

## What's New

*A world where things are not as they seem...* The history of Transformers begins in 1984, as Hasbro releases the very first robot-to-vehicle figures. Also first animated TV series hit the airwaves and kids could read about them too as Marvel Comics published the very first transformers comic book. Transformers become a favorite of young children in the 1980s, children who are young adults as the Transformer Movie hit the big screen in 2007. Though the story line remained the same, many of these now young adults were surprised to realize that "transformers" were not at they remembered them.

A man, in a day and time when the choices in life were few, when expectations were set before your birth and life for most was predictable to say the least, a man sensed God has something else in store. What this something else was – was very unclear. Yet the sense of God's call was strong enough to turn this man's life and behaviors upside down.

When my girls were young, one of the favorite Sunday School starting songs was "Father Abraham". Father Abraham had many sons, many sons had Father Abraham, I am one of them and so are you, so let's just praise the Lord.... The life which Abram lived was so well known that it was hard for them to imagine that what he did, what God called him to do, was unexpected, unacceptable, and radical.

Radical was the sense one young man, of the transformer generation, named the change which hit him as he watched the 2007 movie. In his mind transformers were vehicles which became robots. This was the way he had played with his toys, which with his help transformed from car to robot. This was the way he understood transformers to be, yet in the movie, the reality was vastly different. Transformers were robots, living mechanical and metal beings, which could take on the shape of a vehicle to avoid detection when visiting our "human world".

Just as Abraham is known as "father" though for most of his life he was not, the disciple Matthew is universally known as "the tax collector" though that was his occupation for only a fraction of his life. Tax collector was the way that Matthew fit into the world, before being transformed through experiencing God in Jesus the Christ. He was born as a child of God, a son of Abraham long before he entered into tax collecting in his adult life.

A father who spend most of his life childless, a man who is remembered and identified by the way he made his livelihood for a short time, non-human living beings who take on the shape of ordinary vehicles ... tossed in with a girl who died before she really lived, then lived again a life little if anything is known about and a woman who is so strongly identified by her dis-ease that her name is never spoken. What do they have in common, and more importantly what do they have to tell us about God's will and way for our lives today? Transformation – no changing or improving or being the best one can be but transformation – each speaks to the possibility and understanding of what it means when we, the Christian Church, speaks of the transforming power of God through Jesus Christ. The Greek and Hebrew words often translated into the English word "transform" is closest to metamorphosis, which means "a profound change in form or complete change of form". In Scripture the disciple is called to be transformed, to learn to think and act in ways that the world cannot teach us.

In a number of places Paul writes of being transformed by the renewal of our minds. That means, fundamentally, that we must be willing to change. Those are our only choices—conformity or transformation. Remember, this call is to Christians. When we first begin our walk of discipleship, we haven't been transformed very much from our worldliness. When we've been walking for years, we still have a lot of transformation to do. All Christians are called to grow, to be transformed more and more into the image of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). God does the transforming. We either resist or cooperate. So by giving ourselves, body and mind, to God, we're transformed. God does the transforming, but we cooperate by immersing ourselves in the Word of God, by lifting up prayer continually in the name of Jesus, by being willing to change our thoughts and actions. When we do, we begin to see the world as it really is, and to find "the depth of the riches and wisdom of the knowledge of God" (Rom. 11:33). Then we begin to know and do the will of God, and to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

We begin to be transformed, changed more and more into the image of Christ, of life lived as God designed and desired. It seems simple enough, yet the church universal seems to show little evidence of transformation and many who attend find it hard to comprehend, much less desire, that they might truly be made into something totally different.

That is where I find clarity in the stories shared today, those from our Scripture readings and the story of the transformed transformer fan. Though Abraham spent most of his life childless, father was who God designed him. Though the world stills sees Matthew as a tax collector, God created him as a child of God. The children's toys Transformers, are not cars which become – they have been seen as cars to the world yet are and were always much more. Their true nature, their true identify is not in the vehicle they mimic to fit into the world, their true nature is that living mechanical and metal being. The child was not the one who died, but the one who returned to life, as the call of Jesus and the woman – the woman is not remembered because of her disease but because of the faith which was the foundation for her action, for her reaching for that which the world called untouchable.

We are not to be transformed into something that is alien and does away with our natural selves, we are to be transformed, re-formed, into that which God created and creates us to be. Transformation is not the loss of self, it is the discovery of true self. That is why it is worth seeking from God. That is why it is worth giving up the identity that we have found in the world.