Weird - Part 2

# A Weird Way of Thinking

# (Romans 12:1-2)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. We’re in part two of our series entitled “Weird” and this series is important because some of us are unaware that God has called us to be different from the rest of the world. In fact, God has called us to be weird, but some of you have received Christ like an insurance policy, just adding an additional layer of coverage to your life, without realizing that genuine faith includes a necessary element of repentance and life change. You see, as followers of Christ we’re supposed to be different from the world around us, having a different belief system with different values and different morals because we have the power of the risen Christ living inside of us, and yet for many of us we’re stuck in this pattern of normalcy.

You know, for many of us normal is just trying to make it to next month. Normal is broke, struggling from paycheck to paycheck. In our closest relationships, normal is trying to be better or do better; normal is shame, guilt, regret, and divorce. Honestly, you could say normal has let us down; normal has left us empty, unsatisfied and wishing for more, and so I’m just not satisfied with normal. In fact, I believe that God has something so much better than normal for you and me, we have a higher calling; the Lord has called us to come out and be holy.

And yet many of us struggle with the concept of being different, of living as aliens and strangers in the world, because deep in our hearts we’re so drawn to the things of this world. And so, we’re not living with a longing, an anticipation of that coming age when God will make all things new. It’s almost as if we have difficulty believing that the new heavens, that place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us could be any better than this; and yet we must heed the clear warning of Scripture which says:

*"In just a little while, the Coming One will come and not delay. And my righteous ones will live by faith. But I will take no pleasure in anyone who turns away" (Hebrews 10:37-38, NLT).*

And so, we don’t want to be like those who turn away from God to their own destruction, we’re the faithful ones whose souls will be saved.

And here’s the title of my message today, we’re going to be those who have “A Weird Way of Thinking” because we know the Lord’s coming is near. And so, as followers of Christ we’re going to discipline ourselves to say “no” to the things of this world, we’re going to resist the desire to conform and to blend into the culture as if we belonged to this world. And we’re going to take to heart the urging of the apostle Paul in Romans chapter 12 where he said,

*“I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:1-2, NLT).*

In other words, no one knows the day that Christ will come again, and so he urges us to stand out, to be set apart, to change the way we think, because most of us struggle with the desire to fit in, to look like everyone else, just blending in with the crowd. And so, we need to purposefully surrender, giving ourselves to God, knowing his will and allowing him to transform us by changing the way that we think.

In fact, the apostle wrote to Titus, and I’m going to read it from the King James version because I like the way it’s worded. In chapter 2, the Holy Spirit says the grace of God teaches us to deny… *“ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14; KJV).*

And so, Jesus Christ gave himself for us, redeeming us, purifying for himself a peculiar people, a little weird, a chosen and very special people to be his own possession.

In other words, if you’re serious about following Christ you’re going to have to do more than talk the talk, you’re going to have to walk the walk. And so, it’s a weird way of thinking in our culture, but you’re denying yourself, living righteously, always looking for the appearing of Christ, because your goal in life is not to please yourself, but to please God who set you apart for himself. It’s a weird way of thinking, peculiar by today standards, but it’s okay because it’s weird in a God way. Many people won’t understand, but we want to please God and we understand there is a process going on behind the scenes that just can’t be explained.

## 1. Unexplainable

Last week, we saw some bones, some very dry bones, in Ezekiel chapter 37, and we saw the process of a body forming. And so, there was the bones and there was the breath of God and the whole process got started as God commanded Ezekiel to speak the word of God by faith. Instead of thinking this is just too weird, Ezekiel prophesied over those dead bones and God breathed life into them proving that the only limit to God’s potential is our faith.

I wonder today how much we limit what God can do in our lives because of our unwillingness to think or do things that are weird in a God kind of way? You know, the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is living in you and me, and yet I wonder how many times we hinder the process that is going on behind-the-scenes because of our lack of faith or even a lack of imagination? Just like that time when Jesus went to his hometown, among his relatives and his own family, and the Bible says in Mark chapter six, verse five,

*“Because of their unbelief, Jesus couldn't do any mighty miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief” (Mark 6:5-6, NLT).*

You see, we need to be weird, to think differently, a weird way of thinking that doesn’t limit God’s potential. There were the bones and there was the breath of God, but Ezekiel doesn’t limit God, he thinks outside of the box and prophesies as he’d been commanded. Breath entered the bones, they came to life and stood up on their feet.

I wonder how many of us are frustrated, we know there’s something missing, something that we’re only seen dimly as if in a mirror, there’s the potential but we’ll never know what it could’ve been? I believe right here in this place, in this church this morning, that there are a lot of gifts, abilities, and resources that God has put in us, there’s a lot of potential that hasn’t been manifested, because it hasn’t been released. And so, we need to overcome our fear of being different, of being called weird, and open our minds to the unreleased potential within us. We need to begin thinking differently, preparing our minds so that we can see and experience the latter rains. The kingdom of God is coming, the potential is here, but are we ready to see it manifested?

Some of you today, the difficulties that you’ve been going through, they’re not from the enemy, but God is planting them trying to get your mind ready to experience growth. You see, some of you need to have a new way of thinking because God has been working and a lot of the things that you’ve been praying away are exactly what God has sown into you. It’s all part of the process and he’s getting the soil of our mind ready, he’s sowing, planting some seeds, and so we need to begin thinking differently, because the Bible says that he’s…

*“Able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us” (Ephesians 3:20).*

And when God brings an opportunity to a mind that is not prepared, a mind that lacks vision, we might not only spoil the opportunity, but we could also hurt others in the process. And so, we want to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we’re prepared for the unseen process behind-the-scenes and are able to know God’s good pleasing and perfect will. We can’t always understand it, we can’t always explain it, but we’ve got to trust him in the process and let go. You see, it’s in the letting go that you begin the process of revealing the full potential of the situation.

## 2. Revelation

Some of you know what I’m talking about because you’ve had a failure in your life, you’re frustrated, you gave up or you’re about to give up because it seemed like the dream was over. It’s kind of like when Jesus climbed into Peter’s boat as he was washing his nets after fishing all night. Peter hadn’t caught anything, he was tired and frustrated and the Bible says that Jesus told him,

*“Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets” (Luke 5:4-5).*

In spite of his exhaustion and frustration, Peter trusted Jesus and went out into the deep water and in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ he let down his nets. It didn’t make any sense, it was illogical, it was the wrong time of day to be fishing, but faith called Peter to step beyond the voice of reason and to listen to the voice of the Savior. Verse six says,

*“When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break” (Luke 5:6).*

You see, it’s only as Peter opened his hand, in that releasing, that letting go of the nets that he was able realize the potential of following Jesus. It was all part of the process, but first he had to trust Jesus and let go.

I wonder if there is something that you need to release in your life today? Maybe you’ve been worrying about a situation, considering the circumstances, maybe even trying to manipulate something that God wants you to let go. You see, there’s a process going on behind-the-scenes, but it’s not until you let go that you begin the process of revealing the full potential of that situation. Peter let down the nets and they caught such a large number of fish that the nets began to break. Verse seven says that he signaled his partners, James and John,

*“In the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink” (Luke 5:7).*

It didn’t make any sense, they’d been fishing all night and had caught nothing, now they go out in the heat of the day when the fish would have normally gone down to the bottom and they caught a double portion. The harvest was so big that they filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Some of you may be tired, maybe you’re feeling like a failure, like you’re never going to be good enough, like you should be further along, you’ve been working and working but you can’t seem to get ahead. I know it’s a weird way of thinking, but it’s not until you let go and let God transform you that you’re able to begin the process of revealing the full potential within you. Luke tells us in verse eight,

*“When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8).*

Peter recognize that there was something going on behind-the-scenes that was unexplainable. But it was in that process of trusting Jesus, trusting what he said, and letting go that he began to understand the big picture. He recognized he was in the presence of the living God, that he was a sinful man, and he was unworthy of such grace.

Some of you today are going to realize that there’s something you’ve been holding onto, some way of thinking, maybe it’s your expectations or goals of achieving comfort, money, pleasure, and things, maybe it’s a desire for perfection, but whatever it is it’s strangling your potential, diminishing your opportunities, and stealing your harvest. And so, I want to encourage you as the apostle Paul said in Romans chapter 12,

*“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect” (Romans 12:2, NLT).*

This is a weird way of thinking, but God has called us to be holy, peculiar, and set apart. And so, in spite of the pressure to conform, we don’t conform to the patterns of this world, we want our lives to be in stark contrast, we want to be different from the world. We want to let go, trusting God, letting him transform us, and changing the way we think. We’ve got to give this process a little bit of time to bear fruit, a little bit of time to demonstrate its potential, because it will only manifest itself when it has had time to mature.

## 3. Maturity

You know, when you think about Peter, he’s well known because he had enough faith to step out of the boat and walk on the water. But what we often forget is that later when Jesus was arrested, it was Peter who denied him three times. And when Jesus was on the cross, it was John who was there by his side, the same John who stayed in the boat, but we don’t celebrate those who are faithful, there’s little fame for those who stay. And yet, in second Timothy the apostle Paul quoted a saying that was popular in the first century church. He said,

*“If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself” (2 Timothy 2:11-13).*

Jesus nature, his character is faithfulness, and so as we follow his example, we may dislike our environment, it may be uncomfortable, but sometimes we’ve just got to stay, we’ve got to be faithful to our calling and remain planted. Sometimes we’ve got to give the process a little bit of time to demonstrate its potential because it will only manifest itself when it’s had time to mature.

I believe that because of our inability to let what God is doing in our lives grow, because of our impatience, we often don’t give the process time to manifest itself and bear fruit. Sometimes you’ve got to stay, you’ve got to remain faithful even when it gets uncomfortable, it’s a weird way of thinking, but if you don’t stay, you’ll never see the fruit, you’ll never see the potential of what God has planted in you. And so, we’ve got to be faithful, staying where we are, being connected to the vine because Jesus said,

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).*

And so, you’ve got to stay, remain in the vine, giving it a little bit of time, allowing that potential to form, because only God knows how long it’s going to take. But this I know; it’ll take a little bit of time for me to become all that God created me to be because the Bible says,

*“What we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).*

And so, there’s a process, it’s a mystery, but it can only appear if you remain, because it’s got to mature.

As we stay connected to Christ, allowing him to transform us into new people by changing the way that we think we will bear much fruit. And so, it doesn’t matter what everybody else thinks, we’re going to be weird, living different and holy lives, because we know the normal just isn’t working. Our desire is that our roots are deep in Christ, there’s revelation, we’re dwelling in his Word, we’re daily seeking his presence, and we’re maturing because we’re connected to him, because we’re in him, we’re becoming more like him.

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