

# Form and Reform 2 of 4

## *From the New Testament*

#0327

Study Given by W. D. Frazee

Last Friday night, we began a study of the greatest salvage operation of history: God's program to reform man. In the beginning, God made man in His own image. Sin marred that. But God thought man was so valuable that He instituted the most expensive operation of eternity rather than lose what He had invested so much in. This, of course, is because He loves man.

In some ways, it may be hard for us to understand how Someone who could make any number of items just by speaking, would spend so much to redeem that which was lost. But the mystery of love, for love is a mystery, explains many other mysteries, including this one. When you love somebody enough, you'll do anything rather than lose that one. And this is the way God feels about the beings formed in His image.

Let's look at it in a very practical, scientific way, for a few minutes. You know the Bible says in Genesis 2:7, that:

“...God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” Genesis 2:7.

The chemist today finds in the human body, on analysis, the same elements that are found in the soil—the iron and the calcium and the phosphorous, magnesium and sodium and potassium and the other things. Of course, the chemist can find those elements in the soil, and he can find them in the human body, but the chemist can't take them out of the soil and make a human body. That's something else. God did that. That's the story of creation.

But as we observed last Friday night when God took matter and formed it in His own image, and gave that reflection of Himself the power to choose as to whether or not we would retain that image, He lifted matter to the highest point possible. He bestowed upon that matter the highest honor possible. Think of it! Man was made in the image of God.

Matter, you know, has only those properties with which the Creator has endowed it. Why does iron respond to the magnet? Why is oxygen a gas? Why does food nourish the body? These and a thousand other questions find their ultimate answer only in this: matter acts by the will of God.

One of the greatest scientists of the country, connected with the research laboratories of the General Electric Company, was asked by a visitor to explain the

phenomena of magnetic attraction and how a magnet works. This great scientist gave a very truthful answer as he held the magnet there, and illustrated the response of steel to it.

He said, "That magnet acts by the will of God." That's the truth.

Think of the power we call gravitation. Think of the earth reaching out there thousands of miles in space, and holding the moon to itself, so the moon doesn't wander off in space. That's where it belongs. We call that power of attraction gravitation.

But how can anybody explain it? How can anybody comprehend it? How can this earth, these tons of matter, act where it is now? We're used to the operation of that power of gravitation, but really it defies explanation as it defies comprehension. The answer is: it acts by the will of God.

And so with all the other heavenly bodies; each one attracts other masses, and is itself attracted by others. The power of that can be calculated because God works according to certain laws that He, Himself, has established in order that we may work with Him. But to explain how and in what way all that operates, this, I repeat, is beyond our comprehension.

Now back to the creation of man. God took matter that was simply inert earth, soil, and He formed that in His own image. He gave to that particular combination of iron and lime and phosphorous and sodium and potassium and carbon and hydrogen and nitrogen; He gave to that particular combination powers far beyond what was in the earth itself, or in other organizations of matter. Only to man is given the power to think God's thoughts after Him.

Man can reason. He can listen to evidence and weigh it. He can come to a conclusion concerning moral issues, and then, marvel of marvels, he can choose whether to go with his judgment and reason or against it. He can decide to do what he knows is right, or he can decide to do what he knows is wrong. And why? Because God, in His infinite wisdom and love, desired creatures who would know the mystery of love. And love, my dear friends, and choice are bound up together. Only when we have the opportunity to choose to love or not to love, is love real.

What joy the mother gets from the little one that she's loved month, after month, after month when the child begins to lisp, "I love you." And that joy is exceeded only by the pleasure that comes to the parent's heart as the child grows, and with increasing comprehension, increasing opportunity to choose, that child, that youth, that adult continues to say in a meaningful way, "I love you." Somewhere along the line, there comes the opportunity in that little mind, or as it gets increasingly able to see what's going on, at some point, there comes the opportunity to say, "No, I don't love you."

This is the opportunity that came to Adam and Eve in Eden. Full-grown, in the prime of manhood and womanhood, they used that wonderful choice to say, "No," to their Creator, to engage in an experiment with Satan, God's great enemy. They were

promised improvement, development. It was promised to them that his program of disobedience toward God would lead them into fields of research and experience far beyond anything that they had hitherto dreamed of. Of course, it was a lie, a sham, a deception, but they used that choice and lost their Creator's image, for the Creator's image is love. They went down the road of rebellion.

But the Bible reveals that man is so valuable, I repeat, that rather than lose him, God will launch the greatest salvage operation of history at great expense. For to redeem man, it was necessary that the Godhead itself should suffer.

It's been going on now for six millenniums, and it isn't over yet. But God is going to get the reward of His sacrifice. He's going to see from this human family, thousands upon thousands of redeemed ones in whom the image of His own character is completely restored.

Now, last Friday night, we were studying this subject from the Old Testament. And I promised you that tonight we would study it from the New Testament.

Our opening text is Romans 8:29. I invite you to turn to it. The apostle Paul penned these words; one of the greatest minds in the history of the world, the apostle Paul had. In the prime of manhood, he was converted and became a follower of the lowly Nazarene. He brought to the mission given him not only a superior mind, but a complete dedication. God used his brain to think the thoughts of God here on earth, and to communicate them in human language. Our text this evening has one of the greatest concepts ever given to man. I read:

"For whom he did foreknow (this is speaking of God),  
he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his  
Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren"  
Romans 8:29.

Let's take that big word there, "predestinate." Predestination is an interesting subject. But for the few moments we'll notice it tonight, I'd like to have us think of it in a very simple way.

You know, I got a letter today in the mail. The reason I got it? It was predestinated. It had my name and address on it. It came from halfway around the world. But because it had my name and my post office address on it, I got it today.

You know, that word "predestined" or "predestinated" or "predestination" that sounds like some great, big thing, but let's look at it very simply. "Pre" means before, and "destination" means destination, where it's going. The destination of that letter I got today from across the waters, was Wildwood, Georgia—W. D. Frazee, Wildwood Sanitarium, Wildwood, GA. That was its destination, and it was predestinated—the address was put upon it before it got here.

Now, our text says that God predestinated some folks. What for? To be conformed to the image of His Son. Who did He predestine for that? Those whom He

foreknew. God looked down the stream of time and saw you, my dear friend. And your destination is not hell. It's Heaven. Look through this whole Bible, and never will you find any statement that God has predestinated some people to be lost in hell.

"Oh!" you say, "But won't some people be lost?" Yes. Did you ever hear of letters being lost? Yes, it's possible for a letter to get lost. But my dear friends, nobody will be lost because God predestinated him to be lost. The only way you can be lost is to refuse to go to your destination. That's the only way that you can be lost. You're predestinated to be saved. Isn't that good news? Thank God. Well, I propose to go ahead to my destination. What do you say? Yes.

But now let's look a little closer:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" Romans 8:29.

Notice, Christ is spoken of here as the firstborn among many brethren. And His purpose in becoming a member of the human family was that you and I might become members of the heavenly family. He came down and took our humanity that we might share the glorious power of divinity. He became a man that we might become, once more as Adam and Eve were, children of God. What a wonderful, wonderful plan!

Notice that this predestination is that you and I might become conformed to the image of His Son. What is the last part of "conformed?" *formed*. Back to the word we're studying: form and reform. We were formed in the beginning in the Creator's image. That was lost through sin. Now we're to be reformed, transformed, conformed to that image. "Conformed" means that we are shaped like the pattern. We are made like the Son of God. We are to reflect the image of Jesus fully. Oh, I think that's wonderful. What do you say?

This is why He came to earth. And His whole life was a demonstration of how a member of the human family, by being partaker of the divine nature, could live the life of God here on earth. He took our handicaps and disadvantages. He took our poverty. He took our weariness. He met the temptations of Satan, in all points tempted like as we are, and He met every temptation successfully. He revealed the life of Heaven here on earth. And then, friends, at the close of that wonderful life of obedience, He gave Himself to die for our sins, to pay the debt for our transgressions. And on the cross, that life was laid down as the sacrifice, as our atonement, to bring man back to God in eternal harmony with Him. I'm thankful He was willing to do that. What do you say?

Notice another expression in this verse. We want to get another thought out if it:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" Romans 8:29.

He's the firstborn among many brethren. Well, who are the brethren? Why,

they're the folks who are conformed to His image, that become like Him. But as He became our brother through being born into our family, the family of earth, we are to share with Him in this eternal victory by becoming members of the heavenly family. And that means we need to be born again. He was born into the earthly family from the heavenly family. We're to be born into the heavenly family from the earthly.

Turn to the Gospel of John, the third chapter. Here is the program of reform that God has. It isn't just some philosophical, mental process. It is a spiritual miracle. Jesus is talking to one of the great leaders of the Jewish nation, Nicodemus:

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” John 3:3.

The margin says born from above. When Nicodemus heard these words, the next verse says, “How can that be? How can a man be born when he is old? Can he go back and go through the physical process again?”

Oh, no. That isn't the program. Jesus says in the fifth verse:

“...Except a man be born of water and of the *Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” John 3:5–6.

So this is a spiritual birth. This is a spiritual transformation. The mind is to be transformed, changed.

Let's go over to 1 Peter 1. We'll get an additional ray of light on this. Notice the agent in this spiritual birth:

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” 1 Peter 1:23.

How are we born again? By what? By the Word of God. It calls it here what? Seed. It takes material seed to grow things in the garden. Lettuce seed produces lettuce, carrot seed carrots. And in the animal world, the seed of each animal produces after its kind, so with human life. And in the spiritual life, my dear friends, the Word of God has the life which will produce in us the image of God. Therefore, if we will receive the Word, the Holy Spirit will use that, miraculously, to so change us that we will become like the One we admire and adore.

Turn to Romans the 12th chapter, this wonderful book that our opening text was taken from. This time we're looking at the 12:2, we're looking at this word conformed again—formed like:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed

by the renewing of your mind..." Romans 12:2.

How are we transformed? By the renewing of the mind. Notice this, friends: God is not interested in a change of man in which his mind is not involved. This is why religious laws that persecute minorities that won't conform are outside the Gospel plan. God is not in the business of *making* people do even the right thing. He wants the free consent of a will that is untrammelled, unharnessed, fully under the control of the individual. He's given us eyes that we may see, ears that we may hear, minds that we may think and reason, and a will that we may choose. And all the universe stands waiting while you and I make up our minds. Again it's the mystery of love.

Now notice, He says, "Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

It's garden time. Many people are busy stirring the earth, putting in the seed, cultivating. We're all acquainted with the fact that the kind of seed we put in, determines the harvest. But there's one thing you don't have to plant. You can get an abundant crop of? Weeds. You all knew the answer.

So it is with the mind, my dear friends. To be lost, you don't have to lay your plans. To miss this wonderful destiny of being like the Creator, you don't have to sit down and think it through and say, "How shall I miss my destiny?" No, no, just let the weed patch grow, and it'll take over.

And if our minds are left to wander on any and every subject, if the TV, the radio, the newspaper, the magazine, or any other medium, is allowed to dominate our minds and fill the thoughts with pictures that lead away from God, God Himself cannot save us contrary to our choice, for this would be to defeat His plan in giving man this wonderful gift of the will, the choice.

But friends, let's think of the happier side. Let's think of the wonderful privilege we have, to control what we see, to control what we listen to, to control what the mind feeds upon. What did we read over there in Peter? We're born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God. As we receive God's Word through the scriptures, through the beautiful things of nature, by the work of His Spirit upon our minds, we become like that which we look upon and listen to. We cannot change that law, but we can use it, friends. By working in harmony with it, we can become like the One that we long to be like.

Notice this is a process. 2 Corinthians 3:18. Here's a wonderful promise and a statement of a great law, just as truly a law as is the law of gravitation:

"But we all..."

Notice this is a universal law.

"...with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory,

even as by the Spirit of the Lord” 2 Corinthians 3:18.

What changes us? The Spirit of God changes us. But notice how He does it. What are you and I doing while He is changing? We’re beholding. What are we beholding? The glory of the Lord: His character as revealed in His Word, as shown in the things He’s made in nature. As we look upon His message on the page, printed, as we look upon His message of love and wisdom and power in nature, you and I are what? We are changed. Into what? The same image, from glory to glory.

Oh friends, it’s something like a photographic film. You all know how that works. We come here and we see some beautiful object, some waterfall, some beautiful lake or some loved one. We say, “Oh, I want a picture of that.” So, out comes the camera. Click, we have it. What happened? The film was exposed. We got the picture.

Ah, my friends, every time these eyes are opened, we’re getting a picture. Every time these ears are opened, an impression is being made.

What would you think about somebody who was given a most beautiful camera and who spent his time going through the alleys taking pictures of garbage cans, dead cats, rubbish? Somebody says, “But it’s true.” Yes, and more is the pity. But ah my friends, the photographic film that is used to record rubbish can never be used to put a beautiful lake on, or a glorious sunrise or the face of some loved one. Am I correct? You know I am.

Oh friends, listen, remember, you are so valuable, that mind that the Creator gave you is so valuable the character you can become is so precious, that Christ sacrificed His life rather than lose you. There’s only one like you. There are no duplicates. This is why God will pour out all Heaven in this infinite sacrifice on the cross rather than lose you. Oh, let’s give Him what He wants. What do you say?

How many of us would like to send Him the word tonight, that we’re willing to work with Him, to let Him have His way that His image may be fully restored in us? How many want to send Him that word? May I see your hands? Thank God for everyone.

Now, we’re going to have a little time of witness. Those who would like to speak whatever the Holy Spirit has prompted your heart to respond just come right up and speak for Jesus. All are welcome to speak, those who are here for the first time or those who have been here a hundred times, whoever would like to speak for Christ.

[Testimony service follows]

Now, turn to number 272 and notice these beautiful words of response and petition:

Have Thine own way, Lord!  
Have Thine own way!  
Thou art the Potter;  
I am the clay.

Mold me.

Form me, reform me, shape me.

Mold me and make me  
After Thy will,  
While I am waiting,  
Yielded and still.

[Appeal]

Would the congregation like to kneel with us as we seek the Lord?

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the revelation of Thy love through Jesus. We thank Thee that He left Heaven and came to this world that we might know the love of Heaven and live on earth the life of Heaven.

We're sorry, Lord, that we've grieved Thee with our rebellion and our selfishness. We're sorry we've insisted on having our own way and thereby hurting Thee and ourselves and others. But tonight we've come as Thy children. And we pray that you will forgive us for our failures and take us now and transform us. Work the miracle in our hearts.

As we behold the love of Jesus revealed on the cross, as we see Him dying, the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God, Lord, our hearts respond. We *will* give up everything just now to you. We *will* choose to be Your children. We *will* decide to give up everything that hinders, and we *will* trust You to finish what you have started. We believe you will complete the work that has been begun in our hearts and will present us faultless before Your throne with exceeding joy. We thank Thee in Jesus' wonderful name, amen.

Let us stand.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.  
Amen.

Good night and a happy Sabbath to all of you.

Copyright 2021. All rights reserved.

W. D. Frazee Sermons  
435 Lifestyle Lane, Wildwood, GA 30757  
1-800-WDF-1840 / 706-820-9755  
[www.WDFsermons.org](http://www.WDFsermons.org)  
[support@WDFsermons.org](mailto:support@WDFsermons.org)