

God's Remodeling Project
Psalm 130
Ephesians 4:17, 22 – 5:2
8 August 2021 v. website

Over the past **several** years, **makeover** shows have become a television staple. Sometimes it's a **house** that gets renovated... sometimes a **car**... and on some shows it's a **person**. **Whatever** the **object**, over 20 or 30 minutes we viewers **witness** a striking **transformation** brought about through the skillful effort of one or more experts (like Chip and Joanna!)... and, of course, through the magic of TV. A dump becomes a precious country cottage; a junker is turned into a teenager's dream machine; or a klutz becomes a **celebrity's** pretty fair dancing partner. Really, sometimes it's great fun to watch!

Now, you may not realize this, but we don't **have** to turn on a **TV** to see this sort of **transformational** thing occurring. As a matter of fact, we don't have to look any **farther** than the closest mirror. It's not only **other** things and other **people** that have been selected for major makeovers. **We** have, ourselves. This is true! **God** has chosen you and me **both** to **become** new persons... to become like **God**... to grow up into Christlikeness... and to come into eternal life. God has chosen **us** for this "sow's ear to silk **purse**" transformation. And, what's **more** – God is **working** at it right **now**... expertly, skillfully and, sometimes, entertainingly. God is **currently** engaged in bringing about our transformation... through the stirring, subtle and sometimes straightforward working of God's Holy Spirit.

Now, there is a **theological** word to **describe** God's effort: **sanctification**. Sancti – Holy. Holy-fication: our being moved by God toward and into a more **holy** life... a more **whole** existence... our scattered selves being drawn together... our woundedness being healed... life opening **up** rather than closing down for us. **Sanctification** is a five-syllable word for what the Holy One is **doing** by **drawing** us **into** the **life** of Christ... into the **body** of Christ... into the **love** of Christ... into the **way** of Christ. Saint-making. At heart, it is not **our** doing. No, it's **God's** work. It is God's **remodeling project**. We **participate** in it... though always **only** at God's initiative, and certainly with God's help. We **are**, as Paul penned earlier in Ephesians, *God's workmanship*. We are a project underway. And, **as** we are **God's** remodeling project, we have every reason to **hope** that, unlike so many of the projects that **we** start around our homes or at work or at church, **this** one finally

will be completed... exactly as God envisions it! (Although, on **many** days we may have to say to **others**, *Please, be patient! God's **not** finished with me, **yet!***)

Now, someone who's remodeling a **house** might use carpentry, masonry or landscaping to effect a transformation of the property. But how about when it's a **person** who's being remodeled? What are some of the things **God** does to help persons like us become the people God envisions?

Perhaps the most **basic** thing God does is to **show** people **what** God intends for them to **become...** by **introducing** them to **Jesus**. God helps people to become **acquainted** with Christ... to see Christ's beauty and the glory of his life... to sense his compassion and his unwavering trust in God... and to experience the pleasure of his company. Through our study of the **gospels**, our times of **worship**, our experiences of his presence when we're serving Christ or sharing in Christian fellowship, we get a **taste** for our Lord. God creates an **appetite** in us for Christ, an openness to Jesus and to his teaching. We develop a hunger for this living bread, a desire for **more**. And, just as a **child** will **unconsciously** take on the **characteristics** of an adult it admires... walking and talking in the same ways... **we** begin to reflect our **Savior's** qualities, little by little.

Another thing God does to stimulate and further our transformation is turning on the **light** – shining Christ's light upon **us** and on the world around us **so that** we can **see what is true...** and also **discern what is false** and illusory. Realizing the **truth** of God's love and dependability, we are led to live out of a deep and given sense of security. Realizing how unfounded so many of the world's **promises** to us are, we don't fall for them... so readily. We see, in light of Christ, that if we **aim** to save **ourselves**, we'll only lose ourselves. We see that by **giving** our lives we **actually** receive our lives. And **seeing** things... in this Christ-illuminated way... **changes** how we **act** and how we are.

Then, too, to spur us on in our renovation, God's **directs** us in **specific** things we need to **do** to be living in the way of Christ. **And** God draws out our **cooperation**. Through Paul, God teaches that a Christ-like life **involves** certain **things**, like:

Speaking the truth, in love, the way that Jesus always did.

Giving to the needy.

Instead of taking **advantage** of others, we offer **others** an advantage.

Building **up** others, not putting them down.

Putting away our anger and malice... and forgiving others as God has forgiven us.

Imitating God.

God **directs** us to conform our **mind** to the mind of **Christ**... **our** actions to this **pattern**. And the more we **do** these things... the more we **follow** God's direction... the **better** it feels. And the better it feels, the more we do it. Or, rather, the more **God** does in us. As we cooperate with **God**, God's renovating power **works**. **Sometimes** it works **miracles**... within our lives!

*Lord, the **old** disciple prayed, I am not the person you **want** me to be. But, neither am I the person I **used** to be. And, I'm **definitely** not the person I'm **going** to be when you get through with me! Thank you, Jesus, for helping me to be on your way.*

Now on **television**, of course, we see **amazing** transformations wrought in **less** than half an hour. **Our** remodeling into Christ-like people generally requires something **more** than thirty minutes. More than thirty years, in fact. It's the work of a lifetime... or maybe the work of **eternity**! Whatever the case, it is **God's** work! **Remember** that! It is the **eternal** God who is our dwelling place. God is our forever faithful friend.

So, please, friends, don't give up and don't give in! Don't let yourselves become discouraged... or disdainful of others as they sometimes struggle with the effort. It is a big job, a heavy lift. But God can handle it. God, and only God, can. So, stick **with** God. Trust the Lord and stay on his way. Be gentle with yourselves, and particularly with others. And be **responsive** to God's engagement with you, to the stirring of the Spirit and the living Word's good counsel. God truly is an **expert**... a master craftsman... skilled with both making and re-making people, inside and out. And it is absolutely **certain** that, when God finally **ceases** working upon **you**, God is going to look at you with immense pride and say, *That's it! You are **exactly** what I've intended all along. Just perfect!* God **might** even say, *Hooray – we did it!* But you – **being** perfectly formed in Christ – will **know** that it was **God's** work all **along**.

You are God's work... now, and for all eternity; by the grace and the good favor of Jesus Christ our Lord.