

6. Learning the Glory of the New Covenant

In our last topic, we saw that the Holy Spirit gives us life. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God makes our lives sufficient. We saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the fact that God created us for good works. It is the new covenant that was made available by Christ shedding His blood for our sins on the cross that makes us sufficient. As a result of the fact that God has made our lives sufficient, we are able to be ministers of the new covenant. In our topic today, we will see that the Lord wants us to help our physical and spiritual children understand the glory of this new covenant.

In 2 Corinthians 3:7-8, we read, “But if the ministry of death, written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?” The law which was written by God on the pieces of stone showed us that every person is guilty before God. Romans 3:19-20 says, “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.” The law (old covenant) could never make a person right with God. It could only show that every person was guilty before God.

However, even the law revealed the glory of God. This was clearly seen when Moses came down from the mountain with the law written on pieces of stone. Exodus 34:29-30 says, “Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.” Here, we see that the glory of God was reflected by the face of Moses. It was so great that the people were afraid to even come close to Moses.

Since even the old covenant that brought death had glory, Paul asks the question, “Will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?” Paul then answered that question in 2 Corinthians 3:9-11 where we read, “For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.” The law was glorious even though it showed that every person was guilty of sin. Here, we see that the message of the new covenant is much more glorious than the old covenant. The reason that is true is because the message of the new covenant tells people how to have forgiveness of sin with the result that a person will also receive eternal life.

Moses was the only person whose face revealed the glory of the Lord when he brought the old covenant down from the mountain. In contrast, every Christian is called to have a part in the ministry of righteousness as we share with others how they can have forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The law has a purpose but its purpose is temporary. Galatians 3:24-25 says, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has

come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Here, we see that the purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ. Once we come to Christ, we are no longer under the law. In contrast, the ministry of righteousness is eternal because all who place their faith in Christ receive eternal life.

Because the ministry that the Lord has given to each one of us as Christians is so great, Paul gives us an example of the way that we should share the message of the forgiveness of sin through the death and resurrection of Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:12-15 says, “Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech--unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.” We want to be an example to our children of the way to share this message since we have this great hope in our lives.

Paul gave us an example of how to share this message. We see that he used great boldness of speech. The word that is translated “boldness” means *freedom in speaking, fearless confidence or cheerful courage*. This word is used three times in Acts 4. Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” Peter and John had this boldness because verse 8 says that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. We see that we can also have the same boldness as we pray as the early church did in Acts 4:29 where we read, “Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word.” Here, we see that we need to pray that the Lord will give us boldness to speak His Word. The way the Lord answered that prayer is seen in Acts 4:31 where we read, “And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” We need to show our physical and spiritual children by our example the importance of praying for courage to share the message of the Gospel with boldness.

Paul also gave the Christians a specific prayer request as he asked them to pray for him in Ephesians 6:19-20, “And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” We also need to ask our children to pray that we will continue to speak the Gospel with boldness because the message of Christ’s death and resurrection is such a glorious message.

Moses put a veil over his face so that the people of Israel could not see the glory on his face as it faded away. Because Moses had a veil over his face, the people could not understand his words clearly as he spoke to them. However, we see that the people of Israel have a greater veil than the veil over the face of Moses. Paul said that the Jews still had a veil over their hearts. This veil over their hearts causes their minds to be blinded when the Old Testament is read. We see that the only One that can take away this veil over their hearts is Christ. As a result, they cannot understand the fact that the Old Testament continually points forward to the glorious ministry of Christ.

However, 2 Corinthians 3:16-18 tells us what happens to every person that turns to Christ and places his or her faith in the death and resurrection of Christ as the payment for their sin. Those verses say, “Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Here, we see that the Lord takes away the veil for everyone that turns to Him. As a result, we are able to see the glory of Christ throughout the Old and New Testaments.

We read that the Lord is the Spirit and that He gives us liberty. The word that is translated “liberty” speaks about the true liberty and freedom that we have to live as we should because of the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives. James 1:25 says, “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” Here, we see that the perfect law of liberty makes it possible for us to be obedient to the Word of God. Then, Galatians 5:13 further explains, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Here, we see that liberty gives us the freedom and the power to serve one another in love. This is due to the fact that we are now led by the love of Christ instead of driven by the fear of people.

The Holy Spirit helps us to see Christ as we study the Word of God. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” The Holy Spirit helps us to understand and see Christ as we study the Word of God. John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” As Christ lived on this earth, the disciples saw the glory of Christ.

Because the Holy Spirit now lives in our hearts, we see this same glory as the Holy Spirit gives us understanding of the Word of God. As we see this glory, it is like we are looking into a mirror. We see the glory of Christ. As we look at Him, He is changing us and our lives are being transformed. As a result, our lives also begin to reflect the glory of Christ. Just as the people of Israel saw the glory of God reflected on the face of Moses, the people around us begin to see the glory of Christ reflected in our lives. As we take root in Christ and His love, others see the love of Christ in our lives. As we yield to the Holy Spirit, others see the Holy Spirit work through our lives. As we provide an example for our physical and spiritual children, they also are being shown how their lives can reflect the glory of Christ as He works in them. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your physical and spiritual children how to reflect the glory of Christ.