



Message **Transcript**

Think About It

Justin Hart

Pastor Jeff:

Lord, we just lift up our servant, our friend, our brother in Christ, Pastor Justin Hart. Lord, just continue to use him mightily like You did in the first service. Lord, just bring to mind the things that he needs to share with us. And Lord, I just thank You that he's a faithful proclaimer of Your Word. Lord, we believe as a people, that every time Your word is faithfully and accurately proclaimed, no matter who's doing the proclaiming, that it's You who are speaking Lord and we want to hear You. So our prayer is speak Lord, for we are ready to hear.

So now, for all those who gather, who desire to hear Jesus Christ speak directly to your heart, who will believe what He says and who will by faith put into practice what He shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Amen. Let's welcome Pastor Justin to the pulpit.

Pastor Justin Hart:

[inaudible 00:00:43] All right, good morning, BRAVE Church. You guys doing all right? You're ready to get after it today? I love getting after it and worship and just praising the Lord. This is a church that loves to worship. It's a church that loves Jesus.

And I got to tell you, from the bottom of my heart, I'm honored to be in this pulpit today and share a moment with you that I believe God wants to use in your life to bring some real transformation. So by the grace of God today, I believe He's going to work and do something amazing in your lives on all of our campuses.

As I was thinking about the message that I wanted to build out for this week, I was thinking about my kids. I have four children and I love them all to death. But if you have kids, especially young kids, and there's a moment in your day where things go super quiet, you know something is up. You start peeking around corners and you start hearing the Jaws theme song in the background. What's happening? And I remember finding my oldest daughter and my second son Bennett, and they had taken my wife's nail polish, 20 bottles and just emptied them all on top of themselves and on the carpet. I mean, it was a mess. You can't wash your kids off with acetone. You know that? It took forever to get that stuff worked out.

All I could think in my head was this thing that you and I say all the time, sometimes out loud, sometimes not out loud, it's this phrase, "What were you thinking? What were you thinking? What in the world is going on?" And I wish I could say that this phenomenon of not thinking or not thinking ahead or not paying attention to consequences of things stops when you're children, but if you've been on I-25, you know that's not the case. You know what I mean? Those things continued to happen.

Growing up, I had this book that was always on our coffee table home called, the Darwin Awards. And you may not know what the Darwin Awards. It was this book of people who died or almost died in these ridiculous ways where it's like, what were you

thinking? One of them was this gentleman who in a hurricane had a palm tree that got stuck underneath his house. And the guy just thought, "Well, I got to get that out of there." So he got his chainsaw and he sat on the business end of that palm tree and cut it off. He got thrown like a mile out to sea. He became like a palm tree catapult that threw the guy. And you're thinking, "What were you thinking? What were you thinking sitting there?"

There was another gentleman who I think he was like 75 years old, and he was some kind of fitness guru. So he wanted to show the world that he, at 75 years old was able to live through a hurricane and it would be fine and dandy. And nobody told him that it's not just the wind that's blowing against you. It's what the wind is picking up. So if you get hit with the roof of someone's house, it doesn't really matter how many pull-ups you did this morning, you weren't thinking. You weren't thinking. And the book was filled with these stories of ridiculous things of what people had done. And what I wanted to share with you this morning is that thoughts have consequences because they're leading us to action.

Thoughts have consequences because they're leading us to action. I've titled this morning's message, Think About It, 'cause I'm hoping that we can in this postmodern world that we currently live in, that doesn't really love truth and doesn't really love objectivity and thinks that it can just do whatever and not have consequences, that we as a church would go back to the Shema, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God. The Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul." And say with me, "With all your mind, with all your strength." We need our minds. We got to

think about it. And as a church, we should be people who can stand on that hill and be a bastion of light against the darkness and say, "No, decisions have consequences. Thinking has consequences. How you're living your life has consequences."

I learned earlier this week that the majority of people get into car accidents when they're merging, but not because of what's going on behind them. That's where their eyes are focused. It's actually what's happening in front of them. They're looking behind them to try not to hit anybody, and then they plow into the person in front of them. And here's what I want you to do today. I want you to realize that regardless of what has happened in your past, regardless of our tendency to look back and say, "Well, this happened and that happened." I want you to see that those things can sometimes blind us from what's actually happening in the future. And if you're not paying attention, you could end up in a wreck. If you're not paying attention, you could end up in a place that you don't want to be in.

So I want to take us as a church to a familiar text today, to help us think through how our thought life affects our actions and inevitably how we will end up. Because what you sent your mind on and what it's being transformed by, has everything to do with where you will land. So let's look at this together. I want to take you to Romans 12, and we're going to read 1-2. And I hope this is very familiar territory for you. It's a wonderful passage and I'm excited to get after it. Let's go ahead and read it now.

It says, "Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of

worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Will you pray with me?

Lord, we believe that every single time Your word is opened and we come to You in humility, Lord, You can transform our minds, our hearts. You can do something brand new so that we would leave here a totally different person. God, so I'm asking You now to remove any encumbrance, any distraction, anything that would keep us from hearing exactly what it is that You would have for us today through this passage. Do a work, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Justin Hart:

Well, if you've spent any time in the Bible or you grew up in church, you'll actually start to see this pattern emerge, especially in the Old Testament Prophets and in the New Testament epistles, this pattern that happens this way. It's basically, here's the way that you're thinking. Here's why it's leading you into all this trouble. Here's how you should be thinking, gospel-minded. And here's the blessing that would occur in your life if you would just take it seriously. It's basically Paul talking to these teenage churches, telling them, "Hey, would you pay attention before you do the things that you're doing? Would you seriously consider about it?"

This is important, because what Paul wants us to understand and what the Bible

is trying to help us understand is that belief is central to our faith, not good intentions. Belief is what actually drives and direct our lives, not just what we hoped we could have spent more time on or what we thought we would eventually get to. And the text gets right at the heart of this, because Paul is a loving father that wants you to end well. And my heart for you today is that you would identify areas in your life that are setting you up for a spiritual Darwin Award, that are setting you up for some kind of failure. And I need you to know this church, this is so important.

You can either be a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife or you can be a monument to the faithfulness of God, like so many of their patriarchs in the faith. Your life will either be an altar you build to yourself or an altar that you build to God, but it can't be both. But either way, whatever you end up building, the day is coming for all of us when we will breathe out and we will lay our lives down on the top of these altars that we have built as a statement of who we are and what we stood for. That's not an option for us. That's coming, that's happening. And everything that we do speaks. I hope you know this. Whether you're building the Tower of Babel or you're building a temple for the Lord, what you put your mind to is where your heart and your hands will go.

I need you to know this. Some of you think that, "Well, I'm not doing anything, so there's not repercussions for that." And I want to tell you right now, a father's empty seat at the table speaks just as loud as a full seat. A mother's absence in someone's life speaks just as loud as her presence. There is no neutral ground. You are building something. Well what are you building? And I actually have a slide for you, a picture I wanted to put up of this monument in Gilgal.

These things are everywhere. It's awesome, especially all over the Old Testament, there were these way points, these markers where they would point to stuff and say, "This is where you're supposed to go." Or, "This is where heaven touched earth." You guys want to learn a fun word today? You're ready? Hierophany. Say hierophany.

Congregation:

Hierophany.

Pastor Justin Hart:

Not bad, not bad. Hierophany is a place where heaven came down and touched earth and did something transcendent. And I want to tell you today, BRAVE Church, I want that for every single person in this room. If you put your faith in Jesus, I want you to be a place where heaven touched earth in a dramatic way, that would speak to generations going forward. Amen? So I want you guys to think about these altars, these monuments that speak to us. Your life story is going to be a pile of rocks for the next generation to learn from and be directed by. And the question is, what do you want it to be saying? What will the message actually be?

I have a quote for you I want to put on the screen. It says, "People don't decide their futures. They decide their habits, and their habits decide their futures." People give their thought life to a particular thing, and that's actually going to end up being what happens over the course of that person's life. How many of you guys know you're not going to magically turn into somebody else? That doesn't happen. It's what you do,

how you're processing, what you're thinking that is leading to a particular end. This is why we need Romans 12:1-2 today. This text functions for us as a diagnostic for healthy Christian thinking.

So I want to give you three things to consider today. Three things to help you renew your mind and three tools to go along with those things, so that you can start adding to your pile of stones to make a statement that outlives you for a long time. So I want you guys to come with me and we're going to read verse one, at least a portion of it real quick and then we're going to get into this. It says, "Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God." Here's what I want you guys to think about today. I want you to think about how God defines acceptable sacrifice. How God defines acceptable sacrifice.

In this passage, I want you to think about this for a second. He wants them to think through the sacrificial system. He's writing to a bunch of people who understood the Jewish sacrificial system, who year after year after year would bring these animals to the temple and they would be sacrificed and they would never see them again. Never again. They were gone. And I want you to understand from this, what he's trying to get from in this text is that, listen, if you give your life to Jesus, you're literally saying, you and your agenda are done. It's burned, it's gone, it's dead. Don't resurrect it. You now have a new agenda and a new life and a new purpose in Christ. And we see this antinomy, this paradox throughout scripture of this kind of, I'm dead, but I'm also receiving a new life in Christ.

Galatians 2:20 makes it clear. "I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who live. It's Christ who lives in me." And then in the same breath, he says, "Yet the life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me." And it's like, "Well, which is it, Paul? Do you live your life or does God live your life?" And he said, "Exactly, exactly. That's the sweet spot where I've given away what I used to be and I am not that anymore. It's gone and I've become something entirely new. And I want you to see this, it's a wholesale, it's all of it. You don't get to keep portions from that sacrifice. It's gone. He's doing something fundamentally different."

The gospel is not asking you to check a box or make a donation to the gospel. It's saying, "No, I need your life commitment." And I was actually at an IHOP the other day. Let's see if we can throw this slide up and it had a pig and a chicken on it and it said, "Chicken." For breakfast, it's a breakfast. "Chicken, all on a day's work. For a pig, a lifetime commitment." And this is what I want, I love it. "Make a commitment, be the bacon." Doesn't that make you feel about giving your life over? You're like, "I'm going to be bacon, not eggs. Gross. Bacon."

Here's the deal. It's exactly that point. Are you going to make contributions to the kingdom or are you going to commit your life to the kingdom? Are you just going to check a box and come on a Sunday and say, "You're welcome pastor, I came today." Or are you actually coming here, because you're saying, "No, God has my whole life. He has everything. It belongs to Him. It's not mine anymore. It totally belongs to Him and who He is." And what's being said in this portion of scripture is that God is looking for your whole life. He wants all of it. Why? 'Cause He wants more for your life than

you do.

You know how much God can do with something small and insignificant? He can do something glorious, but the more that we hold back, the less actually gets done. This is why in John 15, He says, "Apart from me, you can do nothing." Apart from God, we can't do anything. And I want you guys to get this, because I think so many people are stuck in this place of frustration, and I'm sort of in and I'm sort of out and I'm trying to get this figured out. And I want you guys to know that what we need to be thinking about is how we lay our entire life down, that we're not holding it back anymore in these different areas.

Some of the best generals from history, guys like Cortes, would do this thing where they would go to the battle, they'd pull up with all their ships, they'd unload everything, and they'd set the ships on fire. Which is for the record, a really cool entrance. There's some pyro and you walk in in all your gear. But the picture is this, there is no going back. There's no Plan B. Spartan said the same thing to their warriors, "Either come back victorious or come back on your shield." Jesus is not calling you to come and live and, "I'll go with you." Jesus is calling you to come and die so that He can live through you. And when we compartmentalize, we come to this place where we end up frustrated and actually bitter.

Listen, the most frustrated and bitter Christians on the planet are the ones with a foot in both worlds. They got a foot in the church and a foot in the world, and they're wondering why it's not working out for them. And it's because you always have a

backup plan. You're shooting yourself in the foot, because the very end game that you say you want is the thing that you're working against and everything else that you're doing. We're plagued by this mindset today. We're plagued by it. This double-minded, this compartmentalization where I think I can live a certain way in my life, and then not have affect anything else that I'm doing.

When we went through this whole same sex marriage thing, it's so frustrating, 'cause everyone's like, "It's in their own homes. Love is love. It's not hurting you. It's not bugging you." And now we're watching the families begin to be pulled apart and we're watching transgender story hour, and we're watching things like this and it's, no, listen. You cannot take Christ out of areas and expect it to still remain and be fine. You can't disconnect portions from what God said is good and right and life-giving, and expect it to continue to live and not devolve into something that was never meant to be. We cannot compartmentalize. It actually begins to kill us when we do. It starts to rot us.

I want you to understand this, because as I was processing how to communicate this, I wanted to take you briefly just to the Book of Joshua. And you don't need to go all there in your bibles, but I wanted to talk about the story in Joshua is really a book of unacceptable sacrifice. And the reason is, is because like our salvation story, Jesus goes in and He says, "I want all of it. I want all of it. Clear everything out of the land." I love how Pastor Jeff says this, "Jesus doesn't come in to be to be resident. He comes in to be president, and He says, 'All of this is mine and He rolls in.'" And the story of Joshua is them stopping three quarters of the way. They go in with all this vigor and it's

going to be awesome. And then they end up leaving some things in the land.

Then right after the Book of Joshua is the Book of Judges, which ends by saying, "And every man did what was right in his own eyes." Because the places that they left slowly began to make inroads and slowly began to break down all of the progress that they fought so hard to have, because they weren't willing to give it all to Jesus. They wanted to short up their bets. They wanted to play it safe and make sure that everything was going to be fine, just in case Jesus doesn't work out. They wouldn't burn the ships. They wouldn't make that commitment.

I wanted to tell you a story. I was learning more and more about the Romans. And I'm a history nerd, I like a lot of that stuff. And one of the ways that Romans would deal with capital punishment for people who were murderers is that, if you committed murder, they would actually take the body of the person that you had murdered and they would lash it to you, so that you would walk around. And what would happen is this dead body as it was decomposing would start to kill the person that murdered them. It would eventually be a death sentence for them. And I'm not saying that to be gross to you today. I'm saying that 'cause I want you to understand, some of you have offered your life as a sacrifice to God and you've picked it up and you're dragging it around with you and it's killing you. It's killing you, 'cause you won't give it all over to God.

This is why in this passage is this urgent plea. He says, "I urge you for the love of God, choose life that you would live. Give your life wholesale. Give it over to God." Why? Because when you say, I present my body to God, what it means is I'm getting

rid of everything else that I used to be. In fact, this word presented here is the word that's used when Jesus is presented at the temple by Mary and Joseph. It was their way of saying, "This boy's life and everything that He represents is Your will and Your work God, and Your glory and Your goodness." The text is urging us to do the same. Present your life. Present it, the rest of it. Going forward, I belong to Jesus, I work for Jesus. My heart is for Jesus. It's not a give and take in your relationship with God. Acceptable sacrifice is a wholesale. It's everything that you are.

So the first stone that I have for you today, because I know this can be a daunting thing. I'm like, "Give your life over." "Thank you, Pastor. Where do I start?" The first thing that I want you to take with you today is this. What have you told God that you would do but you haven't done yet? What are the things in your life that you told God, "God, I said I would start serving in this area. God, I said I would share the gospel with my neighbor. God, I told You last year that I was going to stop doing this thing and I was going to treat my wife better. God, I said I would do this." What is that? Because the area where you're telling God you're going to do something and then not doing it is occupied enemy territory, and it's coming for you. You got to get in there. You got to let Jesus begin to do a work in that place and bring His power and His mercy in a wholesale sacrifice laid before Jesus.

This leads to our next point, because the reality is this. If you aren't giving your life over to Christ, you most certainly have a worship problem. And so I want to take us back to this verse, in verse one, and I want to read the second portion to you. Here's

what it says. "Present your bodies, a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." I want you to think about how God defines selfless worship. I want you to think about how God defines selfless worship.

Here's the picture. It flows right into this because if I've given my whole life up, if I've given everything that I am over to God, it should follow that all of my worship is then brought to Christ. If I'm no longer the person that I used to be, then it should go to Jesus. But let's be honest, even though sometimes we kill that old man and he's gone and he's dead and I've given it all to Jesus, I still have some habits and patterns and tendencies to go to the wrong places. Amen.

So I want you guys to understand this today. When we look at this text, it says this word here, which is, "Your spiritual service of worship." That word for spiritual there is actually where we get our word for logic or rationality. He's saying, "If you are thinking clearly, you would understand that you cannot serve two masters. If you're thinking clearly, you would understand that I can't save my life and all that I am belongs to God, but also I'm going to hold onto other stuff, 'cause I just really enjoy these things." I can't do both of those things.

Jesus wants us to know that the difference between worship in our life and worthless in our life has everything to do with where it is directed, where is our worship directed, because that's how we know it actually matters. And I think a lot of us try to do this thing where we'll do self worship, and then try to staple some Jesus on top of it like, "There you go. I did this." How many of you guys know this? We shouldn't be asking Jesus to go with us. We should be asking Jesus where is He going. You know

that? We should be following Him into what He has for us.

I wanted to share a slide with you. This is a picture of a prayer garden. A lot of these are in Far Eastern gardens and Buddhist temples and things. And this also can be found in Boulder, obviously. If you live up there, I'll pray for you. This is a small picture. Oftentimes, they're a lot bigger, sometimes they're square, sometimes they're kind of labyrinthine. But all of them have this idea that we would start praying, and we would slowly begin to pray and we would move to the center, until I find myself in the middle of myself with God. Isn't that beautiful? Except that it's the exact opposite of what the gospel is.

Listen. The whole gospel is the opposite. We start in the middle and we are running for our lives away from the people that we used to be. Can I get an amen? We don't need more of us. We need more Jesus. We don't need more self-centered, self-thinking worship, where we're hedging our bets and, "Jesus, You can come with me and I'll tag this on." No, Jesus is saying, "Come to me." Because when you turn inward, it's the darkest most awful place that you can go. But if you would get your eyes up on Jesus and begin to worship, you would find life. You'd find hope. And our culture is obsessed with this self-help, self-medicating, self-centered, self-reliant, self-care nonsense that has permeated our world. And let's be honest, I know we're here at BRAVE Church, I know you guys love Jesus, but we're crazy if we think that what's going on in the world is not going to affect us at all. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Justin Hart:

I think we need this today. I was spending time with my daughter who I love to death. And I came up the stairs one day and I was hearing this song playing about, "Follow your heart. It's the only thing to do. Trust your heart. It's the only way." And as a pastor, I'm like, "Lord, help us. What is playing in my house?" Turns out, it's Cinderella III. I don't know how many times that girl needs saved, but at least one more, I guess. I don't understand. So I look at my daughter and I'm like, "Sweetheart, do we follow our heart?" And she looks at me and she's like, "No dad." I was like, "Okay, you're fine. You're going to be okay." She gets it, thank God. But let's be honest, that stuff is playing around us. It is, it's happening. And if we're not careful, it will play us a sleepy tune of self worship, where we begin to have our eyes focused on the wrong things. And we can't live a life pursuing selfish gain and comfort and expect anything other than empty worship.

We can get into bad relationships though. We can get into situations where we end up in this spiritual Stockholm Syndrome. You know what I mean? Where I know I shouldn't have this thing, but now I feel like I love it and I need it. And if I remove it, I don't know what's going to happen and I won't be taken care of. And maybe you're making some financial gain in an unwholesome way. Maybe you are in a relationship that you shouldn't be in. And you're like, "But I don't want to be alone." And I wanted to share with you a story from church history. I love it so much.

There's this saint named Boniface. Saint Boniface was a missionary to these Germanic tribes that were worshipping these Norse gods. And he was going and he was trying to share the gospel with them and tell them about the glory of Jesus Christ. And all of them were almost terrified at the idea of following Jesus, because they're like, "No, no, no. Thor is the one that we serve here." They felt like, if I trust Jesus, I'm going to lose my home. I'll lose our prosperity, I'll be outcast. All these horrible things will happen. And they have this big festival they would do all the time around this very ancient tree called Thor's Tree. And they would go to this place. And Boniface, just has the heart of someone at BRAVE. And he goes in and he takes an ax. And while they're in the middle of worshipping Thor, he goes and he starts hacking at the tree. And everyone's sitting there like, "Oh my gosh, Thor's going to kill him. He can't do that. What is he thinking?" Until the tree falls down.

Here's what I want you to see today BRAVE Church. When we will cut things down in our life, when we'll remove those things that we're holding tightly to, God begins to do a work. And I want you to know that, every single one of those people in that tribe gave their life to Christ, as soon as the tree hit the ground. It was over. From that point on, they were worshipping Jesus. They actually took it as lumber and made a church out of the thing that used to be an idol. Come on, that fires me up. And we need to be the kind of people that in your life right now are ready to go cut the tree down. What is it that you're holding onto? Where's your spiritual Stockholm Syndrome, where you're continuing to worship something 'cause you think it's taking care of you, but if you're being honest, it never has. It's never actually sustained you or been there for

you. That self worship nonsense where you think something is taking care of you, it's got to go.

What worries me is that I'm telling you this and there are some of you in this room right now who are not listening, and you're going to have to wreck a valuable relationship before you cut that tree down. There's some of you in here who are going to wreck good things that God has given to you, because you're too busy still worshiping yourself and what you need and what you think. And that self-centeredness that is so destructive and right-thinking where worship of Christ is primary and not our agenda. Listen, it leads to life, but self worship gives you a comfortable seat to watch things go badly. It really does.

There's this wonderful book, Haggai in the Old Testament, and in the Book of Haggai, there was these people that God had brought out of exile. He had saved them and they begin to build the wall for the temple and build the temple area and got stuff going. And then at some point, they just stopped. And for 16 years, they were building their own homes and doing their own stuff, while the temple laid and ruins and unfinished. And God had a message through his prophet Haggai. Here's what He said.

He said, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house slice desolate? Now therefore, thus says the Lord of Hosts, 'Consider your ways. You've sown much but harvested little. You eat, but there's not enough to be satisfied. You drink, but there is not enough to become drunk. You put on clothing, but no one is warm enough. And he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with

holes.' Thus says the Lord, 'Consider your ways.'" Think about it. "Go up to the mountains, bring wood, rebuild the temple that I may be pleased with it and glorified,' says the Lord. "You looked for much but behold, it comes to little. When you bring it home, I will blow it away. Why?' Declares the Lord of hosts. 'Because of my house which lies desolate while each of you runs to his own house."

They thought that because they had done some stuff for Jesus that they were good to focus on all their own things. I did that. I served that one time. I helped in that one particular way. And the house of the Lord is lying desolate and He's saying, "Are you serious?" Don't you realize that if you don't get rid of this self-centeredness, everything that you bring home isn't going to matter. All the things that you're working on won't work out. Why? Because only Jesus can take what we give Him and sustain it and create something beautiful. Worship that you pour into yourself is a black hole. It's not going anywhere. When we direct it at Jesus, glory is the byproduct. Wonder is the byproduct. Life is the byproduct.

I need you guys to know this today. Self worship, it's a burning house. You got to get out of there. If you're caught up in some of that today, if you're caught up in areas where you got self-worship going on and you got that spiritual Stockholm Syndrome, I want to tell you, get out there. Don't wait for a more comfortable minute to leave, because it won't actually come.

The tool, the stone that I wanted to hand to you guys for this particular portion today is one that I started praying about 10 years ago, me and my wife did. You go through some crazy seasons in your life and it just changes the way that you think

about stuff. And we started praying this prayer, "God ruin my plans. Ruin my plans. If it's not lined up with You and where You want to go and what You want to do, God take it away because my heart, if I'm not careful, can take me to places I don't want to go." And can I tell you, the first time I prayed that prayer, it felt like I was pulling a knife out of my chest. Which tells me that even though I love Christ, I still have a self-centered tendency, don't I? I still got roots in me that want what I want.

I would tell you this BRAVE Church, start praying that way. And if the first time you pray that you don't feel a little pull inside of you, then you're killing it and you're doing great. But the reality is, is the majority of us, when we pray, "God ruin our plans, do what You want to do," begin to see, "Oh man, I really am more self-centered than I thought." And you have to confront this question, am I here to worship Jesus or am I here to worship myself? Selfless worship is all about Christ and His way and what He wants. And listen to me BRAVE Church, it's better. It's better to follow Jesus. There's joy and there's life there.

The last point I want to share is a little bit more insidious, because I think the sins of seasoned Christians are not sins to start. They become sinful, because we take them and elevate them to a place that they shouldn't have. And so I want to show you some of this from verse two today. Let's read this together, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Okay, I want you to think about how God defines intentional transformation. Intentional transformation.

He gives us two options here in this text, be conformed or be transformed. And He makes the incredibly important point that you will actually miss the will of God for your life if you don't get this right. If you aren't being transformed, you'll actually miss what God would have for you otherwise. Walking the will of God is dependent on you being transformed and not pressed into whatever mold the world around you wants. And what is wild to me about all of this is He tells us to be transformed, which means that I have something to do with it. That this is actually something that I have something to say about. I am a part of. Whether I am being transformed or conformed. I have something to say about that.

I got to tell you guys, going through this intentional time of fasting over the 21 days that we had with prayer and getting after it, has told me a lot about my appetites and my tendency to do stupid things when I'm trying to get healthy. You come out of this fast and you're like, "All right, I'm going to eat better for once. I'm going to live my life different. I'm going to do this and I'm going to do that." And then, you have a late night and you're thinking about that 12:00 AM Taco Bell, you know what I mean? And it's like a terrorist attack on your whole life at that point when you eat it, and you're like, "What was I thinking?" And a part of you is like, "Your body's a temple." And the other side of you is like, "Now it's an amusement park." What is happening inside of us?

Here's what I want you guys to understand. It's like having these good habits. "I'm going to run every morning and it's going to be awesome and I'm going to be

healthy. And I'm putting on weight and I can't figure out why, and it's probably because I'm running to that donut shop and eating a dozen." Do you see how we can take good things that we have and dilute them with things that actually work against what we're doing?

A lot of us think I did the thing. A lot of us, "No, I'm doing the right stuff. I checked the box." But if you are so overloaded with everything else that you're loading on top that doesn't help you, what you're doing is you're making it irrelevant and you're stalling your own progress. You're stalling the transformation that God actually has for you. I mean, how many of you guys have done this thing with the fridge, where you walk up to the fridge and you open it up and you look? And there's something you can make. There's potatoes or meat or things. You're like, "That's healthy, there's vegetables. I just don't want to cook." So you close it and you walk away. And you're like, literally 20 seconds, you come back and you open it up again and you're back in it. And eventually, that stale bag of chips on the counter is what gets eaten. Not the thing that's actually helpful.

I want you guys to get this. I think we understand the gospel and churches. I think most churches, Lord help me, for the most part understand the gospel, but I think a lot of churches are weighed down with a bunch of extra stuff that's actually killing them. It's killing them, it is not helping them. They get the gospel, but they're beginning to give their minds so much to everything else, that the outcome is not the glory that God intended. Because what you fill yourself with a Christian, when you get squeezed, that's what comes out of you, right? And we got to be careful what we're taking in, and

I wanted to share this with you. I think this is important.

The average person sees 10,000 advertisements a day. 10,000 advertisements a day. You think Satan wants your attention? You think he's working hard to get you to think about what he wants you to think about? I mean, I think so. I think the world is working overtime, vying for your mind because it knows if it gets your mind, it gets the outcome. If it gets your mind, it gets to decide what your pile of rocks, what your altar actually looks like. The average person sits seven and a half hours a day on entertainment in front of screens and laptops and iPads and whatever other off-brand thing you have. Seven and a half hour, that's 114, 24-hour days of your year.

Here's the deal, some of you're going to go home and watch the Super Bowl and eat chips and Taco Bell, and I'm not dogging on you today, okay? Enjoy your moment in the hot sun, all right? You enjoy it. But here's what I want you to get. If your time doing those things is diluting or overpowering or more exciting to you than beholding the glory of Jesus, something has gone terribly wrong in your life. Man, listen. If you have no problem putting your hands up and putting on a shirt and worshiping the Super Bowl and whatever is happening with Taylor Swift and however you pronounce his name, I don't even know, but you come into here and you're quiet, something's wrong. Can I get an amen? Come on. It's important that we're putting away distractions before our distractions are putting us away. It's really important.

I want to just connect this for you for a second, because I think what you need to see here is the mercies of God being the driver for all of this. It's the mercies of God. Here's what He says, "Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God to

present your bodies, a living in holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Where is the basis for transformation? Where's the well that we pull from, by which we grow strength to actually change? It's beholding the mercy and glory of God in everything that we're doing. It's drinking in what He's done. And this is important, because therefore is the word that start this section, right? Chapter 12, "Therefore I urge you." Why is there therefore? Therefore, the past 11 chapters, where Paul is pleading with you to look at Jesus, look what He's done.

This is Paul's magnum opus. This is his, "If I had one book to share with you, everything that Christ has shown to me, I want to give you this. I want to show you this." And before we even get to here's how to live your life, he's saying, "This is the mechanism that actually brings transformation in your life. It's beholding the Lord Jesus Christ. It's beholding the glory of the gospel, and that's what brings transformation." But listen to me, that's not one time.

Many of you probably know that word for transformation is the word we get for metamorphosis. But what I want you guys to know is that it's actually used here in the present, passive and perfect for you literature nerds, which means that it's a continual process. It's not like I got saved and it was glorious, and now I just do life. No, it's a continual beholding of the infinite God who is a wellspring of joy and strength for anyone that would drink from that fountain, for anyone that would come to him and say, "I need this, Lord." The mechanism for transformation in your life is having our minds constantly renewed by the mercies of God, and not flooded and diluted by distractions.

I have to tell you, I grew up in church for a long time knowing and not being transformed by the gospel. And I was addicted to pornography and I was in relationships I shouldn't have been in, and I was drinking and I was smoking. And I had the audacity to say, "I don't know why Christianity's not working for me. Gosh, this Jesus thing really isn't working out." And it's because I was dunking my life in sin and then going to church and expecting change. That's not how that works. Your transformation continues at the rate of your intake of the mercies of God. Do you know that? That's how that works.

Many of you, you're in here and you're like, "Man, I just get tired." Listen to me. You're not tired. You're just not being transformed, because you're being diluted. You're being weighed down by everything else spiritually. You're struggling so you're distracting yourself. Listen, pick up your Bible. Behold the glory of Christ. Look to Jesus. Let this wash over you and change you and do a work in you. Be transformed, not conformed, BRAVE Church.

I love verses like Jeremiah 15:16. It says, "Your words were found and I ate them and your words became for me a joy and a delight of my heart, for I have been called by your name, O Lord God of Hosts." Psalm 119:32, "I run the path of your commandments, for you have set my heart free." Psalm 1, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked nor stand in the seat of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. His delight is in the law of the Lord. And in it he meditates day and night. He'll be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season. Its leaf doesn't wither and whatever it does, he prospers, but not the wicked.

They're like the chaff that the wind blows away."

I can speak till I'm blue in the face, but the reality is, is some people will hear this and know that God is calling you to more. And some have stopped paying attention, because you're already to the next distraction. The gospel doesn't mean what it used to mean to you. This is why Paul is saying, "I'm urging you. I'm pleading you on the blood of Christ, be transformed, so that when you breathe out and lay your body down on the altar of your life, you would look like Jesus looked."

I wants you to understand lastly, that what Satan mingled in the garden, Jesus has come to restore. And Jesus laid down on the most beautiful altar ever and prayed and gave up His spirit and extended His arms, and He beckons to us and says, "Come follow me. Come follow me to find that there is life, there is hope, there is joy. But you have to choose to allow that transformation to happen in your life."

The last story I want to share with you, the last tool I have for you really centered as in how my mother displayed Christ for me. As far back as I can remember, I think about my mom. I wake up in the morning and my little feet, I'd patter out of my room, and I would see my mom with her brown, just tattered Bible and a copy of course of the Imitation of Christ by Thomas Kempis. I think she wanted to be a nun or something. But I will say this, I'd never been changed so much by anything in my life, I feel like when I was growing up more than watching my mother every single day pour into that Bible and be transformed by it.

Listen to me. We grew up, my dad was a pastor and it was messy. I had five

sisters, I had two brothers. Not everything was perfect all the time. And moms, dads, I want you to get this. You may make mistakes in your life. You may not do everything right. You're probably going to have some times where you're going to wound your kids and you don't mean to. And I'm telling you right now, what will speak louder than every wound and frustration and distraction is you taking time to behold the mercy and glory of God, and let that transform your whole life. It's going to speak louder to your kids than any of that. Your tool, your last tool, the rock I want you to put on this, the pile of your life.

Open your Bible every single day. In your home, be in the word. Be letting the blood of Christ transform you and your family and your children in your neighborhood, because BRAVE Church, revival starts at home. It starts with you and what God is transforming in your life. And how He's changing your kids and How He's changing your marriage. And I need you to know this today, 'cause we're going to take communion in a second. If you go through the motions today while we're taking communion and you're not basking in the glory of Jesus and saying, "Thank You for the blood. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for your grace. Thank You that I get to be transformed by You as I behold You," then I don't know what we're doing here.

So I'm going to pray for us and we're going to sing this song. And I'm just begging you today, plead with the Lord Jesus to waken your heart, to transform your home and your marriage and this nation, because of people who refuse to be overseen, they were going to be a pile of rocks that spoke to the entire world.

Lord God, I thank You for the text that we got to read this morning. Lord, I thank

You for Your mercy and Your grace that I believe You're pouring out in this room right now. And I pray that we would not take this cup in a trivial weight today, Lord, but we would feel the weight of Your resurrection and Your death and Your burial, and Your calling us into a life where You would say, "Come and die with me and find your real life on the other side of leaving all this behind." Lord, we say yes to You again and again and again. We love You and we thank You in Jesus' name. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.