

## **Transformation & Resurrection**

### **Some thoughts on the readings for the day**

**Sunday 10 June 2007**

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Transformation: For some, a word with good associations & positive experiences  
For some, a word with bad associations & negative experiences

Transformation of Individual People:

Behaviour changes, personal issues, growth as a person, new skills in our work or professional life, change of bad driving habits (perhaps near-miss / witnessed terrible accident), Alcoholics Anon.

Transformation of Societies:

Political changes over a period of time; industrial Revolution; technological and informational revolutions today; South Africa, from being on the brink of civil war and breakdown, even economic meltdown...

What causes or brings about transformation?

Need  
Health / safety  
Own interest  
Law

A higher goal / a high end in mind / an overarching value or life changing encounter

Athens: 2004 Olympics – prestige, pride; yet until a year before, much doubt; bickering; yet transformed the city in ways unrecognisable ten years before and held an event considered globally to be one of the most successful ever; citizens united behind “a higher goal”

Beijing: 2008 Olympics – Trying to change some old Chinese habits of widespread hooting and of spitting on the pavement; New law came into effect on Friday 1 June. Highly disciplined nation; good drivers; courteous people. But these old habits, part of the culture, are beginning to change – and change was immediately noticeable on the day the new laws came into effect

Faith:

Transformation from being enslaved in sinful, selfish ways  
Re-made, more in tune with God’s design for humanity; becoming more fully human, as God intended rather than remaining in the ways that sinfulness has marred our humanity

Changed – Christlikeness

Two of our readings today deal with the raising of a person from death.

- **OT – 1 Kings 17:**  
Elijah, an extraordinary servant of God – through his prayers, the widow's son was raised
- **Gospel – Luke 7:**  
A story of resurrection from the dead
  - Jesus – part of his ministry
  - Resurrection not only for Jesus (yet to come) but for all
  - Widow's son – very important, caring
  - Yet why not many more?
  - (Same question with regard to healings...)
  - But points to Jesus as life-giver, the one with power of life
  - Jesus' resurrection (which followed later), points to ours
  - For ultimately, all of us will die physically, as intended

Those who WERE healed / raised from dead, needed no proof!  
Amazing transformation

Paul's transformation – **Galatians 1: 11-24:**

- A written testimony of his transformation
- Based on an in-your-face encounter with Jesus, whose followers he had previously persecuted

Total, radical change

A resurrection, of sorts – until the true resurrection yet to come

Direct encounter with God in Jesus – who asked why Paul was persecuting him / his followers; God had other plans for Paul

Travelled, including spending 3 years in Damascus (mentioned there but minimal detail); NOT a quick-fix or instant-coffee scenario, but a period of first being immersed in the things of God and the good news of Jesus Christ, which enabled him to take a pivotal role in early Christianity as he did later on

**Today's Psalm** speaks of God the restorer, raising the poor from the dust and lifting the needy

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The same God who had power to resurrect a dead person, and who had power to resurrect Jesus, is able to effect change in us, and in our society

Examples everywhere – in great leaders, the example of Paul in today's NT reading  
Abolition of slavery – Christian people at the heart of it; true activists;  
Child labour, various forms of social and political oppression

In cities where God's people have prayed...

Transformation Project in gang-ridden city of Cali, Colombia – prayer, justice, reconciliation of people and churches, concerted combined action – significant reduction in crime including drug gang-related violence and the positive transformation of the lives of individuals

**Concluding comments (elaborate):**

Some changes – legislated

Some changes – externally imposed, or internally driven

Some changes come about for necessity, own reasons

But ultimately, esp. if for good, driven by the power of God

The transforming power of God at work in people's lives following encounter / submission of our lives to God, acknowledging a "Higher Power" or authority than ourselves

"Higher Purpose" – Knowing God, a sense of personal involvement rather than distant acquaintance or vague connection