

*“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”*

Daniel 1:8

We return to our study on Compromising and Conforming or Conviction? We used last week as an introduction to our sermon this morning. We wanted to remind you of your professed loyalty and commitment to God, which is that Christianity, is more than some decision concerning Christ. It's more than just saying yes to Jesus or walking down some aisle and saying a sinner's prayer. The words of Christ Himself are very challenging to all those who proclaim to be believers in Him, Matthew 16:24, “*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will **come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.***” He laid the groundwork, yea the foundation regarding the genuine truth, that if anyone calls themselves a Christian, this is the essence their profession. Come after Him, deny yourself, take up HIS cross and follow Him. This is not the aspect of lip service, but of a commitment found upon a HOLY CONVICTION. This is the essence of a sanctified heart seasoned with grace, that regardless of the circumstances or situations, they will FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART! This is the true result of regeneration; this is what it means to be born again. God has given us a NEW HEART to follow Him! Jeremiah 24:7, “*And **I will give them an heart to know me,** that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with **their whole heart.***” Consider also, Ezek. 36:26 & 27, “***A new heart also will I give you,** and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and **cause you to walk in my statutes,** and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” This is what keeps a true Christian persevering, the grace of God will keep you going, this is what will sustain us through hard and difficult times, because of what HE has done for our soul, what He has done in our hearts. Reminds me of Caleb and Joshua in the Old Testament, Numbers 14:24, “*But my servant Caleb, **because he had another spirit with him,** and hath **followed me fully,** him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it.” Numbers 32:12, “*Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: **for they have wholly followed the LORD.***” This is the essence of Christianity, having a new heart in order to wholly follow the LORD! Isaac Watts blessed hymn sets forth this standard especially the last stanza, “*Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all.*”**

This then, is the principle of grace that was in the heart of Daniel that sustained and kept him through his whole life in such hard and trying times. As I was concluding last week I did not finish the point I really wanted to share with you in my introduction and that is, to emphasize and stress that, we are not to be conformed to this world, but conformed to the image of Christ! Romans 12:1 & 2, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your*

*reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

We shall again take our time and not rush the introduction. In Romans 12:1 & 2 there are many things in these two verses, and maybe some other time speak in particular from this text, but for now I just want to consider one thing and it's the phrase, "*And be not conformed to this world ...*" This is the negative part of this verse which of course follows with the positive part, the importance of, "*...but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*" Be not conformed, that is, be not conformed to this age, or do not behave like the world, do not mold your life to the pattern of this world, do not conformed yourself to the standards and patterns of this present world or age. We are bombarded daily by advertising commercials on the TV on the radio on bill boards to conform and pattern our lives after this world, both philosophically and physically, both soul and body.

I like what Kenneth Wuest says regarding not conforming ourselves to this world in his, Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, "*...Stop assuming an outward expression that does not come from within you and is not representative of what you are in your inner being but is patterned after this age; but change your outward expression to one that comes from within and is representative of your inner being...*" Again, don't fashion or mold your life after the pattern of this world. The word conformed is the Greek word, '**suschematizo.**' It is a compound word with the prefix or rather preposition **sun/syn** which means together with and the root word '**schema**' (We get our English word scheme from this word) which means external form or appearance. When put together it means to fashion alike to someone else's pattern, to conform one's self to another pattern or fashion. From Precept Austin's webpage consider this quote, "*The meaning is to form or mold one's behavior in accordance with a particular pattern or set of standards. The preposition "sun" in this compound verb denotes a personal assimilation to or conformity with the pattern indicated. This verb speaks of an outward conforming, that which is external and does not represent what is on the inside. So when a believer conforms to the fallen world's standard, this external does not represent the new creation on the inside of the believer. Believers are to be changed by what is transpiring on the inside such that it effect's the outside.*" This is why Christ says that those who follow Him must be salt and light to this darkened and fallen world. The Greek word here in Romans 12:2 for conformed is only used twice in the whole New Testament, here and in 1 Peter 1:14, (13-16) "*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 As obedient children, **not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:** 15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*" The phrase, "*...**fashioning yourselves according to**...*" in verse 14 is the same Greek word. Notice the phraseology in this verse, "*...not fashioning yourselves according to the **former lust** in your **ignorance.***" There was a time that we walked in accordance to the lusts of the world, but it was in ignorance, we were lost, we were not saved, we were not Christians, we were in darkness and blind to the things of God, we walked according to the lusts of our flesh, but now, if God has saved us He has implanted within us a new heart and has imputed to us the righteousness of Christ, He has made us new creatures, new men and women called to follow Him in holiness. Turn to

Eph.2:1-10. Before we turn to Ephesians, since we are in 1 Peter look at this verse quickly which I shall make reference to in a minute, 1 Peter 2:11, "*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, **abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.***" This is the battle we have in the flesh, but let's look at Eph. 2 quickly. (Read 1-10)

With this new principle of grace implanted in the hearts and also by having our spirit which was dead is now made alive, by being birth into His kingdom, which is the meaning of being born again or regeneration, Peter says, don't fashioned yourself, don't patterned, don't mold yourself, yea DON'T CONFORMED yourself to your former lusts, but be holy in all manner of conversation, no so much your speech, but your whole conduct in life. Again, as followers of Jesus Christ, we battle against the flesh, the world and the Devil. Therefore, we must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world; if we do we are losing the battle. It is always the eye gate which gets us in trouble, many times the battle begins with the eye gate. This is what happened at the very outset with Adam and Eve, Gen.3:6, "**And when the woman saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." When the woman SAW that the tree...it was their downfall.

We all know that David lost his battle with lust regarding Bathsheba, but we also see his repentance and the brokenness of heart when he wrote Psalm 51. He lost the joy of his salvation; his walked with God was marred. But in repentance he penned those precious words, Ps.51:10-12, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*" Verse 17, "*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*" What shall we say about Samson, same thing, he lost his battle with lust regarding Delilah and it cost him dearly even his life. But like David in repentance he was restored to fellowship with God, though it was short, nonetheless he got his heart right with God before he died. But then you have the blessed story of Joseph when he was tempted, he stood his ground, his faith was great and when Potiphar's wife seduced him he proclaimed those power words in Gen.39:9, (7-9) but in verse 7 it says, "*And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 8 But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master...hath committed all that he hath to my hand; 9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: **how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?***" That is conviction in action! Not all temptations are sensual, but, nonetheless, they will all lead to compromise! Then of course we have the story of Daniel before us.

Again, as followers of Jesus Christ, we battle against the flesh, the world and the Devil. Therefore, we must not allow ourselves to be conformed to this world; if we do we are losing the battle. We must remember that there is a battle within us if we name the name of Christ this morning. Remember the words of Paul to the Galatians in chapter 5:16 - 25. So then this is part of the battle that wages within us, but Paul is very clear in setting forth this principle in verse 17, "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: (This is not just a one way street, no it is a two way street.) and these are contrary*

*the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” This again, is what Peter is speaking about that we read earlier, 1 Peter 2:11, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”*

So we are instructed and admonished not to conformed ourselves to the pattern of this world, not to fashioned ourselves to our former lusts. I love what Peter says here again, perhaps you missed it, *“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.”* I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, this brings us back to Hebrews 11:13, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that **they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**”* Peter says, I beseech you or urge you as being, not going to be, but presently as strangers and pilgrims. This is why they were able to be persuaded and embraced the promises of God, because they confessed this in their lifestyles by not fashioning themselves, not patterning themselves, not conforming themselves to this world, but confessing that they were **STANGERS AND PILGRIMS** on the earth! This is why they were able to persevere amidst the battles with the flesh, the world and the devil; because by faith they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims. Notice the following verses in 14 – 16 of Hebrews 11. (Read) 1 John 5:4, *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”* And of course 1 John 4:4, *“Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”* Yes, these in Hebrews 11, were tried, tempted, entice, appealed to, put on trial, but, they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on this earth and therefore did not conformed or fashioned themselves to the standard and patterned of this world, but by faith overcame the world, the flesh and the devil and thus, died **IN FAITH!** How will you die, with regrets, with failure, with compromising and conforming to this world or dying the death of the righteous in FAITH? Read carefully verse 13 again, I want you to read with me aloud the first four words, **“These all died in faith,** *not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

Therefore, if you profess to be a Christian, this morning, this is our mandate, not to be conformed to this world but to be conformed to the image of Christ. Remember again the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 16:24, *“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”* It is no longer about you, but about Jesus Christ having preeminence in your life. This again is hard, especially when you have the flesh, the world and the devil pulling you in the opposite direction. This is also one of the reasons why you have many tares among the wheat, when put to the test it only shows that all they had was a profession and not a true possession of Jesus Christ in their hearts. The Apostle John deals with this subject when he says clearly and very succinctly, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”* In 1 John 2:12-19 we see some of which we saw last week regarding the temptation of Christ, (Verses 15 -17) but let us read the whole context, please turn to 1 John 2:12-19.

This just shows that not all that are in the church are saved. Some are mere professors with no root or depth of the grace of regeneration. This is why many times you see people come and go. They go for awhile, but when trouble, persecution or even the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, they will endure for awhile but then show their true colors and go back to the world, to prove that there was no real conversion but just a mere profession. Look at Mark 4 in the parable of the sower; let's begin at verse 1 to verse 20.

Again, Christianity is following the Lord Jesus Christ amidst all the problems and tribulations in our lives, thus persevering to the end, because of what has been wrought in the heart by God at salvation. So then, it is more than making some profession, it is possessing Jesus Christ in the heart. This is why both Paul and Peter warn us, not to be conformed to this world, because it will lead you away from the things of God. Therefore, we are not to be conformed to this world, but we are to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. Romans 8:29 - 31, "*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. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" The word conform in this text is different that the one in Romans 12:2, it is the Greek word, "**summorphos.**" (Sun/syn=together with and morphe = form) This word means to have the same form so that there will be a similarity. Of course that is speaking of Christ, that we who follow Him would have some sort of similarity to Christ. We should have some similarity to Christ.

Time is escaping me and thus we'll continue our introduction next week, let me quickly conclude in Revelation 21. Please turn there and let us consider the first 8 verses. In verse 7 we have those who have overcome and persevered to the end. Through many trials and tribulations, but continuing to wholly follow the Lord regardless of the circumstances, they have finished their course and now are blessed with God for all eternity.

Revelation 2:7, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."*

Revelation 2:11, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.**"*

Revelation 2:17, "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; **To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written**, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."*

Revelation 2:26, "***And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end**, to him will I give power over the nations:"*

Revelation 3:5, "***He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment**; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."*

Revelation 3:12, "**Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God**, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

Revelation 3:21, "**To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The importance of being overcomers in this life, Rev.21:7, "**He that overcometh shall inherit all things**; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

How do we overcome? By faith, by faith in His blood! Rev.12:11, "**And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Rev.17:11, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and **the Lamb shall overcome them**: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

But in verse 8 we have the opposite; those who have lived their lives apart from God and have met their miserable end. But it is that first word I want to quickly consider, the fearful, that is, the cowardly. In other words those who have given up, among these are those who were mere professors of Christianity and through cowardice give way under trials and persecution to apostasy.

Daniel and his friends will be tested to see if they will be overcomers or fearful and unbelieving. They will either be conquerors or cowards! What about you, when you die, will you die in faith believing and trusting God and die the death of the righteous or die as an unbelieving coward? When you die, will you die as a conqueror or as a coward?

May God be pleased to speak to your hearts this morning and draw you to Him. If you are outside Christ come to Him in faith this morning, come in repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you name the name of Christ this, may His grace strengthen and sustain you. May God help you to take a stand for Him, that you would be light and darkness to this dark and dying word! Numbers 6:24-26: "*The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: 25 The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: 26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*"

Get your red hymnal and page 118, When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.