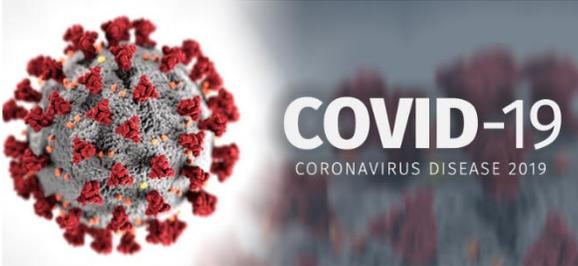


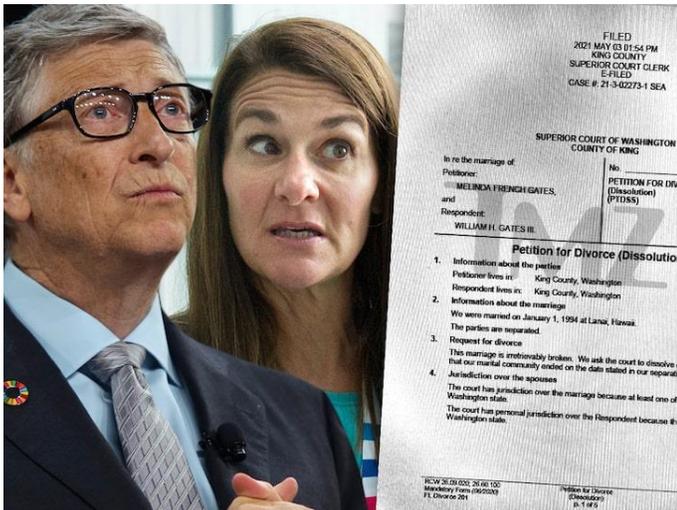
To the Servants of the Most High God at Topeka, Kansas
May 30, 2021

Be Not Conformed to This World - Romans 12:1-2



Beloved, I have a few opening remarks this morning about the *signs of the times* (Mat. 16:3) before I get to my sermon. We have been preaching about the COVID-19 plague for more than a year now. This global pestilence from God marches on. There have been about 170,000,000

cases of COVID-19 worldwide and 3.5 million deaths. These things are no accident and there is no such thing as collateral damage. They happened at the express decree and commandment of the *Great and Terrible God* (Ne. 1:5). To date, the United States has had 33,000,000 cases and about 600,000 deaths. In the past year, I have not heard near as much talk about “God loving everyone” as in previous years. It seems inconsistent when there is so much death. The inconvenient truth is that God appointed and is solely responsible for this plague. If you deny that the COVID-19 plague came from God, you deny His absolute sovereignty. Deut. 28:58 *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; 59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful (extraordinary), and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. 60 Moreover He will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee.*



- According to *Forbes* magazine, Bill Gates is the fourth wealthiest person in the world. His fortune is north of \$124 billion. It is a staggering amount of money. That is more money than the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 153 countries including Cuba, Morocco, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Costa Rica and many more. What does \$124 billion buy you? It buys you 4,000,000 cars at \$30,000 each or 600,000 houses at \$200,000 each. It will buy you your own island. In 2012 a

billionaire purchased the 6th largest island in Hawaii – Lanai, for only \$500,000,000. If you saved \$100,000 a year it would take you more than 1 million years to save \$124 billion. Here is what it will not buy you. It will not buy you one single drop of water in hell (Luke 16:24). And, no matter what the Catholic church will tell you, it will not truly buy you the right to put away your wife or husband and it will not cover the violence done to your oath to God when you deal treacherously with her. *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder* (Mat. 19:6). After 27 years, Bill and Melinda Gates announced they are ending their marriage saying *we no longer believe we can grow together as a couple*. He purportedly told his golf buddies that his marriage is “**loveless.**” That is an interesting choice of words. What do you mean it is “loveless?” And, by the way, what do you mean you have “golf buddies.” Your wife is your “golf buddy.”



Mr. Gates, you have a non-delegable duty and responsibility to God to *love your wife*. *Husbands, love your wives* (Eph. 5:25 and Col. 3:19). And the wife has a duty to love her husband (Titus 2:4). Mr. Gates, you made an oath to God to do this. You have made shipwreck of your house (1 Tim. 1:19). You and you alone are responsible for that mess, carnage, and catastrophe. Mr. Gates you purportedly said that the marriage has been

over for some time and that you are living a separate life from your wife. 1 Tim 6:9 *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* I am afraid Mr. Gates, that it is your money you are in love with and not your wife. You built your house upon sand (Mat. 7:26). And do not think for a moment that your matching pair of Presidential Medals of Freedom from President Obama is going to resurrect that ship; or that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is going to land you in heaven. That is not the sacrifice God wants from you. You cannot buy your way into heaven Mr. Gates and you cannot take your money with you. 1 Tim. 6:7 *For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.* All your money, fame and philanthropy are worthless to you in the next life. You have nothing

except what the Lord your God loaned you and you should have used it all in service to Him.

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Mat. 7:13 *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* I think a lot about this verse from the Lord Jesus Christ. If your expectation is that God or Christ owes you salvation and the Kingdom of God, think again. If you think you are entitled to heaven, you should reread these verses. If you are looking for an easy way to heaven or for a shortcut where you can “slide in” somehow unawares you are mistaken. In the game *Candyland* you can land on some squares and you slide over some squares. Heaven does not work like that. I often run at a park that has a lot of hilly trails in dense forests. I have noticed over months and years of running there, that there is a phenomenon that occurs. On nice days, the parking lot of the park is full and there are a lot of people in the park. But, on days when it has been raining or the weather is poor, like it has been of late, there is no one there. Most days like this, the parking lot is completely empty – not a single car. It is a very eerie feeling. Let me tell you why there are no people there. There are no people there because when it rains - every step you take is difficult. It is all mud all the time. There are no good places to step. The paths are strait (a narrow space or passage; a situation of perplexity or distress; causing distress, difficult; limited as to means or resources; strict, rigorous; narrow; limited in space or time; closely fitting; constricted, tight.) The trail is a couple feet wide and usually slanted (on an angle). You never have good footing – your feet slide wherever you put them. Within a few minutes, your feet are soaking wet and your shoes and legs are covered in mud. It is not comfortable. If you run there you are going to get dirty, because you are on a strait and narrow path. There is no mistaking it. It is the hard way. I know and understand what I am getting into when I go there in those conditions. That is precisely the path the Lord puts us on. The Lord is going to test us on this path. The path itself selects out the weak, timid, fearful, uncommitted and faithless. We cannot be these things and please God. Psalm 26:1-2 *Judge me O LORD... Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.* You are going to get dirty on this path and you are going to be proved. This is the way. This is how it is done. Rev. 7: 13 *And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* When I go to that park, I know I cannot

coast. We should not be coasting on this path either. You should be carrying your own load. We prepare and train for the hard days. When we fall over and get stuck what is the plan? Who are we going to get counsel from? How fast are we going to get to the Lord about it? Yes, we have a duty to help each other, but no one is going to carry you over the finish line and you should not expect it. Listen to me, the Bible is littered with people that did not make it to the finish line (Gehazi, Cain, Judas, Alexander the Coppersmith, Demas, Akan, Baalam, Cozbi, Ananias, Sapphira, Joab, King Saul and so many more). There are a lot of fair-weather people in this world that will wake up in hell, because they were never on the strait and narrow path. But, you however know exactly where you are and we should be prepared and planning ahead and be committed to this path of trials and testings. That is what we have signed up for. This is not a surprise. Phil. 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for His sake.* This is the contract. There is a mutual agreement between the parties, that this will not be an easy way. We all have to train our minds to be resilient and to expect the chastening as from the Lord and not given in to the flesh.

When you run, to get faster, you do interval work. It is fast running that is done for short periods of time, like 12 x 400's on the track, done at much faster times than you can normally run for any substantial length of time. They are painful, but necessary if you want to improve your times. You should not do back-to-back days of intervals. The "magic" of intervals does not happen when you run the interval. The "magic" happens the next day when the body recovers and repairs itself and gets stronger and faster and more efficient. The spiritual "magic" happens on the strait and narrow path when we have faith and understand that every single thing that happens on this path is appointed to you by God Almighty for your highest and best good and that you accept it without murmuring and whining and wearing out the saints because your way is strait and narrow. It is the picture of *The Mute Christian Under the Smarting Rod* (Thomas Brooks). If you have not read that book, I highly recommend it. Psalm 25:14 says *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and He will shew them His covenant.* That is also the "magic" to fear God. The people that abandon the strait and narrow way do not fear Him.

Romans 12: 1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself*

more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord [we are all servants here]; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. 14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* Paul, beseeches or begs and entreats his brethren at Rome. These are strong words. He calls them “brethren.” It means “a fellow believer, united to another by the **bond of affection**,” or “brethren in Christ” or “Christians, as those who are exalted to the same heavenly place” or “a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother.” A companion verse is Col. 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering.* The apostle pleads that we present our bodies a living sacrifice to God, because of the great mercies of God that run to his Elect. **These mercies of God that run to his Elect are limitless.** They are without end and measure and run to infinity. 1 Cor 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* [Gill says that actual text says - for those that waiteth for him]. 10 *But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all*

things, yea, the deep things of God. The deep things of God are reserved for you, if you wait for Him and have fidelity to Him. **Therefore, we are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service.** Haldane: *Every member of the body (your body) is to be employed in the service of God. Many, when they use their members sinfully, attempt to excuse themselves, and found a plea for pardon, by alleging that they have a good heart (not good enough). But we see from this passage that God requires the service of the body, as well as that of the mind. The apostle seems to summon attention peculiarly to our **actions** (“actions speak louder than words”) or outward deportment (**behaviors or manners**), which are of so great importance in the Christian life. **Believers ought to be wholly consecrated to His service, preserving their bodies pure as temples of the Holy Ghost, and remembering that they themselves are living stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.***

Gill - by their bodies are meant, themselves, their whole souls and bodies, all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and the presenting of them, designs a devoting of them, with all readiness and willingness, to the service of God for his honour and glory, without putting any confidence in, or placing any dependence upon them; which would be sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their drag; it includes the whole of their service, conversation, and religion, internal and external. It is all in – or it does not count. The allusion is to the rite of sacrificing, to the bringing of the slain beast, and laying it on the altar, and there presenting and offering it to the Lord. **Under the Gospel dispensation all believers are priests; and the sacrifices they bring are not the bodies of slain beasts, but their own bodies, their whole selves; a living sacrifice, in opposition to the bodies of slain beasts offered under the legal dispensation, and to the dead works of such as are destitute of faith in Christ.**

Holy – they [their bodies] must **not** be employed in the service of sin, else they cannot be fit to be presented to the Lord. **Acceptable unto God** - Jewish sacrifices are no longer pleasing to God, just as Catholic masses are not pleasing to God – they are odious to Him. But, the bodies of the saints are sacrifices that are always pleasing to God. **Reasonable service** - to worship God with our bodies is as rational as to worship Him with our souls. *The difference between the heathen sacrifices and those of the Jews did not consist in the things offered (lambs or oxen), but in the object of the offering. The one was appointed of God, and was accepted of God: the other was not only not appointed by God, but was an act of homage to devils.* It is with the utmost confidence that if we give our bodies to Christ

as a living sacrifice, they will be accepted as Divine appointment. But we must not do it with halting, or holding back, or with a “toe in the water” and a riding the fence approach. I Kings 18:21 *And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.*

Cain’s sacrifice was not acceptable to God (Gen. 4:5) - *But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect.* When Zerubbabel was building the temple (Ezra 4), his adversaries came and said *2 Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.* Zerubbable, said *No Sir, God does not accept your sacrifice. 3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the LORD God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.* 2 Chron. 26, Uzziah went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD [they took their lives in their hands to rise up against the King], *18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed... 19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.* Lev. 22:19 *Ye shall offer at your own will a male without blemish, of the beeves, of the sheep, or of the goats. 20 But whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer: for it shall not be acceptable for you.* Any old sacrifice is not going to do, if you are sacrificing it to the LORD, it has to be done right. *That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* Holy is not committing fornication with your body as this generation would have you believe. Holy is not committing adultery with your body. Holy is not mutilating your body to change your gender. Holy is not committing sodomy and changing the natural use into that which is against nature (Rom. 1). Holy is not using your body to commit murder in your womb. Holy is not committing murder against your neighbor (we get so tired of the military industrial complex that runs our culture). Holy is not being proud, arrogant, and haughty. Our souls are vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked day to day and with the unlawful deeds of our generation (2 Peter 2:7-8). The sacrifice of your body has to be holy and acceptable unto God – as He defines it - that is your reasonable service. There are a lot of people with pseudo sacrifices that claim to

be Christian and are not. John 14:21 *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.* John 14:24 *He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: He that loveth me keepeth my commandments and they are not grievous.* Did you ever see the movie *The Help*? There is an unforgettable scene where the African-American maid makes a pie for the woman she worked for that mistreated her. The pie looks fine from the outside but as the woman that mistreated her takes a big bite of the pie, the maid tells her the pie contains her dung. That is what these unholy sacrifices are to God. The “magic” of this verse, the “special sauce” is that our sacrifice to God is HOLY and acceptable to God not to us. Without the holiness part – no magic – God is not pleased to dwell with you. When Hezekiah came to power here is what he did: 1) he removed the high places; 2) broke down the images; 3) cut down the groves; 4) broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses made (because from the time Moses made it and the people were healed that looked upon it, the children of Israel did burn incense unto it); and 5) he cleansed the house of the Lord and had the priests go into the inner part of the temple – the holy place – where the candlesticks and shewbread was and brought out all the uncleanness (idols and images and alters to false gods) that they found. Ahaz, his dad had idols and images and alters to false gods in the Temple of God in the holy place. It has to be holy, or the Lord is not going to visit you. That is the secret things of God. When that was done, then the Lord delivered Hezekiah and exalted him and delivered him from Sennacherib.

Rom. 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

And be not conformed to this world – “Conformed” means to comply with the rules, standards, or laws... of this world. The people of God are so few that they are not counted in the world. ...*The whole world lieth in wickedness* (1 John 5:19). Haldane: *By conformity to the world is meant assimilation to the people of the world; or the sentiments, conduct and customs by which they are distinguished. It is the character of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, that they walk according to the course of this world, acting conformably to those maxims which are regarding only the present life; and they who mind earthly things are described as the enemies of the cross of Christ; but the conversation of believers, as being pilgrims and strangers is in heaven.* When I stood at a picket in Lawrence (an incredibly evil city) at a remarkably busy intersection recently, I felt like a pilgrim and a stranger – the hatred of that city for God is strong. We cannot be conformed

to the morals of this generation including their excess of riot, their ungodliness and worldly lusts (that I already mentioned in the first verse – that the churches of this generation have completely accepted) and their abandonment of the commandments of God. I, like you, often feel that I live in the twilight zone – it’s hard to believe how totally corrupted this generation really is. They vex our righteous souls day to day. Beloved, with every breath we breathe we must resist and fight against this world that so totally wants to consume us, so that we would be like them. We must resist saying that the “sky is red” when we know it is blue. Fred Sr., used to say that the air is so corrupt and full of pollution that it is difficult to breathe.

But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind – Haldane – *this word signifies the change of the appearance of one thing into that of another. It is used... to signify the change or metempsychosis of animals into trees, or of men into the appearance of other animals. The term denotes the entire change that passes on a man when he becomes a Christian. He is as different from what he was before, as one species of animal from another. Let not men be so far the dupes of self-deception as to reckon themselves Christians, when they are unchanged in heart and life... If there be not a radical difference between their present state and that in which they were by nature, they have no title to the character of Christians. This shows that, in general, it is not (or should not be) difficult to discriminate between Christians and the world. You should be easily able to distinguish a follower of Christ from this world with no problem is what he is saying. Yet, we know that is 100% untrue. The faux “Christians” look exactly like this world! They have no real transformation – only conformity! It is not the conduct merely, but the heart itself of the Christian that is changed; and it is from the renewal of the mind that the conduct is also renewed... Many persons become for a time changed in conduct from various motives, who are not changed in heart by the Spirit of God, and the truth believed respecting the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But such changes are generally temporary, and though they should continue for life, they are of no value in the sight of God. There is no magic there. That change of life which the Lord will approve, is a change produced by the renovation of the mind, in the understanding, the affections and the will.*

That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God – Haldane – *Nothing can be more true than that the renewal of the mind is necessary for a successful inquiry into every part of the will of God. The natural man is in everything opposed to the mind of God. Gill - The word “prove” is commonly applied to metals, to the operation of testing them by the severity of fire. You prove the metal by melting it down and casting*

out the impurities. In that process the Lord reveals to us what is good, and acceptable (pleasing) and perfect (free from defect, stain or injury) to God. This is the magic! Haldane – *That which the Lord enjoins is acceptable to Him, and surely this is the strongest motive to practice it. Nothing else is acceptable to Him, however specious it may appear to human wisdom. All injunctions that proceed merely from men in Divine things are unacceptable to God. Man cannot take something from God and improve it. He approves of nothing but obedience to His own commands! All the injunctions of the Church of Rome are unacceptable to God. They are abomination in His sight. The will of God as exhibited in His word is perfect. Nothing can be added to it, nothing can be taken from it; yet that monstrous system of anti-Christianity which has so long, in the name of Christ, lorded it over the world, had added innumerable commands to those of Christ, and even taken [away] many of His laws. And, do not forget “X-mas” – they added to the Word of God, like God needed them to add a new feast day and Holiday to His son’s death and resurrection. How dare they!* Gill: *The main duty of religion [is] to be separated from the world... If all [Christians] would obey... and separate from the vices and follies, the amusements and gaieties of the world, Christ would be glorified. If all were truly renewed in their minds, they would lose their relish for such things; and seek only to do the will of God.*

I love you all. Amen.