

**Sermon Notes of  
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on June 10, 2018:**

**"Transformed Living:  
Self-denial a Jesus Lifestyle  
Romans 15:1-13  
(Romans 12-15 – Part 9)"**

**[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows that when we exhibit self-denial and then also reach out to others in a loving way, we are exhibiting God's transforming power in our lives.]**

**Notes**

Introduction:

- Today, we're going to return to our series on "transformed living."
- This is part 9 on our series on Romans 12-15.
- It's part of the subject we've been covering this past year on our transformed life and what that means.
  
- Now Dallas Willard wrote a book, "The Great Omission" which was a kind of play on words for what Jesus gave us – "the great commission", to make new disciples.
- Dallas Willard said that the "great omission" was that our spiritual formation was not kept in the center of the "great commission."
  
- The transformational process in our lives is a supernatural occurrence as our human hearts become transformed to the very heart of Jesus.
- And thus we come something other than human as we maintain our humanity.
- There are two subjects here in Romans 15:1-13 – the first one deals with self-denial.

Self-denial:

- In these chapters of Romans, what Paul is encouraging us as believers to accept and adopt is something that is 180 degrees different than what we would normally do on our own.
- So let's test this – how many of us got up this morning with this burning desire for self-denial?
- Self-denial is not something Hollywood speaks about.
- When pastor Craig thinks about his favorite actors – Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis or Brad Pitt, none of them portray themselves as living a life of self-denial.
  
- So we realize is that self-denial doesn't come naturally to us. And it's never going to be natural to us.
- Now, when we are living that transformed life including self-denial, we need to realize that it's a supernatural thing.
- When we think about Jesus, he lived a life of self-denial.

- When we sum up His life even at His point of death, self-denial would be good phrase to use.
- Now if we have a desire to be more like Jesus Christ (it won't be a human desire, but a supernatural one laid upon us by God the Holy Spirit) and live the transformed life, then pastor Craig has good news for us, Paul speaks to that in Romans.

**Romans 15:1 (NASB), Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.**

- Now there is a lot said in this first sentence.
- What Paul says here doesn't come naturally to us.
- This means that somehow we need to tap into the supernatural, which God will gladly give us.
- Paul encouraged the church at Rome in Romans 12 "not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of their minds."
- So that says to us that if we want to be like Jesus, and we want to take on His heart and His character, and to live out the very purpose for which we were saved, and to share that with others, we need to go about it in a way that's not naturally human.
- It requires that supernatural element.
- That change doesn't come from anything we ourselves do – but rather that change comes as a result of the Holy Spirit residing in us and Jesus Christ living His life in us.
- And then we also have to reach out and tap into that through the classic spiritual disciplines of prayer and study and worship and fasting and meditation, which places us on that path of grace.
- If we do what will naturally happen in our lives, we are conforming to the world and its ways.
- But when we are daily renewing our minds through the spiritual disciplines and being transformed into the nature and heart of Jesus Christ, that's a different thing.
- Then, we find we are on the pathway to self-denial.
- So what is one way of denying the self? It's to buildup and to encourage others.
- We need to realize that we're all in a different place along that discipleship pathway.
- Paul acknowledges that in the body of Christ, some are stronger in faith and there are others who are weaker in faith.
- This is not about how many years you've been in the church.
- If you've been in the church for 15 years, you are considered strong in the faith – but a few weeks earlier, you weren't. That's not how it works.
- Paul is telling us that the strong in faith should go out of their way to help, uplift and edify others – in essence that's what the church is all about.
- Now, this isn't a popular message on Madison Avenue or in Hollywood.
- Seeking happiness, seeking fulfillment, and seeking satisfaction – those are the things that naturally come to us in ways to please ourselves.
- God's ways are totally different than our ways and that shouldn't come as a surprise to us.

- And so, when we enter into this transformed life and begin to walk on a supernatural plain, it's a totally different kind of life style.

**2) Each of us is to please his/her neighbor for his/her good, to his/her edification.**

- This tells us to go out of our way to be pleasing to our neighbor – in other words to please someone else rather than ourselves.
- That's not easy to do because this doesn't come naturally.
- Yet, Paul is telling us that we have the means to tap into that supernatural behavior – to be changed and transformed into the very heart of Jesus, who set the example for us.

**3) For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME." 4) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

- This spiritual transformation, this becoming conformed to the heart of Christ has to do with spiritual disciplines.
- Now if you don't like the word "disciplines" just think of yourself as an apprentice of Jesus Christ.
- If Jesus just walked into this sanctuary today and asked us personally, "Would you like to be my apprentice?" pastor Craig would sign up for that job. And hopefully you would too.
- Now we know that it won't be easy, but it will be a transforming life we couldn't have on our own, but it's available to us.
- And it has nothing to do whether God loves us more or about His relationship with us, but rather it changes our relationship to the Father, not the Father to us.
- Now we can become a different person and become changed in our attitude in how we view others and reach out and help them when we step out onto that spiritual pathway.
- And we also know that Jesus doesn't force us to do that, but he welcomes us, He invites us to have that relationship with Him.
- And in that process of our relationship with Him, we are changed – we become different than we could ever have imagined.
- As verse 4 tells us – as we read and immerse ourselves in scripture, we get that sense of encouragement, that sense of peace, that tranquility.
- And those of us who make it a regular practice of studying and reading scripture on a daily basis know what pastor Craig is talking about.
- When we began reading scripture, we may have been struggling about something or down about some issue, but after several minutes of reading, we start to suddenly feel different in our minds and in our hearts.
- That encouragement comes from reading and meditating on the scriptures.
- Now once again, it not just our act of reading or studying scripture, but when we place ourselves on that path, the Holy Spirit then enters into our life in a different way, thus providing us with that encouragement.

**5) Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6) so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- So out of that sense of perseverance and encouragement comes unity – being of one voice, being of one mind.
- Our thinking and acting becomes different than we would normally do, but yet not unique to us as a group.
- And through this we find hope, we find encouragement.
- It's interesting that the series of movies called "Rocky" starring Sylvester Stallone had a great impact on society. It became one of these cult classics, as it defined an age.
- What people loved about that series of movies was that here was a guy who was beaten down by all sorts of stuff – call it life and went on.
- We, ourselves, can feel beaten down by our financial situation, our health situation – perhaps we've lost our parents or some dear relatives, or perhaps things are going well at work, or perhaps relationship aren't going the best.
- So Rocky kind of personified that lifestyle.
- In "Rocky 5", Rocky goes out into the streets and was down in the gutter and beaten up.
- Without the Holy Spirit, our great Coach, we, too, feel that life is just one pounding after another.
- For Rocky, it looked like all hope, all encouragement was lost.
- And then something amazing happened – he begins to hear his coach's shrill voice in his mind, "Get up! Get up, you bum! Getup because Jesus loves you!"
- The encouragement and the hope we have comes from that transformative power of God in our lives.
- And if try to do things on our own, we're going to be pounded on and pounded on.
- Yet when we rely on Jesus, when we rely on the great coach, the Holy Spirit, we hear those encouraging words, "Get up!"
- That's the transformational power Paul is speaking about here.

**7) Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.**

- When we accept one another, when we reach out to others in love, we're bringing glory to God.
- And we cannot bring glory to God without being on that supernatural plain.

**8) For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 9) and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,**

- What Paul is saying here, that this lack of acceptance between Jew and Gentile is now done away because that's not what God's plan ever was about.
- What Jesus accomplished brought Jew and Gentile together.
- Thus, the church can accept and show that love to all and thus glorify God in the process.

**9) and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.” (2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49)**

**10) Again he says, “REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.” (Deut. 32:43)**

**11) And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.” (Psalm 117:1)**

**12) Again Isaiah says, (Isaiah 11:10) “THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”**

- Paul is again reminding the church that this reason for separation and animosity, this cultural division between Jew and Gentile is done away with.
- And through the Incarnation and what Jesus accomplished, all of humanity has been brought into the love and life of Jesus Christ.
- And when we share this with others, we give them an opportunity to realize just who they are – the children of God.

**13) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.**

- Joy, peace, hope – these are things that we all love to have more of, right?
- Now we have to realize that joy, peace and hope are supernatural values, elements, characteristics of the Holy Spirit.
- Yet, we have access to those supernatural elements.
- It’s as simple as what Laura prays in the morning, “Lord, please live in me and love through me today.”
- We need to reach out to the Father, Son and Spirit and say, “Change me. Help me to live a life that is self-denial, as difficult as they may seem. Help me to live a life of accepting others and loving them.”
- That’s what God calls us to do.
- That’s what His church is all about. That’s why we’re here today – to be reminded of those things.
- And Paul says when we live that kind of life, even though we take on life’s hits, it leads to hope, it leads to joy, it leads to peace in believing.
- And that door has been opened to us and Jesus says, “Come, enjoy, be a part of who you are. Realize why I made you and why I love you so dearly. No matter what you face in this lifetime, I’ve faced it all, and I’ve got you, I’ve got you.”
- Yes, Jesus has us.
- That hope, that joy, that peace comes from believing.
- And even when we are down in the gutter, we can still hear that voice telling us, “Get up. Get up, you bum, because Jesus loves you!”

Closing prayer