

TRANSFORMED WITH EVER-INCREASING GLORY

2 Corinthians 3:6-18

It surprises me how few people have heard a sermon series from 2 Cor. It contains great truth about the gospel and the ministry.

In particular we're going to consider passages that deal with living in hard times.

This week we're going to see a different focus of 2 Cor., it introduces the glory of the new covenant, & the privilege of ministry on the basis of the new covenant.

It's such a rich passage, I couldn't just skip over it!

"Wouldn't it be great?! . . ."

...to be there with Moses to see the revelation of God's glory as Israel did?

...to see the revelation of God's glory in the tabernacle when God dwelled among them?

Joy of ministry in New Covenant 2:14-3:18

Joy of victory stirs Paul to get excited about the privilege of ministry. *"It doesn't get any better than this!"*

God enables us to stand firm in adversity & to minister for him.

Basis for Our Ministry 3:6-18

He focuses on the greatness of our privilege by contrasting our ministry with that of Moses.

Glory of the Old Covenant 3:6-7 *"God has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. ⁷Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was..."*

Old covenant was given to Israel in glory.

It reflects the brightness of God's glory.

There is nothing wrong with the law.

Paul says it is glorious.

But it still has an inherent weakness: problem's with me!

Old ministry is based on the letter of the law—it was written in stone.

Since it's fulfillment depends on our performance, we always come up short.

Old ministry leads to death.

Problem isn't in the law; it's in the people!

Old ministry revealed with fading glory

When Moses is in God's presence, he reflects the brightness of God's glory.

Even reflection of His glory's too bright to gaze on.

When Moses leaves

God's presence, & returns to life as usual, the glory fades.

Outstanding characteristic is still glory.

Fading & temporary though it may be, it's still a reflection of **God's glory!**

Greater Glory of New Covenant 3:8-18

Contrasting source of authority: 8 *"Will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?"*

New ministry's NOT based on letter of law

New ministry comes from God's Spirit.

He's the driving power behind it. He makes it work!

New ministry reveals even greater glory!

Contrasting consequence: 9-10 *"If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory."*

Old ministry of law brings condemnation.

Law reveals the problem. It leads to condemnation

New ministry leads to righteousness.

When we trust Christ, God's Spirit gives us new life and credits His righteousness to our account.

New ministry reveals greater glory!

It doesn't fade.

Never ends.

Never comes up short.

If old ministry was glorious, how much more glorious is this new message?!!

Contrasting conclusion: 11 *"If what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!"*

Glory of the old ministry fades away.

Glory of our new ministry remains.

Veil used at giving of old covenant shows that it's temporary & provisional; new is permanent.

We don't use a veil to hide fading glory

12-15 *"Since we have such a hope, we're very bold. ¹³We're not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. ¹⁴But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It hasn't been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts."*

Since our glory never fades, we have an eternal hope of acceptance by God; no need for a veil.

Law acts as veil to **keep people from seeing God's glory. 14-15**

When Moses entered God's presence, he took off the veil to see God's glory.

For Israel, the veil is never removed.

Law gets between people and God's glory,
so we can't see His glory.

We focus on law and miss the point:
only Christ can meet its demands.

Moses' old ministry didn't provide that immediate, continual access to God's presence

**Law dulls the mind & covers the heart
so we don't see clearly.**

Old ministry leads to spiritual blindness.

New ministry removes blindness so we can see.

The Spirit removes the veil & gives freedom. 16-17

"Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, & where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."

In contrast to the old ministry, which leads to death,
the new covenant leads to life and freedom.

God's Spirit is at work in us, producing new life.

We see God's glory clearly & are continually transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory which He provides.

18 *"We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

We approach God unveiled—we see His glory with unveiled faces. In contrast to Moses' glory, which was diminishing, our glory is an ever-increasing glory.

We progress from 1 stage of glory to next.

As we contemplate Him—we become more & more like Him.

H.S. works in us to conform us to His image.

Evidence God's at work in us is NOT that we arrive at perfection, but that God transforms us into image of His Son.

God wants to make us more like Him.

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote about the great stone face:

A lad lived in a village where a mountain had a formation called "The Great Stone Face." Legend told that one day someone would come who would look like the great stone face. He would do wonderful things for the village. The lad was taken by the story & gazed at the great stone face at every opportunity. He'd dream about the day when someone looking like the great stone face would come to their village.

Years passed. He became a young man, then an old man. One day as he tottered down the street someone looked up at him & shouted: "He's come. The one who looks like the great stone face is here." He'd spent so much time contemplating the great stone face that he bore its image. If we want to become Christlike, we'll spend time focusing on Him. We have a full view of His glorious face.

That's enough to change our lives forever –into the image of His Son!

What lessons does Paul reveal for our lives?

Paul is excited about the privilege God has given him as a minister of a new covenant.

Are we that excited about the privilege God has given us of being conformed to the image of His Son, and of proclaiming the good news to people around us?

4 BENEFITS WE receive through new ministry that are **BETTER** than Moses' ministry:

1. Boldness—we're bold because of the assured confidence of our hope.

2. Unveiling—for Israel the veil never comes off.

They never see the unveiled glory of God.

We see clearly—with *unveiled* face.

3. Freedom

Law enslaves.

The Spirit at work produces liberty—freedom.

We're free to love & serve God.

4. Transformation

Moses' transformation was only temporary—it faded away.

As WE look into His face, we're transformed into the image of His Son—progressive, permanent change.

As we behold him, we become holy, for *“beholding with unveiled faces the glory of the Lord we're transformed into His likeness, with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit.”*

Think it would've been great to see what Moses saw?

How about THIS?!!

What incredible GLORY WE're privileged to see!!

& WE're being transformed into the image of His Son!

Because of what Christ has done for us, His body was broken, His blood shed, that we might have LIFE & LIBERTY—that we might be transformed into HIS image.