



gracefellowship

Series: What About the Change?
Date: November 19, 2024

Title: Changed with Greater Glory
Passage: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

This morning I want to try to hold two things side by side and make sure we have proper perspective on them. I don't have a catchy intro like Ryan did last week when he taught us how to trap a monkey! Although, I do feel confident now that if I ever need to catch a monkey that is causing damage to my property within the city of Kingsport, I will be able to do so with confidence!

So, here's the two things I want us to look at today and see what Paul says about their ability to change us in the way the Holy Spirit desires: the Law of Moses and the grace of Jesus.

When we come into faith in Jesus the New Testament writers explain to us that our faith is evidenced by continuing change, or transformation, in our lives. In this series we have talked about how we die to our old self and become a new creation in Christ.

As new creations we are changed to do good works, to bear spiritual fruit, to walk in a new direction and to worship God as living sacrifices.

That's a basic overview of the series. If you have missed any part of it, I would encourage you to go back and find the messages online or in our app to hear those teachings. As disciples of Jesus we want to yield to His work in our lives to be changed increasingly into His likeness.

The Question:

At the end of the day, do I look more like Jesus?

Throughout history there have been two means by which God has given His people to walk in relationship with Him. In your Bible this is divided into two sections: The Old Covenant (Testament) and the New Covenant (Testament). God originally gave His people the Law as a means to know Him and walk in relationship with Him. In these later times God has given us His Son and a covenant of grace to walk with in relationship with Him. I want us to hold those two things side by side today and see what Paul has to say about our transformation

as followers of Jesus and which one of those two things will help us become what God desires for us.

Let's look at the passage this morning together and then answer a few questions that will help us continue to walk with Jesus, being changed to be like Him.

:: 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

⁷ Now 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, transitory though it was,

⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.

¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.

¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Here's the first question I want us wrestle with this morning:

Do we have a proper view of the Law- God's first covenant?

Often when we talk about the Law...and I've been guilty of this myself...we talk about it like it is this awful thing. The Law is so bad! No one can keep the Law, therefore it's a terrible thing.

But that isn't how the people who wrote the Bible viewed the Law!

⁷ Now 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...

Paul tells us that while the Law absolutely brought death- it pointed out everything that we do which goes against God's holy standards- it also came with glory! So much so that the face of Moses, who received it from God on Mount Sinai, had to cover his face because of it's glory! You can go back in Exodus 34 and read the account of Moses receiving the 10 Commandments. When he came down to the people, after being in the presence of God and receiving the Law, his face glowed with radiance!

That word "radiance" literally means his face shot out rays of light!

קָרַן qāran (kaw-rań)

The people were so afraid they made Moses wear a covering over his face until the radiance had diminished, or wore off.

When we think of the Law we should think of something glorious God gave to us. David famously wrote about the Law in Psalm 119. When we see his thoughts on the Law it gives us a different perspective for how to think about this first covenant God gave us.

:: Psalm 119:97, 113, 163

⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law!

I meditate on it all day long.

¹¹³ I hate double-minded people,

but I love your law.

¹⁶³ I hate and detest falsehood

but I love your law.

Even in the New Testament, the writers don't bash on the Law and talk about what a waste it is and how we should despise it.

:: Romans 7:11-12

¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

:: Romans 7:14-16

¹⁴ We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

¹⁵ I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

¹⁶ And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.

Even Jesus addressed His role with the Law:

:: Matthew 5:17

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

Here’s what we need to understand: The Law isn’t bad! God didn’t give us something that was useless or pointless. The Law simply couldn’t save us ultimately.

The problem wasn’t with the Law. The problem was with us! We can’t keep God’s perfect Law.

In fact, that’s what Paul says next when we go back and look at 2 Corinthians 3.

:: 2 Corinthians 3:9-11

9 If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

10 For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.

11 And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

Paul is talking about the two things we said we wanted to hold up side by side today- the Law and Jesus. He tells us that the Law was glorious...BUT...now, in comparison with Jesus the Law has no glory!

Jesus has surpassing, or eternal, glory! The Law was transitory; it was a placeholder until Jesus came to fulfill it. Now that Jesus has come we need to take our attention off the Law as the thing that makes us right with God and look to Jesus, who in the book of Hebrews is referred to as the author and perfecter of our faith!

2 Corinthians 3:12-16

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.

14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Unfortunately, Paul says there is a veil that remains on hearts that continue to look to the Law of Moses and don’t put their faith in Jesus. Only Jesus removes the veil. There is something in us that wants to earn salvation in our own power. We want to achieve rather than receive grace. And many people in our world are still living with

veiled hearts because they are trying to be good enough through obeying a set of moral laws.

One of the people on my sermon team sent me this quote this week:

Human history is the long, terrible story of man clinging to the veil and turning away from God's glory.

The Law was powerless to change us. The Law succeeded in showing us we needed to change, but it was powerless to change us with enduring effect. That's why sacrifices for sins were continually necessary for the Jewish people.

But what happens when we turn to Christ?

:: 2 Corinthians 3:15-18

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

What happens when we turn to Jesus for salvation?

- 1. We gain a freedom to see truth. The veil is removed.**
- 2. We gain a freedom to be changed into the image of Christ.**

Paul describes this as being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory! This isn't like the Law, which faded. It isn't like the glory that Moses had from being in God's presence, which faded. We are transformed and are being changed into greater and greater glory as we walk with Jesus! We are meant to be His image-bearers in the world.

So, that brings us to the second question today- the first question was: Do we have a proper view of the Law. The second question is:

Do we have a proper view of the image of Christ?

There are a lot of ways people think of Jesus...

- Nice guy
- Moral teacher
- Friend and comforter
- Genie in a bottle / Get out of jail free card

But look how John describes Jesus in the book of Revelation. This is the resurrected Jesus, who has returned to heaven in all His glory where He reigns at

the right hand of God the Father we are about to hear about it. This raises the stakes!

:: Revelation 1:12-18

12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands,

13 and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest.

14 The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire.

15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.

18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

We are meant to image HIM in this world! Maybe, just maybe, our view of Jesus needs to get a lot bigger as we represent Him to the world!

Where does the transformation come from? It comes through the Holy Spirit.

18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is passionate about your transformation into the image of Jesus! His enduring role is to shape you into the likeness of Jesus.

- Character
- Mind
- Heart
- Attitude

And true believers don't fight transformation, they embrace it! They willingly yield to the power of the Holy Spirit at work in them, even if that work takes years!

Today before we close our service I want you to hear a testimony of someone in our church who went through a lot on her journey to being transformed into the image of Jesus. It took time and even some difficult and tragic circumstances, but God was at work in her story to bring her to a place where she is in fellowship with God and is being transformed with ever-increasing glory into the image of Jesus! Would you please listen to Aisha Ward as she shares her story with us?