

UNDENIABLE TRANSFORMATION

There are 3 transformations that are 100% undeniable:

1. _____ to _____ (Acts 9:1-18)

2. _____ to _____ (Mark 5:1-20)

3. _____ to _____ (John 11)

Intro: Since 2000, cosmetic procedures have increased 232% (Amer. Society of Plastic Surgeons)
Some of the more popular procedures? Butt lifts, tummy tucks, thigh lifts
One of the most surprising? Calf augmentation, which grew 61% last year alone
The procedure that saw the biggest increase? Botox, which grew at a mind-blowing 1,563%

The money doesn't lie: Americans spend \$10 billion on plastic surgeries

The point today isn't to make a statement on the evils of plastic surgery, but simply to make the point that as a society, we believe in and desire transformation, even if it costs us money and discomfort

Oddly enough, though, is that when you Google "undeniable transformation," the number one image isn't something cosmetic, or even something man is responsible for. It's a butterfly.

God is all about undeniable transformation, and He gives us 3 changes in Scripture that others around us may not like, but can't deny.

1. Darkness to light
2. Debt to liberty
3. Death to life

1. Darkness to light (Acts 9:1-18)

- a. There may be no more dramatic illustration of this truth than Saul to Paul
- b. Saul was a persecutor of believers and was going to Damascus for more (vv. 1-2)
 - i. His opposition to the light of Christ wasn't something he denied (Acts 26:9-11)
 - ii. It was part of his reputation in that day (vv. 13-14)
- c. If you had asked people if Paul was for Jesus or against Him, they would have said against
- d. Paul was clearly on the wrong side of Matthew 12:30
- e. That's why his transformation from darkness to light was so undeniable
 - i. 3 days of blindness (v. 9)
 - ii. 1 obedient man (v. 17)
 - iii. 1 amazing event (v. 18)
 - iv. The change couldn't be denied (vv. 20-22)
- f. The church loses power in the culture because we're deniable
- g. Like we talked about last week, it's often hard to spot a believer from an unbeliever
 - i. Change isn't enough. We need visible change. (Matthew 5:14-16)
 1. Let your light shine before men
 2. So they can see your good deeds
 3. Results in praise to the Father
 - ii. Faith isn't meant to be personal. It's meant to be personally proclaimed. (1 Peter 2:9, 12)
 1. Declare the praises of the Transformer
 2. Live undeniably transformed lives among the lost
 3. Even their accusations result in God's glory
 4. Why? Because darkness cannot deny light. (John 1:5)

2. Debt to liberty (Mark 5:1-20)
 - a. When we hear the word “debt” we typically think about money (Stanley Johnson YouTube clip)
 - b. Makes sense when of households in America with consumer debt, the average amount is just under \$16k
 - c. There’s some truth to thinking of debt in terms of money only (Proverbs 22:7), but we need to think well beyond just money here
 - d. Debt is more about slavery, being bought by another
 - e. Let’s look at a guy in Scripture who was enslaved and became free (Mark 5:1-20)
 - f. Two things to note right away
 - i. The man was possessed (v. 2)
 - ii. The man appeared free but really wasn’t (vv. 3-4)
 1. He couldn’t be bound, but he was
 2. He couldn’t be subdued, but he was
 - g. When I read about this man, I think of 2 groups of people:
 - i. People who know they aren’t free
 - ii. People who think they aren’t in debt
 - h. There comes a time when we have done all we can, and it isn’t enough
 - i. When we fight against what torments us and all we get is temporary relief
 - i. The man could free himself, but he couldn’t set himself free
 - ii. Our lives become measured by a hope for more good days than bad
 - iii. This is why Romans 6 describes our relationship with sin as slavery
 - j. It’s important to see the parallel between this man’s fight for freedom and our own
 - i. His is demonic possession; ours is sin’s hold on us
 - ii. His own strength wasn’t enough; neither are our good intentions
 - iii. It took Jesus to bring true freedom for him and us
 - k. This man’s transformation from debt to liberty couldn’t be denied
 - i. The people of the town saw the difference (v. 15)
 - ii. It probably changed that town’s economy - no more pigs to sell (v. 16)
 - iii. An entire region - the Decapolis - was amazed (v. 20)
 - l. A final takeaway from this transformation: the people begged Jesus to leave (v. 17)
 - i. The reality of what Jesus has done in our lives may not be accepted by others
 - ii. They didn’t accept it, but they couldn’t deny it.
 - iii. Don’t be discouraged when the change in you seems to drive people away
 - iv. God could just be relocating your testimony (from the Gerasenes to the Decapolis)
3. Death to life (John 11)
 - a. This is the greatest transformation of them all
 - b. Lazarus dies, has been in the tomb for four days, and is brought back to life by Jesus
 - c. What can we learn?
 - d. God isn’t afraid of your circumstances
 - i. 8 times (vv. 13, 15, 17, 21, 32, 37, 39, 44) the Bible says he was dead

- ii. We don't like it, but it is the impossibility of our situations that gives the miracle undeniability
- e. God isn't afraid when things appear to go wrong
 - i. Jesus was willing to play the fool (v. 4)
 - ii. What He said appeared to be wrong
 - iii. Our end is not God's end
- f. God isn't afraid of our timetable
 - i. We are!
 - ii. But He knows when the transformation will result in the most glory possible'
- g. One more takeaway: this transformation drew the line in the sand (vv. 45-54)
 - i. Some put their faith in Jesus (v. 45)
 - ii. Some tried to kill Jesus (v. 53)
 - iii. Jesus had to withdraw to a desert (v. 54)
 - iv. Death to life brings great rejoicing and great persecution, but it results in the display of God's undeniable power

4. Takeaways

- a. Undeniable transformations come from Jesus, not from us
- b. Undeniable transformations are based in a change of condition, not circumstance
- c. As a follower of Jesus, you were in darkness, you were in debt, you were dead, but now your condition has changed, even if your circumstance hasn't (or has gotten worse!)
- d. When that truth becomes the bedrock of your soul, your life will impact those around you
- e. Some will glorify God, some won't, but no one will be able to deny the change!