

“The Impact of the Glory of Christ” 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Theme: The more exposure to the glory of Christ a person knows, the more fundamentally one is conformed to Him.

I. The Optimism of Our Hope in Christ – 3:12-13

A. The Confidence of Our Hope – v. 12

1. In the previous section, Paul distinguished between the Old Mosaic Covenant, which explained the reason for condemnation and death, and the New Covenant, which, through the blood of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, produces life.
2. The glory associated with the New Covenant means that the believer will finally and fully be reconciled to God through sanctification.
3. Paul emphasizes the certainty and confidence this provides – *“Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, ...”*
4. *“Hope”* [ἐλπίς] – refers to something confidently anticipated; looking forward to something with a good reason for confidence respecting fulfillment.
5. Paul refers to the glory that awaits us and our confidence that we will gain that hope of glory because Christ is in us – *Colossians 1:26-27*.
6. Because of our confidence, we have *“great boldness in our speech”* as we declare the superiority of faith over works, grace over law, life over death, and mercy over condemnation.
7. *“boldness”* [παρρησία] – describes speech that conceals nothing and leaves nothing out – an open proclamation of the truth of the Gospel.

B. The Constancy of Our Hope – v. 13

1. Paul then uses the example of Moses' fading face to illustrate the fading glory of the Old Covenant – *“... and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.”*
2. At first, Moses' face was so brilliant in its shining that he veiled it to comfort the fearful people of Israel – cp. *Exodus 34:30*.

3. However, God's glory in Moses's face faded with time, and the Israelites couldn't see the fading glory because of the veil Moses had put on.
4. Paul now uses that fading glory to represent the glory of the Old Covenant that was always intended by God to give way to the greater glory of the New Covenant.
5. The promises of the New Covenant are eternal, and hence, our hope is eternal.
6. The Jewish people remain unaware that the glory of the Law has diminished in the light of the blazing glory of the New Covenant.

II. The Obstruction of Hope in Christ – 3:14-15

A. The Rejection of the Purpose of the Law – v. 14

1. Because there is a veil concealing the fading glory of the Mosaic Covenant, the Jewish people have rejected the “innovations” by Jesus and His apostles.
2. Paul tells us, “... *their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil remains unlifted ...*”
3. They have deliberately rejected the Gospel and have been “hardened” because they assume the glory of God is in the Law.
4. Whenever they hear “the reading of the old covenant, *“the same veil remains unlifted”* – that is the “obstruction” to seeing the real purpose of the law, which was to point us to the New Covenant provisions in Christ Jesus.
5. They errantly believe that they can be saved through the Old Covenant by keeping the Law and lowering the requirements to match their abilities to keep it.
6. This hardening of their hearts to the realities of their sin caused them to think there was no need for anything beyond their own efforts.
7. Paul states that the only way the veil is lifted is through the New Covenant – “... *it is removed in Christ*” and “*in Christ*” alone.

B. The Reinforcement of the Perversions of the Law – v. 15

1. *“But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart.”*
2. This refers to the regular Sabbath worship practices – their ability to

properly interpret the Word of God is grossly diminished because of the veil that bars their ability to see the superior glory of Christ Jesus – cp. [Acts 13:26-27](#).

3. Their captivity in a works-based salvation – gained through their efforts to keep the Laws of God was a prison out of which they could not find release.
4. They were hardened in heart and rejected the Lord Jesus as someone who sought to abolish the Law and was, therefore, a heretic – [Matthew 5:17](#).

III. The Objective of Hope in Christ – [3:16-18](#)

A. The Access to the Glory of Christ – [vv. 16-17](#)

1. However, when God’s grace draws a sinner to Christ they are able to find the veil lifted – *“but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”*
2. The discovery of Christ causes a person with a clear view of His glory – cp. [Mark 15:38](#).
3. When the grace of God removes that veil and provides a glimpse of Christ's glory, a soul is transformed by grace — cp. [2 Corinthians 4:6](#).

B. The Alterations to the Image of Christ – [v. 18](#)

1. Paul then provides the Corinthians with the encouragement that all believers know as they are exposed to the truths of Christ in the Word.
2. He says, *“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord ...”*
 - a) *“unveiled face” describes the heart that has been granted a clear view of Christ because of faith.*
 - b) *“beholding as in a mirror” [κατοπρίζω] – describes the contemplation of something as if studying one’s face in a mirror – [1 Corinthians 13:12](#).*
3. As serious consider the *“glory of the Lord,”* the believer is *“being transformed into the same image from glory to glory ...”*
4. *“transformed” [μεταμορφώω]* – a change that is inward in fundamental character or condition – describing the process of sanctification whereby we are conformed to the image of Jesus Christ – cp. [Romans 12:2; Colossians 3:10](#).

5. This is the key – transformation that comes upon us through our gaze upon Christ – cp. *Hebrews 12:2*.
6. This is a transformation that will continue until the day of Christ when the believer is glorified – *Philippians 1:6; 1 John 3:2*.
7. This is God’s purpose for us and is the mark of maturity – cp. *Ephesians 4:13*.
8. This does not happen through legalism or by keeping the law but is the result of the power of God’s Spirit—“... *just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*”

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