

If you have cable TV or spent any amount of time in a waiting room then there's a good chance you've heard of or seen the HGTV channel. Now this channel is filled with shows about people buying these ridiculously expensive homes or a second home in the maldives or something exotic. But the other shows, which most of us on a less than million dollar budget can really get sucked into, are the ones like Fixer Upper. Flip or Flop, and Good Bones. These series help inspire us to get out there and update our houses. Tile that backsplash! Tear out that wall! Remodel your bathroom! And as for me, I work in home remodeling. So I have a kind of love hate relationships with these shows. On one hand I'm all for people trying their hand at home remodeling projects. On the other hand, they seem to make my job look really easy. And if you've ever undertaken a DIY project you may have found it to take a lot longer than it seems in the show and maybe it didn't turn out quite like you hoped. That can be frustrating right? You watched them do it on the show, you probably read up on it, maybe watched some more youtube videos but it still doesn't look like it would on fixer upper. As long as you weren't taking out a load bearing wall, it's probably ok.

But, today, we have some good news. I'm not going to expect you to be able to tile a backsplash by the time you leave. Just like we aren't expecting you to have a revelation that will instantly turn you into Jesus. Over the last 10 years of home remodeling, I've learned how to build a house from the ground up. But I've also realized that my spiritual life has not grown at the same pace. I've struggled to understand how to grow in several areas of my spirituality. It feels like, when I read the Bible, I'm reading about some super humans who achieved this incredible faith and performed amazing miracles in no time. Just like when we watch those home improvement shows. But I remember that I learned how to build a house through years of practice just like we learn to think and become like Jesus when we do the little things. When we humble ourselves. When we obey. When we seek God's desires above our own. This isn't a burning bush experience but an everyday slow, steady transformation. There is a place for major standout experiences but we are not going for that today. What I want is for us to learn to see the world the way that God does. Just like when a homebuilder sees a house he sees something different than when a home buyer does because of his training and experience. We can get frustrated by not seeing the world God's way, and wonder how we can learn to do so.

It takes steady practice and patience.

And today I want to offer you some hope. That who God wants you to become is not out of reach. That the leaders of the bible were not superhuman but people like you and I. That we have the opportunity to see the world through God's eyes everyday.

Let's prepare our minds and hearts for what God wants us to learn today. Would you join with me as we continue worshipping?

Welcome

[Series Master Slide] During the Summer, we're asking one basic question: How do we know God? We began last week with the conviction that, if God is our creator, then God is knowable. God is knowable because God *wants* to be known and, by becoming human in the person of Jesus, made himself knowable.

We have four major sources of knowing God: Scripture, the record of God's interactions with us throughout history; Reason, our ability to think and learn and discover; Tradition, how others on the journey of faith have known God; and Experience, what we learn about God from our own lives.

Throughout the summer, we're going to dive into each of those four sources of knowing God, and ask how we can know God better. We began with Experience, exploring how we can know God better through what happens in our lives - our private practices and acts of service both in relation to others. Next, we explored Tradition. From our local Catalyst experience to the global church, we saw how sharing in the faith experiences of others helps us know God better.

Last week, we began exploring the third source of faith, Reason. We saw that Reason is our ability to think, to make sense of the world around us. Despite the fact that many Christians today are suspicious of Reason, our faith has a long tradition of people who've used their brains to know God better. We heard Paul's command to the Roman Church:

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. -- Romans 12:2

[Scripture Slide 1] So today, we're asking how our minds are renewed. In other words, how can we learn to think like God? If you've been raised in the church or even if you haven't, you've heard about all of the things that we suggested to be doing on a daily basis to begin to think and act like God. Read the Bible, be in constant prayer, read books about the Bible, worship God through singing to name a few. These truly are important in learning about who God is and who He wants us to be. But still, having the same mindset as Christ comes from more than just knowledge. It's more than just reading and becoming a great theologian and thank goodness that we don't all have to go to seminary! But we all have to learn to see ourselves and the world how Christ did. We're going to be reading in Phillipians chapter 2 today. The book of Phillipians was written by the apostle Paul to the church in Philippi. This book was written as a thank you for their support and, as we see in this chapter 2, a chance to encourage them to remain humble and unified. Phillipians 2:5-8 says this:

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God,

he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.

Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;

he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,

he humbled himself in obedience to God

and died a criminal's death on a cross. -- Phillipians 2:5-8

Since I've grown up in church, I've heard this specific verse dozens of times. And yet I've never considered it as a look into Jesus' worldview. And more specifically, his view of himself and his role in it. I saw it as just another telling of who Jesus was. I didn't see it as an exhortation that hey look, here's how you begin to see yourself like Jesus saw HIMself. He didn't view his role on earth as one of lordship but of servitude. Not one of self-righteousness but of humility.

If this if Jesus' worldview, is it also ours? Are we putting this into action in our own lives? How do we view our neighbors? What do we think of that guy who just cut us off? what do we do when we go through a difficult period of life? We need to examine ourselves and how we treat others and change to match how God sees these people and situations. So then how does God change us? How does he change how we see the world around us and our place in it? How do we gain the same mind that Christ had?

We actually just read the answer to that. What made him into the example of true Godliness was not the fact that he came from God but that he humbled himself and served. He was obedient. He already had all of the knowledge of how to act like God so it wasn't about WHAT he knew but about how he acted in the world. He sacrificed. He had the mindset that this time on earth was not just to fulfill his desires or yearnings but to obey in humility. The miracles that he performed were in service to others. He focused not on the rich, but the poor. He was so committed that he carried this attitude until his death.

To get our hearts and minds synced up with God we need to obey what he is telling each one of us and then apply the teachings we read in the bible. Sometimes we may not understand it but we have faith and relationship with God to base our obedience in. Even if you don't have a relationship with God yet, that doesn't mean that you can't obey and see God show up in your life.

[Scripture Slide 2] 2 kings has an excellent example of this very thing. In this story we have the prophet Elisha from Israel and Naaman, the captain of the Aramenian army. The country of Aram was to the north of Israel and much, much stronger. Naaman was a super well respected military leader and servant of the King of Aram. The only problem was that he had leprosy. Now this disease would get progressively worse over time and he would end up as an outcast of society the worse it got. This meant losing his position, being cut off from family, and having to live in a leper colony. A life ending kind of disease. He had heard that there was a prophet in Israel that could heal him of his leprosy. He told his king and because his king loved him so much, he sent him off with hundreds of thousands of dollars in silver, gold, and clothing. Whatever it would cost to have Naaman healed and around for a long time. Naaman assumed that this prophet MUST be the king of Israel because, why would someone who can perform miracles NOT be the king. So he shows up to the king of Israel and the King FREAKS. OUT. He's terrified that if he can't fix the leader of the Aramenian army then they will surely attack and

conquer them. Thankfully Elisha, the actual prophet, hears about this and tells the king to send Naaman to him. This is where we pick up the story in 2 Kings 5:9-14:

So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and waited at the door of Elisha's house. But Elisha sent a messenger out to him with this message: "Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan River. Then your skin will be restored, and you will be healed of your leprosy."

But Naaman became angry and stalked away. "I thought he would certainly come out to meet me!" he said. "I expected him to wave his hand over the leprosy and call on the name of the Lord his God and heal me! Aren't the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than any of the rivers of Israel? Why shouldn't I wash in them and be healed?" So Naaman turned and went away in a rage.

But his officers tried to reason with him and said, "Sir, if the prophet had told you to do something very difficult, wouldn't you have done it? So you should certainly obey him when he says simply, 'Go and wash and be cured!'" So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and dipped himself seven times, as the man of God had instructed him. And his skin became as healthy as the skin of a young child, and he was healed! -- 2 Kings 5:9-14

I think we also often fall into the same mental trap that Naaman did. We are expecting God to suddenly change our whole worldview after one event or weekend or experience. OR we want God to explain everything before we obey. AKA we want to be able to think like God without the transformation process to learn to think like God. We look for our transformation to happen in the big things. And it's understandable! That's where it's exciting. That's when you can truly FEEL the spirit of God, and yet that's not what Christ did in order to serve God. It was the small and ordinary tasks.

There was a movie series that came out a bit before I was born but it had a big impact on me and my friends. The Karate Kid led my friends and I to believe that we too, could learn karate through simple tasks. That we could become masters and defeat any bully out there. As JR and I were talking about this and about how we obey God but sometimes don't always understand, all I could think of was "wax on, wax off". That famous scene where Mr. Miyagi is having Daniel wax his car or paint his fence for hours on end which led Daniel to nearly quit. The reveal at the end of the scene is what we are looking towards. When Daniel realizes that all these repetitive motions have given him the muscle memory to fight even without thinking. Sometimes you may feel like God is making you "paint a fence" when you deal with difficult coworkers or customers. But it's the daily decision of whether you will submit your attitude to God or react how you want that will determine your mindset next month and next year. Every person you meet is a chance to 'wax on wax off'. To obey, even if it doesn't make sense. To learn the muscle memory of thinking like Jesus. Will you take time to read the Bible today? Will you spend time in prayer?

Ok I know some of you may have come from legalistic churches which focus on strictly following rules and guidelines. This isn't that. Legalism does have value but it stops short. It focuses on the task or deed at the expense of the relationship. See, obedience without faith is purely legalism. Obedience WITH faith is part of a relationship. We aren't doing things just to do them because someone said so. We are following the example of a God that we KNOW loves us and wants the best for us. We have faith that his desire is for us to become the people he made us to be.

And I know this struggle. I've had a coworker that I worked with a few years and we have had struggles working together. I've been forced to learn patience. I've realized that my words can cause far more harm than my actions. I've been reminded that I need to be humble in order to have others listen to me. It's been a daily learning process for both of us but here and there I can see the change occurring in us both.

I have more love and compassion for my coworker than I did before. We share parts of our lives and struggles that we didn't used to. And this relationship will continue to help me change my worldview to be more Christ like as long as I continue to wax on and wax off. As long as I continue to humble myself, obey God, and seek his will for my life.

There are times when you feel like you are obeying for weeks, or months or years and nothing has changed. It can feel exhausting and discouraging. It makes me think of what Naaman maybe felt as he was washing. 1 time, 2 times, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times and slowly he starts to think...this isn't going to work, I'm making a fool out of myself. This is a waste of time.

What if he had stopped there, after the 5th wash. I know we aren't always given a time frame for when difficult times will end but what if you stopped caring today? What if you threw in the towel on that relationship too soon? What if you gave up humbling yourself because it doesn't seem like anyone cares or notices? What if we missed getting to see it blossom into something beautiful all because we lost faith that God will come through. Faith is the confidence that God is working. Faith is the fuel that keeps us washing even when it seems pointless.

We develop the mind of Christ by adjust our worldview towards his.

The world says live for yourself

God says live for me and serve others

The world says money and people bring happiness

God says I will bring you deep, pure joy

The world says YOLO

God says this is just part of your eternal life

The world says to bury your enemies

God says to love them

The world says that your job is who you are, your purpose

God says that you are not defined by your work but by who I say you are

The world says to fear people you don't know

God say to greet strangers with love and hospitality

The world says get as much as you can while you can

God says I will provide everything you need

The world says truth is what you make it

God says I am the way, the truth, and the life and in me you will find you purpose

We must daily choose God's attitude over the world's and our own. We must daily humble ourselves. We must daily choose to obey God. We have the choice to become more like Christ on a daily basis. It will not happen overnight. It will not happen on a mountain top. It will not happen at an event. There is no get rich quick scheme to learning to think like Christ. But we all have equal opportunity. It doesn't matter what your social or economic status is. It doesn't matter how you were raised. It doesn't matter what you have done. You have the choice right now to decide whether your life will move towards God or towards the world. And that is both incredibly exciting and terrifying at the same time. So, every day when you wake up, think, where do I want my choice to lead me today. Will I become more humble or proud? More giving or selfish? More loving or hateful? Will the words I speak bring life? Or death?

Communion + Examen

[Communion Slide] We come to the communion table today to share the meal Jesus shared with his followers the night before he was killed. Our meal together reminds us what Jesus' worldview was like, how he was obedient to God, even though it meant his death. He endured the pain set before him because he was faithful. He knew God wouldn't abandon him, even if it meant the cross.

At the meal, Jesus offered bread. He broke it and said, This is my body, broken for you. Eat it. After the meal was finished, he gave us wine, saying, "This is my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sin. Drink it."

Jesus saw in a simple meal reminders of God's faithfulness to us. So too, he invites us to the table that our minds might be transformed, that we might see God's faithfulness everywhere we look, so that we too might have the courage to obey.

You don't have to be a member of Catalyst to receive communion with us today. If you're willing to respond to God in faith, trusting that God is transforming your mind, you're welcome to come to the table.

Before we approach the table today, I want to give you some time to reflect prayerfully on how God is speaking to you. I'm going to put Philippians 2 back up on the screen, and give you a few minutes to read and pray through this Scripture.

You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

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he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.

Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;

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Prayer

God, you have gathered us today to hear stories of your faithfulness. We confess we don't always see the world the way you do. We confess that we don't even always know how you see the world. But we have heard this morning in your Scriptures that you promise to transform our minds, to work with us to help us see the world as you do. Thank you for sending Jesus to show us what your mind looks like. Thank you for your servant Elisha, and for the faltering, grumpy faithfulness of your child Naaman. Thank you for giving us the grace to receive their stories that we too might hope for your healing.

We approach your table today as a people asking for that same healing. Some of us feel like we're on the sixth, the tenth, the hundredth wash and we wonder how much longer we have to wait. So we come to your table today to receive this meal. We pray these wafers and juice become a spiritual food for us. Give us the grace to persist, to trust that you are with us.

We offer these prayers and approach your table this morning in faith, and in the name of your son, Jesus.

Assignment + Blessing

Thank you to those of you who are regularly supporting Catalyst through your giving and serving. Thank you for making what we do possible!

And again, if you're a guest with us, welcome! We know it can be hard to connect to a new congregation, and we wanted to make it easy to do that. We created an experience called the

Newcomers' Lunch that we do once a month. The next one is next week, on August 18. It's right after this, and in about 45 minutes, we feed you, tell you who Catalyst is, and what God is doing here, and we give you a next step to get connected. If you'd like to sign up, just check the top box on the Next Step Card and drop it in the box by the door on the way out!

Now, as you're going, I want to challenge you to do a sacred reading of Philippians 2:1-11 this week. It's the larger passage we just prayed through. And ask those hard questions: How do I need to obey God this week? Where do I need to show faith? It can be scary to obey God, because faith is an act of trust. It can feel pointless, too - like Naaman, we may want to give up.

So as you go, may the God who healed Naaman, the God who was faithful to raise his son Jesus from the dead, go with you and before you and behind you. May this God transform your mind so that you see everything - the world around you, your friends, your enemies and yourselves - the way Jesus sees them. He is able and willing to do what he promises. Go in the grace and peace of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit!