

## Transformed and Free

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

In 2 Corinthians 3, the Apostle Paul speaks to a people struggling to move past their old ways of living. He compares the old covenant—which required a veil to hide the fading glory on Moses' face that in turn moved to the new covenant, where the glory never fades. Paul calls us to live with "great boldness" (v. 12) because, through Christ, the veil is taken away. When the veil is removed, and we truly see Christ, Everything changes!

I want you to see this chart that reveals the New Covenant Promises compared to the Old Covenant Prophecies. This is located in your bulletin listening guide.

Old Covenant	New Covenant
It's engraved on stone tablets (vv.3-7)	It's written on our hearts (v.3)
Death-Dealing Written Code (v.6)	Life-Giving Spirit (v.6)
Death (v.7)	Life (v.7)
The glory of God (vv. 7, 9-11)	The glory of God (vv. 8)
Fading (vv. 7, 11)	Permanent (v.11)

### I. The Veil is Removed, Christ is Seen (v. 13-16)

Paul looks back at Moses, who put a veil over his face so the Israelites would not see the glory fading away (Exodus 34). Paul uses this as a metaphor for legalism and unbelief. When we try to reach God through our own efforts, our minds are "hardened" (v. 14).

We see the problem: The veil represents blindness to the fullness of the gospel, focusing on rules rather than on a relationship with Christ. Listen to verse 14. We will see this further in a few weeks, but listen to 2 Cor. 4:4 ***"In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."*** What is the solution? Verse 16: "But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (v. 16). When we stop trying to impress God with our performance and instead turn to Jesus in faith, the spiritual blind spots are removed. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Parents and grandparents, please get your child in front of the gospel as much as possible. They will not choose church, they will be blinded by the god of the world Satan to be entertained instead of encouraged and eternally saved by the gospel message. The solution is the gospel! This is all out spiritual warfare! Prayer and proclamation of the gospel must be presented often and always!

### II. The Spirit is Received, Freedom is Granted (v. 17)

"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (v. 17).

- **Freedom from Bondage**: This isn't just freedom *to* do anything; it is freedom *from* the crushing weight of legalism, shame, and the need to justify ourselves.
- **Freedom to Serve**: It is freedom to serve God out of love, not fear.

- **Freedom from the Past:** Whether it is past sin or old habits, the Spirit breaks the chains that hinder our spiritual progress.

### III. The Lord is Reflected as We are Transformed into His Image (v. 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."

- a. **We represent a new identity.** We are no longer limited to seeing God's glory through a mediator (like Moses). Because the veil is gone, *we all* can behold his glory. 2 Cor. 5:17: ***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."***
- b. **We reflect Christ.** Paul suggests that we act as mirrors. As we gaze at Jesus in the word and in prayer, we reflect his light. The more we look at him, the more we become like him.
- c. **We radiate change.** This transformation isn't an outside-in, behavioral fix. It is an inside-out change of heart, driven by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 15:51) ***"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"*** This is a wonderful verse for a church nursery.
- d. **We reproduce His likeness.** It is a process: "from glory to glory" or "ever-increasing glory." We are not instantly perfect, but we are consistently changing. (Rom. 8:29-30) ***"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified."***

#### **Application: Living with opened eyes**

The challenge for us today is to live with "opened eyes."

1. **Repent and stop hiding:** Stop trying to hide your weaknesses or covering up your spiritual life with religious activity.
2. **Return to the Lord:** Daily, turn away from self-reliance and turn to Jesus, trusting in his grace.
3. **Reflect His Glory:** Ask the Spirit to transform you, so that in your daily life—your work, your home, your relationships—others see the image of Jesus, not just your own efforts.

We are called to be people of the shining face, not because we are special, but because we are looking at someone who is.