TITLE: The Chameleon in Us!

TEXT: 1st. Co. 15:33; James 3:9-10; Ro. 12:1-2;

Acts 4:1-13

INTRODUCTION: Does everyone know what a Chameleon is? A Chameleon is a small tropical lizard.

 I can remember when I was a child and went to the Iowa state fair that there would be stands where they sold Chameleon’s. They would have a string with a safety pin attached to both ends. One end would be pinned through the Chameleon’s tail and the other end you would pin to your shirt and that is how you carried the little lizard around.

 What was so unique about the Chameleon that made them so popular an item was that they had the ability to change color to adapt to their environment. You would put them on a green shirt and they would turn green. Put them on a brown shirt and they would turn brown.

 It was the way that God created them so that they could survive in the tropical conditions in which they lived.

 Their ability to change color helped them blend in with the scenery so that their enemies couldn’t find them. Gods camouflage, if you will.

 As a young child I can remember thinking how neat it would be if we could change color like a Chameleon.

 Be able to just blend in to our environment..

 How neat it would have been on those times when mom or dad where looking for me when I was in trouble if I could have just leaned up against the wall and changed color & blended in with the wall so not to be found.

 Well, the fact is, there is a little Chameleon in all of us.

 We all do have the ability to blend in with our environment, so to speak.

 We know that this is true… How many times have you seen people who have acted one way when they are with a certain group of people and then when placed in another group of people they act totally different?

 How many of you here this morning have ever found yourselves doing the same thing?

 You act and behave one way when you’re around one person or one group of people and find yourself acting and behaving a totally different way when you’re with another person or another group of people.

 The fact is we all have done it. There is a little Chameleon in every one of us.

 We all have the ability to change with our environment.

 The fact is that God created us with that ability.

It is a byproduct of our free will, our free choice that we were created with.

 But like all things, all of our God given abilities, we can use them wisely or use them unwisely. They can be a good thing or a bad thing.

 So it is with our ability to adapt to any particular environment that we are placed in.

1Cor 15:33 (NIV) Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

 Have you found this to be true? That bad company corrupts good character?

 If someone is of good character how can their good character be corrupted by just keeping bad company?

 Because of the Chameleon that lies within us!

 Example: I was pretty wild when I was young—you name it and I most likely did it.

 I got married young and really settled down. It wasn’t long after I got married that Christ started to deal with my heart.

 But I can remember being invited to a poker game with guys after work one night…..

 I had previously stopped smoking and was doing fairly well with it—everyone there was smoking so I found myself lighting up also.

 I had pretty much quit drinking and since everyone at the table was drinking beer I had a couple that night as well.

 I had not cussed for quite a while but found myself doing that too before the night was over.

What happened?

 I had started to develop a good character and found that the good character that I had started to develop was being corrupted.

 What had corrupted it? The company that I chose to keep that particular night. The bad environment that I had chosen to place myself in.

 Why did I do the things that I allowed myself to do that night? It was the Chameleon in me. The desire to blend in and to not stand out.

 My desire to be accepted in the environment I was in.

 Each and every one of you here this morning has the desire to be accepted. Each of you also have the ability to change colors, so to speak, to fit in, to blend, to go along with the crowd, to go unnoticed as being different.

 We change colors primarily through conformity. Conforming to what is going on around us.

 How many times as a Christian have we gone to Church to worship God on Sunday and found ourselves cursing or maligning God or our fellow man on Monday?

 It is to this that James is speaking when he says in:

Jame 3:9 (NIV) With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

**10 Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.**

The Apostle Paul speaks of conformity in:

 Roma 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

**2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

Once we come to Christ we still have the Chameleon in us. But we are to not conform any longer to the pattern of this world.

Simply speaking, we are not to allow the world to influence us any longer.

 Instead of our being conformed we are to be transformed.

The Greek for conformed is:

**4964 suschematizo {soos-khay-mat-id'-zo}**

**1) to conform one's self (i.e. one's mind and character) to**

**Another’s pattern, (fashion one's self according to)**

The Word of God tells us that as Christians we are…

**not to conform any longer to the pattern of this world,**

We are not to allow the world to fashion us, fashion the way we act or think.

We are not to conform ourselves for the purpose of fitting in, of being like everyone else.

Instead we have been called to…

 **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

The Greek word for transformed is:

**3339 metamorphoo {met-am-or-fo'-o}**

**1) to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure**

**1a) Christ appearance was changed and was resplendent with**

**divine brightness on the mount of transfiguration**

 The world will always conform! Those who live by the standards of this world demand conformity!

The only way that the world can feel good about itself, being apart and separated from a relationship with God, is to try to get everyone else to conform to their way of thinking and behaving.

 The homosexual activist wants us to conform to their worldview, their way of thinking. That what they do is OK. That they were created the way that they are. and That they have no choice in the matter.

 Homosexuality does not define who or what a person is, it defines what they do. It is a sexual choice that they make.

 And if you want to get right down to it, it, like any sexual act outside of the confines of the marriage covenant is sin in Gods eyes.

 If you stand up as a Christian against that lifestyle then you will be the one that is tried to make feel like a social outcast. Like you are the one who is not enlightened but bigoted.

Or take the worlds view concerning abortion..

 Many within the anti-life camp will try to make the pro-lifer’s feel like they are the ones who are wrong. Feel like they are against women and free choice by opposing abortion. Religious radicals who are more dangerous to the world then Adolph Hitler was.

 Even though they are the ones who are mercilessly slaughtering over 1 million of our most innocent citizenry, our unborn children, each and every year in the US alone!

 Take any topic that you choose and the worldview is to try to get you to conform to their way of thinking.

 The chameleon in us wants to blend in, not to appear different or to be radical, so often we find ourselves conforming.

 We go to the break room and everyone is sitting around laughing and having a good time telling dirty stories or maliciously talking about someone else, and if we stay there and laugh with them instead of getting up and leaving, then we are allowing ourselves to be conformed to the pattern of this world.

 Example: I can remember when I was at Dahls a Manager that was a Christian had stopped to talk to a salesman that had come into the store from one of the food brokerages. To break the ice a salesman would often start out by telling a joke. This guy started to tell a joke and not far into it you could tell it was going to be a dirty joke. When this manager discovered which direction the joke was taking he simply turned around and walked off saying something like; I don’t have time for that garbage,

 Needless to say that salesman didn’t make a sale that day.

 He was pretty embarrassed and came up to me and asked if the manager was religious or something.

 Just as an act of being polite this manager could of stayed and listened but he didn’t—You see he wouldn’t conform.

 That happened over 40 years ago and I still remember it as an example of Christian integrity.

 Church, we are not to be conformed but we are to be transformed!

The world that we live in conforms---Only Jesus transforms!

 It is only Jesus that can take us from who and what we are and change us, transform us, into whom and what He wants us to become.

 Conformity will always necessitate compromise on our part.

 Being transformed will most often necessitate our not compromising.

 Our not compromising our values just so that we will fit in, not look foolish or appear to be radical, appear to be different from the world around us.

 That is what Gods Word means when it says that we are to be **in the world but not of it.**

 As Christians we have been called to not let the world change us, but we have been called to change the world.

 Not through force but through introducing others to Jesus Christ, allowing Him to transform them into new creations just as He did and is doing with us.

 To do so will often necessitate our willingness to be different, our willingness to stand out and to stand up for Jesus.

 As I said earlier, God has put a little chameleon in all of us. God has created us with the ability to change and to adapt.

 And the environment we place ourselves in will largely determine what kind of change will take place in our life.

 That is why it is not just important but essential that we spend time hanging out with Jesus. Spending time with Him. Being In Prayer and in the Word. Being In fellowship with the rest of His body, the Church.

 When we fellowship with one another we are in fact fellowshipping with Him.

 When I accepted Christ His Holy Spirit came to live inside of me. When you accepted Christ His Spirit came to dwell inside of you. When we come together for fellowship we all bring the Spirit of Christ with us.

 As Christians when we fellowship with one another, hang out with one another, we are fellowshipping and hanging out with a multiplied presence of Jesus.

 And when we hang out with Jesus it will make a difference in our life!

 When we hang out with Jesus the chameleon in us will want to become like Him.

 The more that we hang out with Jesus the more like Him we will become.

 And the more that we become like Him the more the world that we live in will see Him in us.

 When Peter first met Jesus he was an uneducated, rough and tumble fisherman. A common laborer, a common man who would have been pretty indistinguishable from other Galilean fisherman.

 Think of the merchant marine type!

The after the death and resurrection of Jesus, after the Holy Spirit of Christ had come into his life, he and John, another converted Galilean fisherman, through the power of the Holy Spirit, healed a man who was crippled from birth.

 Then they go and speak the Gospel before the people and the Jewish religious leaders heard them speaking. The Jewish leadership took them before the religious and legislative Jewish body, the Sanhedrin.

**Acts 4:1 (NIV) The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.**

**2 They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.**

**3 They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.**

**4 But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.**

**5 The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.**

**6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family.**

**7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"**

**8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!**

**9 If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed,**

**10 then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.**

**11 He is "`the stone you builders rejected,**

**which has become the capstone.'**

**12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."**

**13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

**13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

These were common ordinary men! Unschooled, Un-educated! Possibly couldn't read or write!

 Peter was the one who cowered in fear the night Jesus was arrested and denied even knowing Him three times!

 John and his brother James were notorious, they had a reputation as young men and it wasn’t a good one! They were called “sons of thunder”!

 Yet here these two common, uneducated men were healing cripples and boldly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ!

 They didn’t even back down when brought before the Jewish hierarchy. The Senate Judiciary committee of the day, if your will…

These Jewish leaders, the important men of their world, these men of renown, said:

 **When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished!**

 How could this be! These guys never even went to college!

 Never finished high school! They where just common fisherman and not very good ones at that.

 Every time Jesus came upon them what did they seem to be doing? Catching Fish? No! They seemed to always be mending their nets!

 They couldn’t even afford a good set of nets!

 They couldn’t figure out how so common of men could come before them and speak so boldly and so eloquently and with such authority.

 They were astonished by it!

 The only thing that they could attribute it to was that these men had been with Jesus!

They had hung out with Jesus through the 3 years that he wondered the Galilean countryside.

 They were still hanging out with Him through prayer and meditating upon His Word and fellowshipping with one another.

And their hanging out with Jesus was making a difference! Not just in their personal lives but a difference in the world in which they lived as well!

 A man crippled from birth had just been healed as they invoked the name of Jesus over him!

 5000 men, women and children had just received Christ as their personal Lord and savior through their boldly proclaiming the Gospel message!

 And the only thing that these Jewish leaders could attribute all this to was: **they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

The same thing that happened to Peter and John can happen to anyone who spends time with and hangs out with Jesus.

 Because we will start to become more and more like Him.

 Instead of being conformed to the pattern of this world we will start to be transformed into His image and likeness.

 Instead of being a man or woman or child that conforms to the world we will be a force that God can use that will conform the world to Him..

 There is a little Chameleon in us all and that is OK as long as it is Jesus that are desiring to be like.

 How about you this morning? Where and with whom are you hanging out?

 Are you hanging out in the world finding that you are being conformed to its likeness-- or are you hanging out with Jesus and finding that you are being transformed? Transformed into His likeness?

 Being changed into the man, woman or child that He has called you to be!

 When the people of this world see us do they take note that we too have been with Jesus?