Trans'ed
Romans 12:2

Emmanuel Christian Church 7.9.23

INTRODUCTION: Being "trans" is all the rage today. It is the "T" in LGBTQI+. It is a **fashionable** topic, but it's **frightening** in its application. Children younger than ten are being led into transvestism, puberty blocking drugs and irreversible surgical procedures.

And as frightening as is the application, even more so is the **implication**. Lives that have been "trans'ed" are lives that are filled with physical, psychological and spiritual trauma. A forty year longitudinal study performed in Sweden concluded: (quote)

"This study found substantially higher rates of overall mortality, death from cardiovascular disease and suicide, suicide attempts, and psychiatric hospitalisations in sex-reassigned transsexual individuals compared to a healthy control population. This highlights that post surgical transsexuals are a risk group that need long-term psychiatric and somatic follow-up."

It leaves us wondering: "Has it always been this way?" The answer is "No". As a matter of statistical fact, the trans movement is a relatively recent phenomena. Just take a look at this recent study by PEW research.

Notice this- within the last 20 years, trans/non-binary sexual identification has multiplied by 17 times, and the greatest increase has occurred among young people!

"What's going on here?" you ask. I believe the answer is "deception".

People sense that this life is somehow not what it should be. And they're right! But instead of looking to the LORD for answers, they make the extreme error of either looking inside themselves, or to other people who are equally dissatisfied and confused.

PROPOSITION: The truth is all of us need to be "trans'ed"! But what form does that transformation take? Is it sexual (as the world would have us believe) or is it something else? Thankfully, God's Word speaks about our need to be "trans'ed" with absolute clarity. But, before we can hear what it has to say on that subject, we first need to answer a basic question:

“WHY ALL THE FUSS?”

- Why are people so seemingly discontented with the **way** they are? Why are they so discontented with **who** they are?
- ANSWER: We live in a DISORDERED condition.
  - This is really nothing new. It has been the case since the Fall of mankind in the Garden.
    - Originally, we were created in the IMAGO DEI (The image of God). That means, our basic nature is one that longs to be conformed to the character of our Creator God.
    - But that basic nature was frustrated and broken by the choice of our parents Adam and Eve to rebel against obedience to God’s command.
    - That rebellion was and continues today to be the very essence of what it means to SIN.
    - Ever since that first rebellion, every child of Adam and Eve (and that is us all) has been uncomfortable in his or her own skin in one way or the other! Scripture puts it this way:

“For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it…We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.” Romans 8:20&22

  - Frustrated by the brokenness of sin and the loss of our true nature as children created in the image of God, we now stand at the “T” intersection of decision:

Ecclesiastes 10:2 The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.

    - To the left is a path that leads further from God. It is a path of **self-definition** and **self-determination.** It is from where the LGBTQI+ advocates hail. But don’t be fooled! It is a place of pain, suffering and ultimate separation from the Creator.
    - To the right leads us back home. Back to the IMAGO DEI. Back to the essence of our intended, created nature. Back to a place of peace, purpose and contentment. A place where we are finally comfortable in the skin God gave us- knowing who **we are**, where we **are going** and what we **are to do**.

APPLICATION: So, how do we get back to the starting point? The place before the Fall of mankind; that place where God is, that place we desire to be? It begs another question:

WHAT DOES GOD WANT?

That is a very practical question that is answered by one verse in the Bible:

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.

This one verse has two points that when taken together cause us to make a "right turn" back to God.

- The first point can be summed up like this: **"Be a "non-conformist"**
  - The best picture you and I can understand is that of a piece of play-do pressed into mold.
  - So if we're the play-do, who's doing the pressing? Every media source that's preaching what you should **eat**, **wear**, **think** and **do**!
  - These "preachers" don't just get thirty minutes a week to preach and press your play-do, they get all the other minutes in the week!
  - Just guess how much screen time the average American has each day… (7 HOURS!) THAT'S A LOT OF PRESSING AND PREACHING!

APPLICATION: Here's a challenge: Fast for one week from ALL social media. If not a whole week- see if you can do just one day. As you fast from social media, invite the Holy Spirit to speak in the silence.

- Here's the second point: **"Be transformed"**.
  - That's right! **God wants you and I to be trans'ed!**
  - Now, this word is different from the first. It actually occurs only 4 times in the New Testament:
    - The first two times it's used to describe how Jesus was changed on the Mount of Transfiguration:

Matthew 17:2 There (Jesus) was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. (also in Mark's Gospel)

- The third time the word is used here in our text.

- The forth and final time is found in 2 Corinthians 3:17&18:

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being ***transformed into his likeness*** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

- There is a load of theology in that passage! But let me make just a few simple observations about what it has to say regarding the transformation experience that God calls us to go through.
  - **First, our transformation is the work of God's Holy Spirit.** It's NOT about our own self improvement, it's about God's recreation that takes place when we make the "right hand" choice to submit ourselves to His will and His transforming power.
  - **Second, it is our only path to freedom.** If we make the fool's choice of turning to the left we will only find **slavery** to the opinions of others and **bondage** to our own sinful impulses.
  - **Third, it is a process.** Both here and back in Romans chapter 12, Paul uses a verb tense that points to the fact that our transformation is an ongoing, daily process where we make the choice to yield ourselves to God and God meets us with His transforming power.

Having said all that, we're left with one more question in regard to God's plan for us to be "trans'ed":

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

- The answer to that question is what Romans chapters 12, 13 & 14 are all about!
- Now, if you've been united with Christ by faith and in Christian Baptism, you've already begun the transformation process- but there is a road ahead of you that Christ calls each of us to walk- that's what we're going to consider in the weeks ahead as we look more deeply into God's "trans" process.
- If you've never begun the process through faith, repentance and baptism you need to begin by dealing with those issues in your life.
- But if you are a Christian, walking God's road of transformation, there's something I want you to hear:

CONCLUSION: God has called us to live in these United States at this precise time, knowing full well the spiritual conditions we would encounter. His desire is that we would be the salt and light of truth at a time when spiritual darkness is attempting to overwhelm our nation.

Our job is fairly simple- **to speak and live the truth** before the watching eyes of the world.

Remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians? We are being transformed into the likeness of Christ f**or the purpose of reflecting His glory**!