

“The Glory of The New Covenant”
Freedom and The Ever-Increasing Glory:
2 Corinthians 3:7-18
Message 7

Introduction:

Rom 8:1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the **law of the Spirit** of life set me free from **the law of sin and death**. 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

NIV

The joy of the sermon today rests in knowing that we have been freed to serve God in newness of Spirit- not in the old letter of the law. Did you hear the contrast in the before mentioned verse. The law of the Spirit and the law of sin and death. Wow! What a contrast. You and I are free to serve, to grow, and to accomplish all God has for us, because through Christ, you and I have been set free from sin and death. Unbelievers cannot understand this spiritual principle.

Note Luke 18:9-14 with me. One man places his salvation in his own ability and tries to keep the law. The other man rests his hope in the New Covenant. One man hopes his ability to keep the law will be good enough, while the other rests his hope in God's mercy and the work of Jesus.

Listen- the law was never intended to save you!

Luke 18:9-14

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself:

'God, I thank you that I am not like other men — robbers, evildoers, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

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In this passage, we see the entire problem with the Jewish nation, with moral men, and self-righteous men. When we use the term “self-righteous,” we think of people that we don't like. We think of people who are just like this pharisee, but the truth is- anyone who tries to get into heaven without Jesus is “self-righteous.” Anyone who tries to live the Christian life without proper (Christ) righteousness is self-righteous.

In 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, we see that Paul explains the old covenants to us and tries to teach us the ever-increasing and glorious freedom of the New Covenant.

I. The Purpose of The Old Covenant: Verses 7-8

Notice the contrast that Paul uses to explain the Old and New Covenant.

- The ministry of death
- The ministry of the Spirit

- The ministry of condemnation
- The ministry of righteousness

- The ministry of glory
- The ministry of surpassing glory

- The fading glory
- The lasting glory

When we look at how Paul describes the Old Covenant that was written on tablets of stone (The Ten Commandments), we have to think that something must have been wrong with the Old Covenant. Why did God make this covenant anyway? Well, God knows what He's about. Who are we to question God.

Paul explains it all to us. Nothing was wrong with the Old Covenant as I preached to you in the last section.

Gal 3:23-25

23 Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. 24 **So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ** that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

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Illustration: The ladle and the strainer.

The purpose of the law was to teach us what sin is and to drive us to Christ. The entire old testament system of sacrifice pointed to Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews was written to explain this to us. The ceremonial law and the Ten Commandments will never save you because you can't keep them to perfection.

Moses did not want the Israelites to look into his face due to the fading glory of the law; how could the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious and ever-increasing.

II. The Purity Of The Old Covenant: Verse 9-10

Paul says that the Old Covenant has glory. There was nothing wrong with the covenant except that it cannot save you. The covenant was not flawed; we are.

General revelation, or creation, can condemn you but not save you. You may see in creation a creator, and you should, but specific revelation is needed for salvation. Not even love for God will save you. Many people that are living moral lives due to respect and love for God have never committed their lives to Christ or experienced the atonement of Jesus Christ. You can even love God and not be born again.

The law is holy. The law teaches us that we are sinners. Without the law we do not understand this. The problem that we have is in our inability to meet the demands of the law. The law identifies us as sinners.

Rom 7:7-20

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 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.

13 Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

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. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

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In Paul's life, just as the sinner at the altar in Luke 18, the law did its job. The law revealed to Paul that he was a sinner.

Illustration: Remember the previous spatula story (p. 99).

Illustration: A paraphrase from Pilgrim's Progress:

Then interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him to a very large parlor that was full of dust, because it was never swept; in the same room, after a while, the interpreter called for a man to sweep it. When the man began to sweep, the dust began to fly around abundantly and dust was flying all over. Christian was getting choked badly due to all the dust. The interpreter said to a damsel nearby, "bring us water and sprinkle the room." After she had sprinkled the room it was cleaned easily and with pleasure.

Then Christian said, what does this mean. The interpreter said that the room or parlor was the heart of man that had never been sanctified by the sweet grace of the gospel. Lost! The dust is the original sin and inward corruptions, that have defiled the entire man. The one that began to sweep at first was the law, but the one that did bring water, and did sprinkle it, is the gospel. Now, when you saw the first one sweep you saw the dust fly everywhere and that the room could not be cleaned. All present were choked by the dust (Sin). The law, instead of cleansing the heart, by its working, from sin, does actually revive and put strength into sin and increases sin in the soul, even as it does discover and forbid sin... but never gives the power to subdue it.

Rom 5:20-21

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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1 Cor 15:56

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

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“The law does its job even though it is a minister of death.”

John MacArthur: “The law condemns sinners by defining the standard of divine righteousness.”

III. The Problem With The Old Covenant: Verse 11

Paul tells us in verse 11 that the old covenant was “*fading away.*” Paul uses Moses as an illustration to explain. Moses would put a veil over his face because he would radiate the glory of God when he spoke with God or read the law.

The glory would fade and Moses didn't want the people to gaze at something that was temporal.

Greek: Fading- Katargeo, to abolish, cease, destroy, put away, or vanish.

“Moses did not want the people to put their trust in the law that brought damnation, but not salvation- condemnation and no justification” (John MacArthur).

The New Covenant would be new (**Kainos**), not a revision or a fixed up covenant- totally new in quality and form. The New Covenant would be something that had never existed before.

Heb 8:7-13

7 For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. 8 But God found fault with the people and said: "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a **new** covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 9 It will **not be** like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord, 'because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."
13 By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

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The new Covenant is more glorious.

IV. The Power Of The New Covenant Verse 12-13

Two key words are here:

- Hope- **elpis**. Confident expectation and anticipation. Based on what God has said. Faith.
- Bold- **Parrhesia**. This is plainness of speech. Bold confidence or open speaking. A slave was said to have boldness when he could **speak it all** to his master.

*The Old Covenant could not bring an eternal hope and boldness.

*The New Covenant brought freedom and forgiveness.

*The power of the New Covenant is the finished work of Christ.

Notice the difference in these passages.

Endless sacrifices that brought no forgiveness:

Heb 10:5-7

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;
6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.

7 Then I said, 'Here I am — it is written about me in the scroll —
I have come to do your will, O God.'"

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Eternal redemption:

Heb 9:12

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place **once for all by his own blood**, having obtained eternal redemption.

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Speaks of drawing near to an eternal Jesus that intercedes eternally:

Heb 7:25

25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, **because he always lives to intercede for them.**

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Heb 10:10

10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.**

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Heb 10:11-12

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the **same sacrifices**, which can never take away sins. 12 **But when this priest** had offered **for all time one sacrifice** for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.

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Heb 10:19-22

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near** to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith,

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This is from where the power and boldness come to preach the New Covenant.

Paul says we do not veil our glory in hope of a better way, a better message, or a neo-new covenant. This New Covenant eternally

established at the cross is the last chapter. The New Covenant is sufficient and efficient.

Hebrews 10:26 speaks to the error of not fully trusting in the new covenants power and efficacy.

Heb 10:26

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left...

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V. The Perfection Of The New Covenant: Verses 14-18

Verse 14: Veiled, poroo- παρωω, To petrify, callus or harden. Here is the problem the people have. God has put a veil (veil) over their hearts. Paul speaks in detail of this in Romans 11.

2 Cor 3:14

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.

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Only in Christ can the veil be removed. That's why people cannot come to Christ without the specific revelation of the Holy Spirit. The scales must be removed. **This is specific revelation.**

Paul says that Israel is dull, blinded, and hardened in their hearts. They have been cut off and blinded for you and for me. Romans 11 speaks of an olive tree whose natural branches are taken off so that a wild branch can be grafted in. This was done to make his people jealous so that when they do come to Christ, or are grafted back in, they will fully come.

In Romans 11:12 we learn that if their transgression means riches to the world, and their loss means salvation the Gentiles, how much greater will their riches be when their fullness comes.

Rom 11:7-36

7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were hardened, 8 as it is written:

"God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day." 9 And David says:

"May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. 10 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever."

11 Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. 12 But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their fullness bring!

13 I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I make much of my ministry 14 in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? 16 If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, 18 do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." 20 Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

22 Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. 23 And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24

After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the

full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved,
as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. 27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins." 28 As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, 29 for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. 30 Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, 31 so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. 32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

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Verse 15: "For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead. This thought is so magnificent to Paul that in Romans 11:33-36 Paul breaks out into a doxology.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 34 "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" 35 "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" 36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Paul says in verse 15, "even to this day whenever Moses is read, a **veil** lies over their hearts. But to God be the glory for the power of the New Covenant, which has the ability to remove the veil, but it is only in Christ that it can be taken away.

Verse 16: If you do not understand but want to know the truth about Jesus Christ, just turn to the Lord Jesus and He will remove the scales. He will save you and reveal the truth to you.

Notice with me this passage in Hebrews that speaks of the perfection of the New Covenant. You can be perfect in Christ.

Heb 10:8-14

8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them" (although the law required them to be made). 9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do your will." **He sets aside the first to establish the second.** 10 And by that will, **we have been made holy** through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.**

11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins.** 12 **But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.** 13 Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, 14 because by one sacrifice he has made **perfect forever** those **who are being made holy.**

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When you are in Jesus Christ the truth unveils Jesus to you. The truth will then be understood.

You will then begin to understand your freedom in Christ. The Bible says where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Where the spirit of the Lord is there's freedom, so where is the spirit? The spirit is **in** you! **The external written tablets have been replaced with the law of the Spirit.** The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in your heart, and in your soul, and in your mind.

Rom 8:1-4

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the **law of the Spirit** of life set me free from the **law of sin and death.** 3 For

what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4 in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

NIV

Verses 17-18: When the veil has been removed and Christ is given full control, the Spirit brings freedom and spiritual growth. This is the confidence that Paul has in the New Covenant.

As we grow in Christ, we reflect, contemplate, or with unveiled faces (as a glass or mirror) the glory of God. We are transformed and **changed** into his likeness (**metamorphosis**).

Here is the perfection of the New Covenant. When you sin, you will not need to go to the priest with an animal sacrifice. You already have one in heaven that has already made an eternal, perfect, sacrifice with his own life, blood, and purity. You now have the power and perfection of the New Covenant living within you. Jesus kept the law perfectly for you and for me. Now the law has no power over you anymore. With no power, the law cannot condemn you for your sin. With no sin, there is no death. We now have lost the fading glory and exchanged it for an ever-increasing glory with freedom.

Oswald Chambers Jan. 23: “The greatest characteristic a Christian can exhibit is this completely unveiled openness before God, which allows that person's life to become a mirror for others. When the spirit fills us, we are transformed, and by beholding God we become mirrors. You can always tell when someone has been beholding the glory of the Lord, because your inner spirit senses that he mirrors the Lord's own character. Beware of anything that would spot or tarnish that mirror in you. It is almost

always something good that will stain it- something good, but not what is best.”

Closing:

Rom 6:11-14

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

NIV

If the Old Covenant of the OT was severe, how much more will the punishment be for those who trample underfoot the New Covenant of ever-increasing glory?

Heb 10:28-31

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30

For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

NIV

Any preacher today that does not preach this revealed truth of the New Covenant is a heretic and a liar.

