

***“Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians —
Paul the Man, the Messenger, and His Message, All of Grace”
Part 2***

Review: Paul the Man, the Messenger, and His Message, All of Grace

- ***Paul, the Man, A Sinner Redeemed By God's Grace, Had An Eternal Hope!***
- ***Paul, the Messenger of God's Transforming Grace, Has Been Sent Forth***
- ***Paul's Message, The Truth that Is Now Unveiled, Alone Offers God's Grace***

- ***Paul, the Man, A Sinner Redeemed By God's Grace, Had An Eternal Hope!***

2 Cor. 3:12-13, 17-18

12 Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:

13 And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

...

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- ***This is the teaching here in summary:***
 - ***Regarding Moses:***
 - ***On Mt. Sinai Moses was presented tablets of stone and commanded to write on them the Law of God as given by Almighty God to him for his people.***
 - ***While Moses was in the presence of Almighty God his face shone with the glory of God which continued when he came out of the Lord's presence and into the presence of the nation of Israel. All could see that his face was shining when he came down from meeting with the Lord carrying the two tablets of stone.***
 - ***So Moses put on a mask so that the visible glory of God shining from him would not be seen. Paul tells us why in these verses. There were two reasons, one of which is found in Exodus and the other which is found here in our verses:***

- *That glorious influence of God's presence on him was quickly passing away indicating as Paul teaches that the Law itself would also lose in God's good timing its power and authority or be terminated. Moses did not want that to be known so he covered his face! Thanks to Paul we may now understand this so much better.*
- *We see here several similarities and contrasts between Moses and the Law and Paul and the revelation given thorough him. Through the teaching of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus Christ, Paul was given the teachings of the dispensation of grace including the gospel of the grace of God. This was given to. Him, he writes, for our sakes, for the sake of the church which is his body.*
 - *But rather than his face shining after his initial presence with the risen Lord as Moses had found his face, Paul's face was marred and his eyesight was seriously harmed.*
 - *Paul in his ministry to the people of God wore no masks and spoke and wrote without reservations concerning the simplicity and power of the revelation of the unveiled glory of God under grace. The glory revealed through Paul's revelation has not diminished and continues on and on while the Law has been annulled and is no longer in effect.*
- *Final conclusions of this teaching by analogy are found in the final verses of this chapter:*

2 Cor. 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

- *"The Lord is that spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty": **The Spirit of God is now, Paul writes here, writing his own letters on and in the hearts of God's dear children. That spirit is in fact the same Lord of glory that had been with Moses and had given the Law of Commandments to him to be written on the tablets of stone. But now instead of the bondage of the Law, we have the astounding and freely given***

liberty of grace by the same spirit. Indeed, the dispensational plan of God has changed entirely!

- ***So, the bottom line is this: Moses had his face veiled so the glory of God could not be clearly seen by the people. We are wearing no veil so the glory of God's working in us under grace may be well seen and known when we look into the mirror and see ourselves being glorified by the almighty power of God the spirit of liberty under grace working in us all, "from glory ... to glory..."***

This is the ongoing work of the spirit in us all, as we behold the glory of the Lord as displayed in the word of grace (not in the word of the law), we see as in a mirror ourselves as God sees us, are being changed into the same image or reality the Lord has ordained for his people. This process will be completed in heaven's glory, of course, not here. Here it is a life long process and the key to our understanding is in these words Amen.

- ***Paul, the Messenger of God's Transforming Grace, Has Been Sent Forth***

- ***Paul now turns to his own testimony as chapter 4 begins:***

2 Cor. 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not...

- ***For he had received directly from the risen and ascended Lord Jesus a new life and a ministry as we see written here. See 1 Tim. 1:15-16 for a blessed commentary on that high calling. And so having received so much "he faints not" even though he had given up his former life with all of its human and earthly glories and now had become "the offscouring of all things" See also 1 Cor. 4:10-13 for that blessed teaching. For the apostle, there were trials on every side and his life was often in danger, but he now had TRUTH and the God of Truth and that was enough. So he had the ministry of preaching that truth and it was more than sufficient. Amen.***

Do we feel the same? What is our ministry is a valid question for each of us?

- ***Paul's Message, The Truth that Is Now Unveiled, Alone Offers God's Grace***

2 Cor. 4:3-6

3 But if **our gospel** be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- ***The contrast between the old and the new is Paul's central focus here. Moses had hidden his face because he did not want the people to know that the Law which he had just delivered would be only temporary. So no one could see to the "end" of the law. The contrasts in the language there between these two workings of Almighty God are so important. Do we understand them fully?***

The contrasts are these: The ministration of death and the ministration of condemnation, and darkness on the one hand, and on the other, the ministration of spirit, the ministration of righteousness, and life and light.

- ***But in the ministry of the Law through Moses much about the Law and its purpose were hidden. In contrast, today, under grace, all is revealed. There are no masks today nor were there any for Paul. The full revelation of God's glory through his grace in Christ Jesus has been revealed with nothing to obscure it.***
- ***Paul preached Christ, his glory and his gospel with a power to save even the most reprobate of sinners, even one such as Paul! So he preaches the gospel that alone is the power of God unto salvation to all who will believe. And so Paul is our example today for we live under grace and not law. Amen and amen.***

Our Outline Today:

- ***Paul's Testimony of the Working of the Spirit in Him Should Be Compelling***
- ***The Working of Grace in Paul Is for Our Glory and Demands Our Attention***
- ***For Paul and for Us, Our Eternal Prospect of Glory Is Always Transforming!***

I. Paul's Testimony of the Working of the Spirit in Him Should Be Compelling:

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:7-12

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

- "... we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." : ***Our weakness is the condition for the display of God's power and strength — and his glory***
- "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed, Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." : ***The general statement, then the details***, "always delivered to death for Jesus sake", ***and therefore by God's gracious work the life of Jesus may be made manifest. "Always" is the key word here. In our day of plenty on every side, of signs and wonders promoted by media hawksters on TV and radio and Internet everywhere, with health and wealth their calling cards, Paul's message may not be welcomed by "the many", but so be it, it stands written here by our apostle and by God's grace may our hearts be open to receive it fully.***
- ***Paul's testimony was therefore powerful and it should always be our constant example. These Corinthians would know ever so well how true these words were. He writes in absolutes but truthfully so:***
- "... For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh": ***Now the summary statement of it all as he makes his central point here, that this is all "for Jesus' sake", and, of course, for ours as well.***

Do these words call you into a life of ministry and service to the Lord and others, for his glory? That is the question before us as we read and study these verses today. Can you look back in your life to a time when they did? If not, today is a new day, praise God.

II. The Working of Grace in Paul Is for Our Glory and Demands Our Attention:

- *So Paul's testimony here assumes a larger significance than one might have thought. And this is central to his point here.*

[READ] 2 Cor. 4:13-18

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

- “... We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak...”: ***David was an example for Paul and we are also bound up in this with him. We really do need to stand on the shoulders of those that have gone before. How well do we?***
- “... Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.”: ***This working of grace works through time and we are to accept that truth by faith and not require sight, David didn't, Paul didn't, and we shouldn't. That is the teaching here. Take note that this faith is attached to the word of grace which here is all about out eternal inheritance with Christ in heavenly glory. Without a knowledge of that we cannot reckon on these truths “by faith”.***
- ***If Paul's suffering was “for us”, then what if we refuse to “imitate him”? What are the consequences of that rebellion likely to be? No doubt we would experience all that he has written about in these letters regarding the abundant life with the fullness of grace and peace overshadowing our trials and our sufferings. Great joy in our salvation is offered to all believers and by his grace we may always***

enjoy him as he works such miracles in each of us by his grace. But there is more here as we shall soon see.

- *Future glory is promised for those who suffer with him in a godly way, really!*

III. For Paul and for Us, Our Eternal Prospect of Glory Is Always Transforming!

[READ] 2 Cor. 5:1-4

1 For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

4 For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

- *Paul reveals the details for our eternal future and they are so important to know! Take them to heart. These details were important to the Holy Spirit who inspired these words, the reason being that they would be a powerful and transforming blessing for the Corinthians, and, by application, for all those who would thereafter hear or read them. May we take them as spiritual food therefore and be eternally blessed by them.*
- *So it is clear. The teaching here is that there are special blessings available now to those who take Paul's testimony to heart. By faith, he writes, our future as promised by the Lord here through Paul should be always taken to heart. By faith, he writes, not by sight. And if we do, as verse 4 indicates so powerfully, "mortality might be swallowed up of life". Now those are blessing of the Lord indeed. But there is more:*

[READ] 2 Cor. 5:5-8

5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who **also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.**

6 Therefore we are **always confident**, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

8 We are **confident**, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

- ***Again, faith is the key, not sight. Paul's example of faith should be our example when we are under stress and our burdens are great. If Paul with his constant trials even unto death can be our example, and he says he has been appointed as such by the Lord, then our sufficiency is also in the Lord and his word of promise. Amen.***
- ***Are we willing as Paul was, even to be with the Lord? If we are, what difference does it make? Any testimonies?***

[READ] 2 Cor. 5:9-11

9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be **accepted of him**.

10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad.

11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

- ***Paul considered his life a labor, yes, but a labor of love. Why? How do we see our lives? It was as he writes here because he considered the rewards ahead for faithfully service.***
- ***The Judgment Seat of Christ is ahead for all — rewards or loss ... What foundation are we building upon? Our works? The church? Our families? Certain teachers and preachers? Or on Christ himself, the only true and authentic foundation that will endure.***
- ***Knowing the Lord of glory is a burden that should always motivate us in ministry and outreach. It shall be, he promises, that our burdens will be light when we are knowing your future as Paul did. Praise the Lord!***

Application / Conclusions:

- ***Praise God for his ever abundant grace. May his grace and peace so capture your hearts and minds that you also may be shining with his glory to all that they may also come in God's good timing into his abundance and salvation through grace. Amen.***