

# Changing or Being Changed (Part 2)

Sunday, July 4, 2021

Last week we discussed the changes that are taking place all around us and proposed the question...

Are we **CHANGING** (conforming more and more to the things of this world) or are we **BEING CHANGED** by the power of God?

KEY TEXT:

**Romans 12:2 (ESV)**

**2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed** by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We looked at the scriptures that remind us not to be conformed to this world

**Exodus 22:31; 23:2**

**31** “You are to be my holy people.

**2** “Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd,

**2 Corinthians 6:14-17**

**14** Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” **17** Therefore “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

**Leviticus 11:45**

**45** I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

**1 Peter 1:14-16**

**14** As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. **15** But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; **16** for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

We said that rather than **CHANGING** (conforming) to be like the world, we want to **BE CHANGED** (transformed by the power of God).

We said we want to be different, but to be different we must be changed by the power of God.

Finally, we took hold of the promise found in...

### **1 Samuel 10:6**

**6** The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you...**and you will be changed into a different person.**

Today I want to begin looking into the scriptures to see how lives were changed by the power of God. With each one, I want you to try to put yourselves in their place. Imagine what their lives and situations were like before meeting Jesus. Think about how greatly they were changed by the power of God. Picture how they must have felt about the change that Jesus brought to their lives.

## **CHANGED LIFE - MARY MAGDALENE**

The first one I want you to meet is found in Luke Chapter 8. Fourteen times she is mentioned in the Gospels, and though we are not given a multitude of details, Luke's description gives us enough to imagine what her life might have been like before she met Jesus

### **Luke 8:1-3**

**8** After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, **2** and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: **Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;** **3** Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

- *Different explanations have been given of this name; but the most natural is that she came from the town of Magdala.*
- *She appears before us for the first time in ([Luke 8:2](#)) among the women who "ministered unto him of their substance." All appear to have occupied a position of comparative wealth.*
- *With all the chief motive was that of gratitude for their deliverance from "evil spirits and infirmities."*
- *Of Mary it is said specially that "seven devils went out of her," and the number indicates a possession of more than ordinary malignity.*

- *She was present during the closing hours of the agony on the cross. ([John 19:25](#))*
- *She remained by the cross till all was over, and waited till the body was taken down and placed in the garden sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, ([Matthew 27:61](#); [Mark 15:47](#); [Luke 23:55](#)) when she, with Salome and Mary the mother of James, "bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint" the body. ([Mark 16:1](#))*
- *The next morning accordingly. in the earliest dawn, ([Matthew 28:1](#); [Mark 16:2](#)) they came with Mary the mother of James to the sepulcher.*
- *Mary Magdalene had been to the tomb and had found it empty, and had seen the "vision of angels." ([Matthew 28:5](#); [Mark 16:6](#))*
- *To her first of all Jesus appeared after his resurrection. ([John 20:14,15](#))*
- *Mary Magdalene has become the type of a class of repentant sinners; but there is no authority for identifying her with the "sinner" who anointed the feet of Jesus in ([Luke 7:36-50](#)) neither is there any authority for the supposition that Mary Magdalene is the same as the sister of Lazarus. Neither of these theories has the slightest foundation in fact.*

We don't know exactly what her life was like before she met Jesus, but anyone who lived in the torment of seven demons could not have been living a happy and peaceful life.

- Some have surmised she was a prostitute, perhaps because of the reputation of the city with which she is identified
- Some associate her with the sinful woman that Luke mentions in the previous chapter, who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume

Regardless, what we can be certain about is that before she met Jesus her life was miserable. But after she met Jesus, her life was changed. She was free. She was at peace. She was whole. she followed him as faithfully as any of the disciples even more so at times. She helped provide for the ministry.

Her life was completely changed by the power of God. It reminds me of the Story of John Newton

## **John Newton's Moment of "Amazing Grace"**

The *Greyhound* had been thrashing about in the north Atlantic storm for over a week. Its canvas sails were ripped, and the wood on one side of the ship had been torn away and splintered. The sailors had little hope of survival, but they mechanically worked the pumps, trying to keep the vessel afloat. On the eleventh day of the storm, sailor John Newton was too exhausted to pump, so he was tied to the helm and tried to hold the ship to its course. From one o'clock until midnight he was at the helm.

With the storm raging fiercely, Newton had time to think. His life seemed as ruined and wrecked as the battered ship he was trying to steer through the storm. Since the age of eleven, he had lived a life at sea. Sailors were not noted for the refinement of their manners, but Newton had a reputation for profanity, coarseness, and debauchery which even shocked many a sailor.

John Newton had rejected his mother's teachings and had led other sailors into unbelief. Certainly, he was beyond hope and beyond saving, even if the Scriptures were true. Yet, Newton's thoughts began to turn to Christ. He found a New Testament and began to read. Luke 11:13 seemed to assure him that God might still hear him: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

That day at the helm, March 21, 1748, was a day Newton remembered ever after, for "On that day the Lord sent from on high and delivered me out of deep waters." Many years later, as an old man, Newton wrote in his diary of March 21, 1805: "Not well able to write; but I endeavor to observe the return of this day with humiliation, prayer, and praise." Only God's amazing grace could and would take a rude, profane, slave-trading sailor and transform him into a child of God. Newton never ceased to stand in awe of God's work in his life.

## **CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES - A DEMON POSSESSED BOY AND HIS FATHER**

Next, I want us to look at the life of a young boy and his father. I am going to read you their story from 2 different accounts - Mark and Matthew

### **Mark 9:14-27**

**14** When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. **15** As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

**16** "What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

**17** A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. **18** Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

**19** "You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."

**20** So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

**21** Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"

"From childhood," he answered. **22** "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

**23** "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."

**24** Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

**25** When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."

**26** The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead."

**27** But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

### **Matthew 17:14-20**

**14** When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. **15** "Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. **16** I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

**17** "You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." **18** Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

**19** Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

**20** He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Again, it's not hard for us to imagine how difficult the circumstances of this boy's life, not to mention his father who had to try to take care of him, were before they met Jesus.

And that is the first thing I want you to notice about this passage. It took Jesus to change things. Nothing is going to change unless we ask Jesus to do the changing.

Impossible circumstances were changed that day. A boy delivered. A father's job made a whole lot easier. A Jesus taught the disciples, and us, that our circumstances can be changed by his power too.

*"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."*

## **CHANGED FUTURE - THE DEMONIAK OF GADARA**

Our third character is found in Mark Chapter 5

### **Mark 5:1-20**

**5** They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. **2** When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. **3** This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. **4** For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. **5** Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

**6** When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. **7** He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" **8** For Jesus had said to him, **"Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"**

**9** Then Jesus asked him, **"What is your name?"**

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many." **10** And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

**11** A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. **12** The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." **13** He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

**14** Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. **15** When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. **16** Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man—and told about the pigs as well. **17** Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

**18** As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. **19** Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” **20** So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

One more time I want you to try and put yourself in this man's place. He lived in the tombs, he was out of control, many times people had tied him up or tried to bind him with chains. He would cry out and cut himself with stones.

If you thought Mary was bad with seven demons, what about his man who had a legion?

One thing is for sure he had no future. In fact, as I was reading this passage again, I felt like the Holy Spirit said that what happened to the pigs represented the only future this man had - self destruction and death. In the words of Psalm 37...

### **Psalm 37:38**

**38** But all sinners will be destroyed; there will be no future for the wicked.

And Yet Jesus changed all of that and gave him a future. And we are given just a glimpse of how different that future would be for him.

**5** ...dressed and in his right mind;

**18** As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. **19** Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” **20** So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

As that beautiful verse in Jeremiah reminds us.

### **Jeremiah 29:11**

**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.

## CHANGED DESTINY – LAZARUS

The last person we want to look at today is found in John Chapter 11. I'm sure you know the story of Lazarus well, so let's skip to the end.

### John 11:40-44

**40** Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

**41** So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. **42** I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

**43** When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” **44** The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

The story of Lazarus shows us the greatest change that Jesus can make in our lives - Our eternal destiny. Without Jesus we are destined for death (eternal separation from God in Hell). But Jesus changes our destiny and gives us eternal life.

### John 11:25-26

**25** Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; **26** and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

That's why Romans reminds us...

### Romans 6:13

**13** Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who **have been brought from death to life**; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.

What changes does Jesus need to make in you today?

**VIDEO:** [Amazing Grace](#)