

2 CORINTHIANS 3

The legalists who caused trouble in both Antioch and Jerusalem (Acts 15) had come to Corinth and enticed some of the believers into living by the law of Moses. Paul refuted their position by showing the wonders of the new covenant ministry. The background is Exodus 34:29–35.

It changes hearts (1–3). The law reveals only sin; it cannot renew the inner person. The Spirit wants to write a new version of His Word on your heart. Will you let Him?

It gives life (4–6). The law kills, but grace gives life and sustains that life. God’s children have a living relationship with Him through the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2).

It gets more and more glorious (7–16). The glory of the law is gone: the temple, the priesthood, the ceremonies, and the awesome revelations of God’s power. But the glory of God’s grace remains and grows more glorious (v. 18; Prov. 4:18).

It brings freedom (17–18). The law brings bondage (Acts 15:10), but grace gives glorious freedom that makes us more and more like Jesus Christ. Each day, you can have your own personal transfiguration as you worship the Lord and yield to the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS 4

The glory of salvation (1–6). Unlike the legalists who had invaded the church, Paul had nothing to hide. The Jewish religious system veiled the gospel, but Paul sought to reveal the gospel. The image is taken from Genesis 1:1–3 and transferred from the old creation to the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).

The glory of service (7–12). Paul paid a price for his ministry, but the legalists went about collecting honors (3:1). We are vessels; the treasure of the gospel life within is important. As vessels, we must be clean and available for His use (2 Tim. 2:20–21).

The glory of suffering (13–18). Jesus suffered and turned that suffering into glory; by faith, we can do the same thing. It is not wrong to care for the outward person, so long as you recognize that it is perishing. Concentrate on the inner person. It is the invisible that is imperishable. The best is yet to come!

2 CORINTHIANS 5

We know (1). This building is our new body that we will receive when we see the Lord because God saves the whole person (1 Cor. 15:42–58).

We groan (2–4). Creation is groaning and God’s people also groan (Rom. 8:18–23), yearning for the Lord Jesus to come again. We do not want to die and leave our “houses”; we want these bodies to be “clothed with” the glory of God from heaven (1 John 3:1–2). Paul longed to see Jesus come in his lifetime.

We are confident (5–8). God’s Word gives us the truth about death and beyond, and God’s Spirit guarantees that God’s children will go to heaven. We claim this by faith and walk with confidence, and what peace it gives!

We aim to please Him (9–21). Paul’s spiritual motivations for service include the judgment seat of Christ (vv. 9–11), the love of Christ (vv. 12–16), the power of the gospel (v. 17), and the commission of the Lord (vv. 18–21). What motivates you to do His will?

2 CORINTHIANS 6

Acceptance (1–2). Often those in the church who cause problems are people who have never truly been born again. They may think they are saved, but they are not. *Now* is the time to accept God’s grace. Tomorrow may be too late.

Appreciation (3–13). It is easy to forget the sacrifices others have made so we can know the Lord. Paul never spoke about his sufferings unless his words helped to protect the ministry (11:16ff.). Do you take your church fellowship for granted? Have you thanked those who came before you and made it possible?

Agreement (14–18). Believers in the church were compromising with the world and not walking in a separated way (Ps. 1:1). God longs to have a closer fellowship with us, but He will not share the yoke with the world.

2 CORINTHIANS 7

Cleansing (1). It is one thing to ask God to cleanse you (Ps. 51:2, 7) and quite something else to cleanse yourself and put away the things that defile (Isa. 1:16). Separation sometimes demands surgery.

Comforting (2–7). The same people who give you joy can also cause you sorrow. When Titus reported that the church had disciplined the offender, the apostle was overjoyed. Have you ever been an answer to somebody’s prayers as Titus was?

Clearing (8–11). If we are serious about repentance, we will do everything we can to clear things up. Remorse and regret do not go far enough; there must be repentance followed by restitution.

Caring (12–16). Both Paul and Titus cared about the believers in Corinth, and this love finally won the day. You take a risk when you love others, for they may hurt you; but it is worth the risk to be like Jesus Christ and live a life of love.