

# **Metamorphosis**

## **Discussion Notes 6**



**“Late have I loved you, Beauty so ancient so new,  
Late have I loved you.**

**You were inside, but I was outside, seeking you there,  
In my ugly state I rushed headlong  
into the beautiful things you made,  
You were with me, but I was not with you.**

**Things held me back from you,  
Things which would not exist without you!  
You called, shouted, broke through my deafness.  
You flared, blazed, banished my blindness.**

**You were fragrant,  
I breathed and now long for you.  
I tasted you and now I hunger and thirst for you.  
You touched me and now I burn for your peace.**

**- St Augustine Of Hippo (354-406AD)**

# GROUP INTRODUCTIONS

These discussion notes are based on the sermon at [www.ichurch.net.au](http://www.ichurch.net.au) Start with a fun question:

- ***If you had to perform in a talent show what would you do?***
- ***Spontaneous ← → Planned. Which side of the scale do you prefer?***
- ***What is your favourite tool? (Note that a tool is anything we use to modify the world around us: mechanical, building, computer, cooking, gardening, sewing, etc!)***

## METAMORPHOSIS RECAP

*Romans 12:1*

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*

For six weeks we have explored a metamorphosis where we grow in the character of Jesus. We resist the buzz of the world as it tries to enslave and distort us into frenzied fools. We have focussed on the word 'transformed' which in the ancient language is *metamorpho*. Recall the 5 aspects of that word:

#1: CHANGING FORM - *Literally 'change shape' - to be renewed in the 'image' of Jesus.*

#2: LIKE CHRIST - *The transfigured Jesus on the mountain - that's the other place the word is used!*

#3: CONTINUAL JOURNEY - *Grace saves us in an instant and takes us on a lifetime journey of growth.*

#4: PASSIVE REST - *Spiritual life remains 'by grace' from beginning to end!*

#5: PLURAL / COMMUNITY - *This word is a 'plural' - it happens in community.*

And (drumroll please) the missing one...

#6: IT IS A COMMAND!

*This word is what they call 'an imperative'. Just like the old Ten Commandments, this is literally a command. It literally means "Y'all continually be transformed!"*

- ***What have noticed in Romans 12:2 that our church needs to work on?***
- ***What have you noticed here that you need to go deeper into?***
- ***How can we be given a "passive command?"***

## TOOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is like a surgeon, operating on us for change. Metamorphosis continues as we sit under the work of the Spirit. Throughout history many theologians have attempted to make a list of the 'tools of the Holy Spirit'. None of these lists have been perfect! So now it's your turn to try...

- ***What are some of the Spirit's tools of transformation?***
- ***How long can you make your list?***
- ***Work together! Can you agree as a group which ones are most important?***

# LUTHER'S MINIMUM LIST OF METAMORPHIC TOOLS

In 1537 Martin Luther tried to summarize the Christian faith in a simple way that all the churches could agree on - the result was 'The Smalcald Articles'. In part three he outlines what he calls 'Means Of Grace' which are the key ways that the Holy Spirit shapes people. He lists the following...

## 1. THE WORD OF GOD

*2 Timothy 3:16-17*

*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The word is literally *theos* (God) and *pneustos* (breathed). It is breath of God so we must invite the Holy Spirit (*pneuma/breath*) to guide us. We will hear not just something general for everyone, but also God speaking personally directly into our lives now. God breathed out. Now we breathe in!

- ***How do we 'sit under' The Word rather than just treat it as information?***

## 2. SACRAMENTS (BAPTISM & COMMUNION)

*Romans 6:3-4. Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

*We enter into the history of Christ through baptism... Those who forget this lose their future in God, which Paul states is a "hereditary right" of the future world... - Jürgen Moltmann*

Sacrament means 'holy thing'. Sacraments are touchable, tangible, physical ways God gives forgiveness. They unite us into the life of Jesus and the life of Jesus into us! They are tools of the Holy Spirit for changed lives. They are also powerful tools for spiritual warfare.

- ***Name five ways that Baptism & Communion can be used for spiritual growth!***
- ***How do these holy things help you personally?***

## 3. FORGIVENESS

*John 20:21-23. Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you... Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven...*

Secrets will kill your connection to Jesus and God's grace. But truth, admitting sin, brings freedom. Christians have the power to forgive each other in the name of Jesus. You can actually do this. Tell each other your sins, in confidentiality. Then tell each other (actually speak it out loud) in the name of Jesus that your sins are forgiven. Without this practice our growth can be stunted!

- ***How do you feel about the practice of 'confessing and forgiving' each other?***
- ***Have you done it? How does it feel?***

## 4. MUTUAL CONVERSATION & CONSOLATION

*Matthew 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*

Yep! Luther says that God's Spirit works through conversations! Note three things:

MUTUAL: equal, shared, openness

CONVERSATION: truth, listening, vulnerable, affirming

CONSOLATION: comfort, reassurance, encouragement, hope

So we intentionally gather to hear what God is saying to our hearts. It's not just casual conversation about weather, politics, hobbies etc. We intentionally ask "what is God saying to us?"

- ***How have you experienced this 'mutual conversation'?***
- ***Stop for a moment and simply ask each other 'what is the Spirit saying to you?'***

## 5. PRAYER

Luther actually doesn't list this one, so I'm cheating. But in many other places he makes it clear that prayer is a means by which the Spirit shapes us.

*As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up - one on one side, one on the other - so that his hands remained steady till sunset. - Exodus 17:11-13*

*When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God... After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. - Acts 4:24,31*

Prayer is especially not just talking. It's listening - no conversation is healthy unless it is 50% listening. The same for prayer. Your words may get in the way of prayer! We need to think of prayer as mystery - something we are always beginners at. It's listening, soaking, reflecting, conversing, joking, dreaming, and walking with God!

- ***Why will prayer always be a mystery in which we are beginners?***
- ***How do we listen in prayer?***

## CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray as a group include everyone.

If you that sort of thing it you might use the prayer on the front page in some way too!