - No longer do the things you once did because Jesus is now your Lord and Saviour
- Your unbelieving friends, family and neighbours are going to ridicule, hassle and persecute you for it
  - They'll label you
    - Fundamentalist
    - Mock your stance social and moral issues
    - Label you as weird and religious
  - Ridicule you and your faith
    - Tell you Christianity is
      - A crutch ... if you had more gumption ... you wouldn't need it

- A big fairytale ... you're a fool because you believe in what's unseen
  - Exclude you from
    - their friendship groups
    - conversations
    - stop asking you about your life
    - their life
- But don't fear > don't back down > don't go into your shell
  - Keep living that transformed life
  - Because you know that God will judge with equity and justice
  - For those who suffer for living transformed lives in Christ will be vindicated and raised to share in their heavenly inheritance
  - Any shame or ridicule now ... will be exchanged for eternal glory

### 3. Transformed lives in a servant-hearted church (7-11)

- In verses 7-11 Peter switches his attention from encouraging his readers to live transformed lives in an unbelieving world to living transformed lives in the church [SLIDE]
- The promise of a future judgment in v5-6 prompts Peter to say in v7
  - *'The end of all things is near'*
  - When we hear that phrase we associate that with some crazy guy with a sign or sandwich board standing on a street corner warning the world of Jesus imminent return [SLIDE]
- The Bible is not hysterical about this reality
  - One day Jesus will return
  - All will be called before him to give an account of how they responded to the gospel



- But we don't know when that day will come
- So we are to wait patiently in readiness for that day

**[SLIDE]**

- Peter goes in v7 and says 'Therefore ...' do these things – and he lists of a bunch of things Christians should do as they relate to one another
- In other words, in light the reality that the end of all things is near ...
  - Be good stewards of the time and gifts God has given you
  - Use the time and the gifts God has given you ...
  - So that as you live a transformed life with one another ... you will bring glory to God
- Two general instructions Peter gives his readers
  - Firstly, love one another in particular as you show hospitality
  - Secondly, use the gifts God has given you to serve the good of the church
- Love one another
  - Talked about this last week > 3:8
  - We're to love one another deeply
  - Not a superficial love
  - Not a conditional love > only love those I like or those who will love me back
  - Love from the heart, that's deep, genuine, caring and real
    - Especially if fellow Christians are suffering for their faith ... to have a community of brothers and sisters in Christ to whom they can share life with and be loved and cared for is a real blessing
- But a deep love for one another enables Christians to
  - bear with one another
  - be patient with one another's idiosyncrasies
  - forgiving when we sin against one another

- For love covers over a multitude of sins<sup>2</sup>
  
- In the gospels, Peter asked Jesus how many times should he forgive his brother
  - He proposed what he thought was a generous 'seven times'
  - But Jesus was not impressed
  - He replied "*I tell you, not seven times, but seventy seven times*"<sup>3</sup>
- Love doesn't keep score ... but grants forgiveness freely to every brother and sister who seeks it
  
- **Application**
- Such practical wisdom here from Peter
  - No church is perfect ... because no Christian is perfect
  - There'll be things about church ... things that ppl have said and done that will hurt
    - I've hurt you and you've hurt me, and you've hurt one another
- When you have a deep love for the other person, modeled on God's deep love for us in Christ ... it covers over a multitude of sins that would otherwise fracture relationships and dishonour God ... rather than glorify God
  
- One of the ways we can show our love for one another is to offer hospitality to one another
  - Word for hospitality literally = zenophilia = love of strangers
  - Opposite of xenophobia = fear of strangers
  
- Hospitality has always been one of the marks of the Christian community
  - Whether ppl opening up their homes to visiting preachers in Peter's day
  - Christians today opening up their homes to one another today

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<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 10:18

<sup>3</sup> Matt 18:21-22

- As we live a life transformed by the gospel ... it means our time and our home is not just for my use and satisfaction
  - It's actually part of the good gifts God has given me to be stewards of while we patiently await Jesus return
  
- **Application**
- As we grow to be a church that establishes Christians and equips one another ... hospitality such an effective way of doing that
  - As you open you homes to one another
  - Share meals and coffee and M&M's, Oreo biscuits ...
    - These are opportunities to do life together
    - Share your struggles
    - Pray for one another
    - Build friendships
    - Encourage one another in the face of hardship, sadness, and doubts
- Use your Sunday's (or any day) for hospitality
  - Have ppl over, open your home, do life together
  - And as do ... you can spur one another on to stand firm in your faith and in your walk with Jesus
  - Don't have to do it every week
  - Doesn't have to be roast lamb and veggies and with all the good wedding crockery
  - But as you live a life transformed by the gospel, offer hospitality to one another
  
- Finally, in v10-11 encourages his readers to serve the church with their gifts
- Notice he just has two broad categories
  - Gifts that involve actions for serving one another
  - Gifts that involve speech for teaching one another

- v10 – *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various form*
  - Whatever gift you have says Peter ... is to be used to serve one another / serve the church
  - We all have gifts that God has given us
  - What's interesting is what Peter says at the end
    - 'Faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms'
    - Other translation
      - 'As good stewards of God's grace' ESV
- In other words, we're exercise stewardship over our gifts
  - We're to use them and use them effectively
  - We're not waste them
- Second type of gifts are gifts of speaking
  - These are gifts of speaking the word of God to teach and disciple and evangelise and train and build up ppl in their faith in Jesus
- And the motivation for using these gifts ... is not for
  - our fulfillment
  - our satisfaction
  - our glory
- It's so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ
- **Application**
- In many ways, living in Australia in 21<sup>st</sup> century we are blessed in many ways and our standard of living is unbelievably high
  - However the problem nearly all of us face and feel is we're time poor
  - We're so busy with
    - Maintaining and running the household
    - Being a supportive husband / wife

- Doing a good job at work
- Looking after the kids > running them around to everything, cleaning up after them all the time
- Life is exhausting
- And as a result we're very guarded about our time
- Want to protect our time and not let ppl or things make our life any busier than it already is
- And the temptation can be that we're reluctant to serve God and his church with our gifts because it takes time
  
- But a life transformed by the gospel will mean we have a completely different mindset to how we spend our time and utilize our gifts
  - When you're not a Christian ... time is all about me ... and what I want to achieve with my time
  - When you're born again and Jesus is now Lord of your life ... my time is a gift from God for me to be a good steward of that's to be used to glorify him
  - It's all about his glory ... his magnification ... building up and loving his church
  
- Of course we do glorify God in the way we
  - Run the home
  - Be excellent workers
  - Godly parents, loving spouses
- But part glorifying God ... is by being good stewards of our gifts and our time is to serve his ppl and his church
  
- One of our aims as members here at C@P is be ppl who serve one another
  - Lots of ways that many of you do that – especially on Sundays
    - Set up
    - Service leading

- Kids church
- Prayers
- Bible reading
- Music
- Morning tea
- Book stall
- Growth groups
- All valuable > we give thanks to God for all those who do those things
- But as we seek to grow C@P to double in size by 2017 ...
  - If we're going to do that ... we not only need to serve in ways that maintain the week to week running of church
  - We also need to have ppl serving in ways that will help grow our church
- So, I want to ask you
  - Are you serving Jesus and his church with the gifts he's given you to be stewards of?
  - If you are ... fantastic > keep serving him joyfully and bringing glory to him as you do that
  - If not,
    - What would you like to do?
    - What could you do to serve?
    - What are you good at?
- Do you have gifts that could help grow C@P
  - Can you lead co-lead a growth group?
  - Can you come a learn Christianity Explored?
  - Can you read the Bible 1:1 with a new Christian?
  - Can you teach scripture next year?
  - Are you passionate about welcoming and integrating newcomers? Could you make that your ministry?

- Lots of ways God has gifted his church
  - He just wants us to be good stewards of those gifts so that he might be glorified

#### 4. Conclusion

- As you live out your new identity in Christ ... it will lead to transformation in your life
  - Transformed life in an unbelieving world
    - No longer living the way you used to live but a way that seeks the will of God
    - As you do you will be ridiculed and hassled for that
    - But stand firm ... knowing God judges justly and vindicates all who are his
  - Transformed life in a servant-hearted church
    - Because the end is near we're to be good stewards of the time God has given us
    - Love one another
    - Do hospitality
    - Serve him and his church with the good gifts he has given us
- *"So that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."*

#### PRAY

Our gracious God and Father, we give you thanks for Jesus and his willingness to suffer for our sake. May his suffering strengthen us to endure suffering as we stand firm and live out our faith. We thank you that the gospel means, like Jesus, we too will be vindicated on the final judgment and those who oppose us will have to give an account to you. Please strengthen us to continue turning away from the sins of the past and live transformed lives for your praise and honour and glory. In Jesus name we pray . **AMEN**