

BEING TRANSFORMED

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit...” —2 CORINTHIANS 3:6

The Old Covenant - The Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone, and the New Covenant - the laws of God written in our hearts are the same laws; nothing altered, added to or taken from, yet the difference in them is the difference between condemnation and freedom and death and life.

The Ten Commandments, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, is what Paul refers to as the Old Covenant. It was a covenant that, by virtue of being on tablets of stone, was externally applied. In 2 Corinthians 3:9, Paul calls it ‘the ministry that condemns men’. Many people in today’s world are driven by an attitude that says, “I ought to do this and I’m supposed to do that”, but they are unable to meet the demands of the law. That is because the external demand could not meet with an internal ability.

The New Covenant is what Paul calls ‘a ministry of the Spirit written in human hearts’. It is internal; it empowers, brings righteousness and imparts life. The contrasts between the Old and New Covenants are vital. One is external, written on stone; the other internal, written on our hearts; one is imposed from the outside; the other empowers from the inside; one condemns and the other liberates; one kills, the other gives life.

The laws under the Old Covenant could demand what is good and right but could not produce it as it was given externally. Because we are

incapable of keeping the law, our sin is exposed, which creates within us a sense of frustration and failure. That is not meant to humiliate us, but to bring us to where we can become what the law demands. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:24 the law was given to serve as our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

The Old Covenant came with glory in that it revealed God's moral character, which is His glory, but the New Covenant imparts glory. Jeremiah 31:33 says, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts." The New Covenant does not involve a rewriting of the law, but a relocating of the law.

Under the New Covenant, God gives us the only one capable of keeping the law. If we are in Christ then we are already brought from condemnation to life. God gives us His Son, not only to save us, but to dwell in our hearts and begin the process of transforming our lives into His likeness. That is from one degree of glory to another. Once we've experienced 'Christ in us', being made into His likeness becomes a heartfelt, lifelong prayer.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank You for your indwelling Spirit that gives me life and freedom. Continue your work in me, Lord, to reveal your character in me and through me.

TO REFLECT UPON: In what area of my life do I most need the transforming work of Jesus Christ? Do I pray for it?