Conformed To His Image
Romans 8:28-30

Objective: Help folks appreciate what is involved in being conformed to the image of Christ.

Reading: Romans 8:18-30.

Memory: Romans 8:29, "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,"

Introduction:
1. Most of us dislike change. I get comfortable with my old jeans, my old jacket, my old ways of doing things. We are all capable of changing, if we see the need and the benefit. Even a 90 year old Bass fisherman can and will change if you show him a better way of catching fish.
2. Some change is good. Some change is absolutely essential. Change is essential to our Christianity. We need undergo change in being conformed to Christ-like-ness. (WHAT?)

The Apostle makes it clear that God chose for His people to become like His Son, so that Jesus would be the “firstborn” among many. The Apostle identifies In verse 30, elements of a process by which we are changed to become the very image of Christ. God does these things, but they involve us. Our willingness, desire and participation. And they are all painful. Like any other beneficial change or transformation, being conformed to the image of Christ involves a certain amount of

I. Suffering.
A. This is a necessary, even desirable part.
   1. To build muscles, do painful pushups. To be transformed into a runner, work until lungs burst.
   2. Without suffering, positive changes do not take place. Romans 8:15-17, “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”
B. Even Christ was made ready through suffering.
   1. Hebrews 2:10, “In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.”
   2. His suffering especially qualified Him. To lead us. To join us. Like a guy who enters the burning building and joins the people in order to lead them to safety.
C. The right kind of suffering is necessary.
   1. Suffering that is brought on by one’s own evil or rebelliousness may not serve the purpose.
   2. For your efforts at Christian growth to change you, they must cost you something. Like the discomfort of going out of your way to help others. Serving god-causes, unselfish love causes that cost you something in time, money, energy, emotions.
   3. Things like adopting a child. Giving up a leisure time to clean the building. Taking time to genuinely listen to someone. Time to read and reflect on His Word.
   4. It is specifically HIS sufferings we need to share. Romans 8:17, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Doing the things His nature would do so we grow to be like Him. What sufferings of His do you really share in? Things that cost you somehow?

In order for one to be conformed to the image of God’s Son and thus be saved, one must be…

II. Called. (ἐκαλεσεν) Romans 8:28, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
A. Who are the “called”?
   1. Romans 8:29, “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son,
   2. The category of “Christ”, is foreknown, rather than the individual. Anybody who answers and proceeds with the transformation.
3. Consider concept of “predestined”.
4. Ephesians 1:4-5, “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will –“
5. Category of “in him” is what was predestined. Those in Christ are the chosen!
   a. Cf. Red bus is headed north. Yellow is headed south. Which one are you going to be on?
   b. Winner of World series is already fixed too! Whoever wins 4 out of 7 games!

B. Being “called” involves a response.
1. To call is to invite, summon. To say “I’m coming” doesn’t mean you are, you must keep coming.
2. Matthew 22:14, “For many are invited, but few are chosen.” Because many don’t follow.
3. Romans 8:28, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Specifically in mind here are those who have responded to the invitation to fulfill God’s purpose. Specifically here, an invitation to partake in a divine blessing, to be conformed to the image of God’s son. (Even through suffering)
4. It takes effort to answer the call when the Master says “follow Me.”
   a. Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”
   b. Matthew 11:12, “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.”
5. Don’t coast along. Get up and follow. Apply yourself! Engage in the fight. Are you coming??!!

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III. Justified, (εδικαιωσεν) Romans 8:30, “… those he called, he also justified;…

A. Given a status of approval.
1. Given a status of “okay”, “accepted by God”. You can never do enough to earn this status.
2. Romans 4:25, “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Passive case: you are “justified” by another and given a status of “righteous”.
3. Acquitted from guilt because Christ paid our debt.
4. Thus no accusation can legitimately be made against you by Satan!
5. He has paid the price to clean us from guilt so that the Spirit of God and live and abide within us.
6. For another to pay for our justification requires grace. “Though my sins were as scarlet, HE has washed them away.”
7. Titus 3:4-7, “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

B. His justification does have requirements.
1. One must be “in Christ”. Romans 8:1, “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus…” We are placed “in Christ” when we are obedient to the Gospel and when we make the appeal to Him in baptism. Stay in Him by the obedience of faith.
2. Requires genuine repentance. If one knowingly, willingly continues in sin they are not “in Christ”.
3. Requires that the spirit of Christ abides in you. Romans 8:9, “You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” Actively, aggressively doing the things Jesus would do. Not in order to earn salvation, but because you are following His Spirit. You are “in Him”!!

In order for one to be conformed to the image of God’s Son and thus be saved, one must be…

IV. Glorified, (εδοξασεν) Romans 8:30, “… those he justified, he also glorified.

A. Concept of being given high honor.
1. Honor resulting from a good opinion. Now esteemed by God and welcomed into fellowship with Him. To be adopted as His children. God transforms us into something higher and exalted.
Better than we were; So much so that we are now children of God.

2. These souls are different now; gloriously changed. Just look at them; the very image of Christ. Noble, loving, self-controlled. Holy and pure in body, soul and mind.

3. Romans 3:23-24, “…for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” None of us can measure up to the glory of God. But in Christ, He elevates us with new godliness.

B. Glory involves the power of the resurrection.

1. Romans 8:11, “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”

2. Standing in circle of men at Camp Hunt: what a bunch of ugly men – until you look at their hearts, then how beautiful and glorious they are!! Those ugly, homely mortal bodies now have life in them. You could “see” the love, honor, the glory of Christ in them. This didn’t happen by accident. It involved their personal sufferings in becoming like Christ. Suffering and struggling to refrain from any and all sin. The willingness and desire to serve the cause of truth and righteousness and soul salvation. They had been life. A “make-over”. They were “glorious”.

3. Philippians 3:10-11, “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.” They had been changed by stepping out and coming to know Christ by fellowship in sharing the sufferings of Christ. These men were changed because they had actively engaged in the things Christ would do.

C. It has been done, but there is more to come!

1. Right now we have “firstfruits” of the spirit. Romans 8:22-23, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.” Do you feel the straining? The energy? The changing force? There is more coming.

2. 1 John 3:2, “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and 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.” What will we be like? We have already been glorified, but more is to come.

3. Christ is the firstborn from the dead of all creation. This completes the glory of God that was laid out for Adam but not attained because of sin. It is now completed in Christ and available to all who continue to be conformed to His image.

So What?

Called, justified, glorified. These describe a most wonderful change Christians go through to become children of God. Change involves pain and suffering. Call them “growing pains”, but you cannot grow in Christ without change. We need to be ready and willing to suffer to be conformed to the image of Christ. “…we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

Closing Prayer:
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Romans 8:28-30

Reading: Romans 8:18-30  Memory: Romans 8:29
“F_t_G_f_h_a_p_t_b_c_t_t_l_o_h_S_,”

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Elements of a process by which we are changed to become the very image of Christ.

I. Suffering.
A. This is a necessary, even desirable part.
Romans 8:15-17

B. Even Christ was made ready through suffering.
Hebrews 2:10

C. The right kind of suffering is necessary.
Romans 8:17

II. Called.
A. Who are the “called”?
Romans 8:29  Ephesians 1:4-5

B. Being “called” involves a response.
Matthew 22:14  Romans 8:28  Matthew 7:13-14  Matthew 11:12

III. Justified.
A. Given a status of approval.
Romans 4:25  Titus 3:4-7

B. His justification does have requirements.
Romans 8:1  Romans 8:9

IV. Glorified.
A. Concept of being given high honor.
Romans 3:23-24

B. Glory involves the power of the resurrection.
Romans 8:11  Philippians 3:10-11

C. It has been done, but there is more to come!
Romans 8:22-23  1 John 3:2

So What?
We need to be ready and willing to suffer to be conformed to the image of Christ.