

Elements of Transformation: Space

The Impact of Human Transformation in the Natural World

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Intro: The second element of transformation is SPACE, and by space, I mean the natural realm in which everything occurs. The sphere in which all matter exists. According to the dictionary, (Slide 1) SPACE is the unlimited or incalculably great three-dimensional realm or expanse where all material objects are located, and all events occur. Yes, this reality.

In Genesis, the Bible says that God created the universe after he created time: "In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth." Interestingly, the eternal God manifests his power by creating everything, but this message isn't meant to help us understand God's creation of heaven and earth. As astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson says, "The Universe is under no obligation to make sense to you." However, we can reflect and understand that God's presence is made manifest in the universe so we humans can experience transformation in this natural world. Transformation not only occurs in the spirit, it actually happens in our physical reality.

Today's Bible passage in John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

The author of this Gospel uses an intriguing concept here to speak about Jesus "The logos." Now, according to a Bible commentary; in order to understand John's approach to the story of Jesus, we must recognize the centrality of (Slide 3) the incarnation to this Gospel. For John, Jesus is the incarnate Word of God, he provides unique and unprecedented access to God because Jesus shares in God's character and identity, and it is as the Word made flesh that Jesus brings God fully to the world. Jesus does not simply speak God's words and do God's works;

rather, he does those things because he is God's word and work in the world. Jesus' words and works, his life and death, make God known in the world. From beginning to end, John bears witness to the gift that God gives the world in the incarnate Jesus. The evangelist is not observing the incarnation as an uninvolved spectator but is recounting his community experience of God, because many witness Jesus Christ live and ministry. **Theological reflection.**

God created the universe. God cares for this material world and the incarnation is precisely God's demonstration of love and compassion for the universe. Jesus is the ultimate expression of God made flesh and the incarnation is the manifestation of God's love for humanity and all that exists. Jesus then is a human for all humans, a man for all humankind. Even when the world is experiencing chaos and uncertainty, we can experience the actions of God through Jesus Christ because the transformation of the soul and the spirit has crucial implications in the natural realm.

Let us remember the nature of the butterfly when it is transformed.

The caterpillar attaches itself to the underside of a stem or branch with a small mat of silk and hangs upside down in the shape of a "J". Inside its body, underneath its skin, the chrysalis is forming and later the caterpillar is remade into the shape of a butterfly. (Slide 4) Through the miracle of nature, this insect is transformed. Taking this natural phenomenon as an illustration, we as Christians must to be open to receive the nature of Christ in ourselves, and be able to bring the inward process of perfection to the outward demonstration of the presence of Christ, but how is this possible?

Application;

John Wesley's sermon "Christian Perfection" addresses the importance of presenting oneself as a "living sacrifice." For Wesley going on to perfection requires the practice of spiritual

disciplines, as expressed in works of piety, our devotion to God, works of mercy, and our compassionate treatment of others. The only way that this world can experience the transformation of this reality, this palpable darkness of violence, hatred, racism, economic injustice, etc. is through the powerful presence of Jesus Christ impacting the souls and bodies of people here in this world! But how could this be possible? How can we bring Jesus from heaven? Do we need to wait for Jesus to fix everything? Dear Church, the Bible says that we are the body of Christ here on earth. (Slide 5) The way God wants to perform his divine power of transformation is through you and me! Let's reflect on this: Are we living like Jesus and showing his character in all the aspects of our lives? Are we expressing Jesus in how we treat our bodies, how we eat, how we interact with God's creation, including animals, plants, the air, and water? Are we participating in the creation of a sacred space for others? How do we treat others?

During this pandemic, it is essential that we ask ourselves if we are allowing God to create a worship space that has a healthy emotional atmosphere that welcomes others. During these uncertain times, we should not ask how do we get back in the building but rather how do we get the gospel outside the building to the world? How can we build the infrastructure to become a meaningful faith community for Des Moines? Are we using all available means to reach out to new families and new people? Dear Church, let's consider how we can bring new people to this space of transformation! The space of transformations begins in our hearts, our lives, and bodies, then with acts of mercy our space will be transformed and will be filled with God's Spirit. I believe we want to participate in what God is doing right now globally, don't we? If so, we better make space for the holy and transformative character of Jesus Christ! Amen!