

Sacredly Written Sermon Notes

Capturing Heaven's Downloads, One Message at a Time

Rock City Church | Pastor Darius | August 24, 2025

Message Title: "Why Am I Not Changing"

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Scripture Focus

Matthew 13:19–23 (NLT)

“**19** The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don’t understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts. **20** The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. **21** But since they don’t have deep roots, they don’t last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God’s word. **22** The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God’s word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no fruit is produced. **23** The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!”

Sermon Summary

True transformation isn't about performance—it's about submission.

Pastor Darius reminds us that salvation and transformation are not the same, and that real, lasting change requires examining our heart condition, breaking cycles rooted in shame, and seeing ourselves through God's eyes—not the distorted lens of past pain or external pressure.

The Core Question We're All Wrestling With

One of the greatest issues in the body of Christ is that we seek God for *real answers* while lacking the courage to ask God *real questions*.

- Everyone wrestles with the same core questions at some point:
 - Who am I?
 - Why am I here?
 - What is my purpose?
 - What happens after I die?

The church has taught us how to seek answers—but not how to seek God *with* our questions. And that's where breakthrough really begins.

Answers will give you a **breakthrough**,
Questions will show you how to **become** a breakthrough.

The haunting question many of us are too scared to say out loud:
“**Why am I not changing?**”

Saved vs. Changed

- Thousands get *saved*, but only a few actually *change*.
- It's one thing for Jesus to *save* you...
It's another thing for Jesus to *change* you.

If you let Him, Jesus will give you a taste of heaven *while* you're still living on Earth.

We know how to praise God as:

- Healer
 - Provider
 - Deliverer
 - Keeper
- But how often do we celebrate that Jesus is a Change Specialist?
- If everything in your life was already perfect... why would you need God?

- Jesus doesn't come just to adjust your behavior—He comes to transform your heart.

Spiritual facelift ≠ Heart transplant

“When was the last time you shouted because God gave you a clean heart?”

Duality – The Saved You vs. The Sick You

Romans 7:19 (NLT) – “I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.”

- Every single one of us has two natures:
 - The saved version of us
 - The sick version of us

And too often, the sick version is the one driving the car.

The Frustration Gap:

You know better, and you even want better...

But somehow, you still don't do better.

It's Not About Trying Harder

Just praying louder, trying harder, or serving more won't change your life.

If **willpower** alone was enough—you would've changed by now.

- Lasting change doesn't come from behavior modification—it comes from **heart transformation**.
 - Jesus isn't the king of habits—He's the King of Hearts.
 - He's not interested in a spiritual facelift. He wants a full *heart transplant*.

“When's the last time you shouted over God giving you a clean heart?”

- Your heart might be healed... or just **hardened**.
- True change happens *from the inside out*, not the outside in.

Heart Work > Hard Work

- God wants to do more than fix your *morals*. He wants to change you.
- A lot of us are doing good things with old hearts.
- Some people are praying... and still agitated afterward.
 - Why? Because they're praying from a wounded heart.
 - Sometimes your prayers are *witchcraft prayers*—begging God for *your* will, not *His*.

1 Samuel 16:7 – “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

The Transformation Toolkit

5 Stages of Spiritual Formation

(Feed » Foundation » Frame » Function » Fruit)

1. Feed – What’s feeding you?

- Whatever you feed the most will **lead** the most.
- Change doesn’t start with your **function**, it starts with your **intake**.
- Most of us try to change by adjusting habits—not addressing what’s feeding our soul.
- You spend more time on your social media **feed** than feeding your **spirit**.

“Jesus didn’t come to make bad people good—He came to make dead people live.”

Start your day with God, and you won’t have to wrestle as hard in the middle of it.

2. Foundation – What are you standing on?

- What you feed begins to shape your **foundation**—your beliefs and identity.
- Before God **fills**, He **forms**.
- You don’t really know how strong your foundation is... until the storm comes.

Only the immature need a crisis to stay committed.

“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness...”

3. Frame – How are you seeing it?

- The way you **frame** a thing determines how you **fight**.
- You could be asking God for something that’s already there—you just don’t see it right.
- Sometimes, it’s not your situation—it’s your **perception**.

Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

“God, whatever makes me feel awkward in this season... I declare will be an **asset** in the next.”

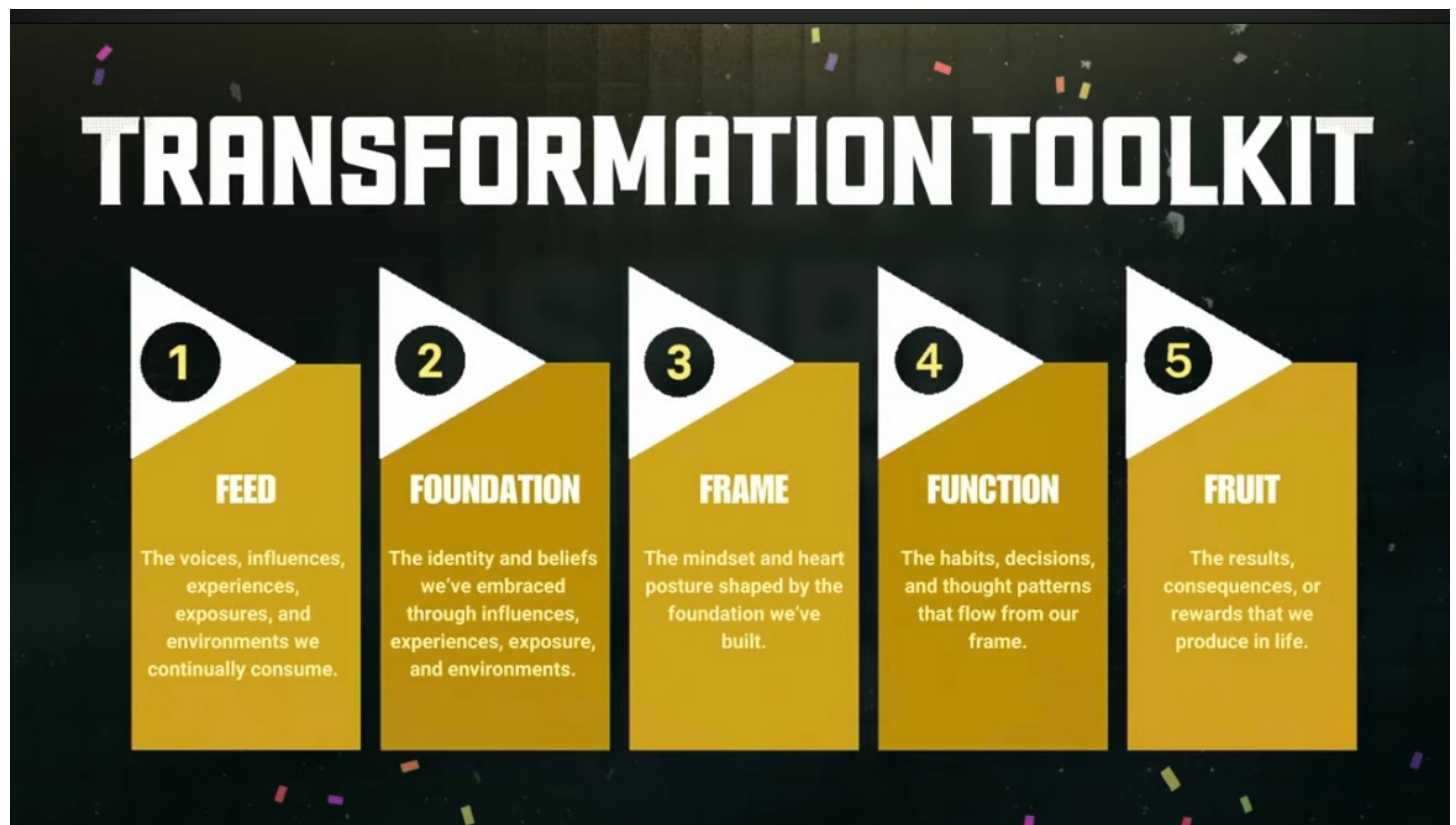
4. Function – How is your heart behaving?

- Dysfunction on the surface is often tied to brokenness **underneath**.
- Some people are quick to judge your badness, while ignoring your brokenness.
- Jesus didn’t just come to forgive the act—He came to **heal the wound**.

5. Fruit – What are you producing? Right function produces right fruit.

- Some of us are **serving the right God...** but producing **wrong fruit**.
- Real fruit is not just about being visible—it’s about being **right**.

Matthew 13:22 – “The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.”



The 4 Heart Conditions

Matthew 13:19–23 – The Parable of the Sower

1. Suppressed Heart

- This heart hears the word, but doesn't **hold** it.
- We either *stuff* our issues or *spill* our issues.
- Some of us think we're healed—but we're just **hardened**.
- Unforgiveness, bitterness, offense, and insecurity give the enemy **legal access** to your heart.
- Hears the Word but doesn't hold it.
- Stuffed vs Spilled: You either stuff issues down or spill them all over.
- A *stuffed heart* = an *unexpressed heart*.
- You may *think* your heart is healed—but it's actually *hard*.
 - The Word can't get in. The enemy doesn't even have to fight—it already can't take root.
- Bitterness, unforgiveness, insecurity = legal access for the enemy.

2. Stony Heart

- Gets excited by the word but never gets *established* in it.
- An *emotional encounter* ≠ a *spiritual experience*
- Some of us are still carrying:
 - Betrayal
 - Rejection
 - Disappointment

Jesus didn't remove His own stone—He sent people to help.

Sometimes God sends divine partners to remove what you **can't** remove yourself.

- You can't ignore **delayed grief** forever—it will deal with you eventually.
- The enemy is waiting to expose what you won't heal privately.

John 11 – Before Jesus called Lazarus out, He thanked God in advance.

Breakthrough often requires a *pre-praise*.

3. Sick Heart

- Emotionally tied to idols.
- A sick heart says yes to **God** and yes to **everything else**, too.
- Sometimes a *blessing* in one season becomes an *idol* in the next.
- Your loyalty is **divided** between God and the weight of worry or wealth.

Not a dead heart—just surrounded by thorns.

“God, forgive me for asking you to remove something you graced me to remove myself.”

4. Submitted Heart

Matthew 13:23 – “But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

- A submitted heart:
 - Welcomes the word
 - Works the word
 - Watches the word bear fruit

It wasn't nails that kept Jesus on the cross—it was **submission**.

Submission is the **gap** between your *calling* and your *completion*.

Ask yourself:

“What areas of my heart have I not fully submitted to God?”

David vs Saul – Heart Recovery

King Saul was arguably more *moral* than David.

- Saul disobeyed God, consulted people he was warned not to, and lost the throne.
- David? Slept with a married woman, had her husband killed, lost the baby... and *nearly lost his mind* until the prophet Nathan called him out.

The difference? **How they recovered from their fall.**

- Saul *hardened* his heart and ignored God.
- David *repented* and ran back to God.

God says: “*I can use someone who is not perfect—but I can't use someone I can't trust.*”

- Can God trust you to run back to Him in both success *and* failure?

Highlights

- Principles are not enough. You need *power*.
- Church is where you're fed, formed, and freed.
- Don't become a spectator. Be a *participator*.
- Sometimes the greatest sermon someone will ever see... is your life.
- We become what we consume. If we're constantly feeding our mind negativity, comparison, fear, gossip, or just straight-up nonsense—it's going to reflect in our decisions, emotions, and patterns. What's feeding you is forming you. And if we want to be transformed, we've got to check our diet.
 - Conviction hit: You can't expect spiritual transformation with a carnal appetite.
- Our identity is shaped by what we've been exposed to—our upbringing, our culture, our trauma, our wins, our losses. But not everything we were taught or told is true. Some of us have been trying to live a free life with a broken foundation. That cracked foundation can't support the weight of who you're becoming.
 - Reflection moment: Just because it's familiar doesn't mean it's functional.
- The frame is our mindset and heart posture. If your foundation is broken, your frame (aka your perspective) will be off too. You'll misread situations. Mislabel people. Minimize yourself. Maximize others. The frame we operate from determines how we interpret what we experience.
 - Reminder: A wrong frame will keep you seeing yourself through trauma-colored glasses.
- Your patterns flow from your perspective. We make decisions, build habits, and repeat cycles based on how we see things. This hit hard: you don't need more discipline—you need transformation at the root. If you don't fix the frame, you'll keep functioning in dysfunction and calling it personality.
 - Ouch but true: Consistency without clarity will still have you stuck.
- This is the evidence check. The results don't lie. If you don't like the fruit in your life—your relationships, your habits, your mood, your progress—it's time to go back and check what you're feeding, what you're building on, and how you're seeing it all.
 - Revelation: You can't fake fruit. What's showing is what's growing.
- Sometimes, the reason we're not changing isn't because we're lazy or undisciplined... it's because we're trying to build something new on an old, unexamined foundation.
- Time to go back to the blueprint. Feed truth. Lay the right foundation. Reframe with faith. Function from freedom. And let the fruit speak.

Reflection Questions

1. What am I feeding my soul daily—and is it really fueling the version of me I’m trying to become?
2. Have I been settling for behavior modification when God is calling me to heart transformation?
3. In what ways have I been trying to “pray louder, serve more, or try harder” instead of truly surrendering?
4. What part of my heart is still hard—and have I mistaken healing for hiding?
5. Where in my life do I have a stone that I’ve been too proud, scared, or numb to move?
6. Have I been functioning out of brokenness that I keep masking as busyness, ministry, or personality?
7. Am I lowering the standard of Christianity to just “being a good person” instead of letting God make me new?
8. Do I have unprocessed grief, rejection, or betrayal still sitting in my heart waiting to be healed?
9. Have I made idols out of things God once gave me as blessings?
10. Which condition of the heart (Suppressed, Stony, Sick, or Submitted) am I operating from in this current season—and why?
11. Can God trust me through success and failure, or do I only run to Him when things fall apart?
12. What thorny thoughts or divided loyalties are choking the Word out of my life right now?
13. Do I truly believe Jesus came to give me life, not just better habits—and am I living like it?
14. Have I become a spectator in church or life when God is calling me to be an active participator in my own transformation?
15. If transformation starts with awareness—what is God trying to make me aware of today that I’ve been avoiding?

Personal Reflection

This gave me language for what I’ve been trying to pour into someone *else*. You ever hear a word and immediately think, “I wish she could hear this”? That’s exactly how I felt. Because this wasn’t just a message for *my* growth—it was a reminder that I’ve got a responsibility to speak life into others too.

Pastor Darius pulled back the curtain on something that I know she’s been silently battling: the frustration of being stuck. Praying, journaling, trying—yet still feeling like

change isn't happening. And the thing that hit the hardest? That line: **"Salvation isn't the same as transformation."** Baby, that'll preach. I realized this is exactly what I've been trying to tell her. You can love God, be in church, serve faithfully... and still be stuck in a cycle because your heart hasn't fully surrendered.

It's not that she isn't trying. I see her trying. I see the tiredness in her eyes and the weight she carries. But this sermon helped me understand that real change—the kind that lasts—doesn't come from doing more. It comes from *submitting* more. From *surrendering* the parts we've kept hidden. From letting God clean out what we've gotten used to hiding behind strength.

What I'd say to her now? Girl, you have to break the cycle. Not with more hustle, but with more healing. You have to *see yourself through God's eyes*—not shame's. You've been trying to *function* without checking your *feed*. And it's time to go back to the root. Back to the heart.

God's not asking for your perfection. He's asking for your heart. Let's give Him that—together.