

THE FREEDOM TO SEE AND TO BE

Sunday, April 21, 2024 – 2 Corinthians – Pastor Ben Nistor

2 Corinthians 3:17–18

English Standard Version (ESV)

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

REVIEW

- 1) LAST WEEK: Psalm 4 and David the Shepherd King – As we seek God, we can enjoy the peace, rest and hope that can only come from God.
- 2) WEDNESDAY: ‘How/What Should We Pray for One Another?’ – Our prayers should reflect our concern for the spiritual well-being of others and ultimately bring glory to God.
- 3) TODAY: ‘The Freedom to See and to Be’ – how the Holy Spirit frees us to see Christ and be like Christ.

BACKGROUND OF 2 CORINTHIANS

- 1) Paul’s history with the Corinthian Christians is intense:
 - Paul visited Corinth for the first time in Acts 18. He was opposed by Jewish worshippers.
 - After “many days,” Paul left Corinth (Acts 18:18), having been acquitted by Gallio (Acts 18:14–16).
 - We know of at least four letters that Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor 5:9; First Corinthians; 2 Cor 2:4; Second Corinthians)
 - We know of at least two visits to Corinth (Acts 18; 1 Cor 2:5–10; 3:1; 5:12; 7:12), and possibly a third (2 Cor 12:11, 14; 13:1)
 - Paul confronted the Corinthians on sin issues, spiritual practices, and sordid allegiances.
- 2) Paul’s ministry to the Corinthian Christians is inspiring:
 - Despite their struggles, Paul gave thanks for the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:4–9)
 - Despite their foolishness, Paul spoke truth to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:26–31)
 - Despite their disloyalty, Paul endured major personal trials as an apostle (2 Corinthians 1:8–10; 2:4, 13; 4:8–12, 16–17; 6:4–10; 7:5–6; 12:7–10)
 - Despite their drifting, Paul remained centered on Christ (1 Corinthians 2:1–5; 2 Corinthians 1:19; 2:14–17; 4:5; 5:14; 8:9; 10:5; 12:9–10)

SO WHAT??

In Second Corinthians 3:1–4:6, Paul teaches that the foundation of true Christianity is the new covenant. All Christians are part of the new covenant. This is possible because the Holy Spirit frees all Christians to see Christ’s beauty and to be transformed into Christ’s likeness.

The Spirit gives us the freedom to SEE Christ and to BE like Christ

THE SPIRIT’S FREEDOM FOR THE BELIEVER (2 Corinthians 3:1–4:6)

- 1) The Holy Spirit frees us to SEE Christ (3:17–18a)

-Jesus Christ is the face of YAHWEH’S glory:

*17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there is freedom**. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,*

2 Corinthians 4:6: For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God **in the face of Jesus Christ**.

-Jesus Christ is the final word of God’s salvation:

Hebrews 1:1–3: *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

-Jesus Christ embodies the fullness of God's presence:

Colossians 1:13–20: *13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

APPLICATION

- Has the Spirit freed you to see Christ's beauty? Turn to him (2 Corinthians 3:16).
- Rejoice in our freedom to see Christ clearly; Keep Christ the center of all you do.

2) The Holy Spirit frees us to BE Christlike (3:18)

18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

-We are being transformed

*18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed***

- Our transformation comes from God ('the Lord who is the Spirit')
- Our transformation is God's doing ('being transformed')
- Our transformation is certain ('are being transformed')

-We are being transformed 'into the same image'

- God wants us to look like Christ ('beholding the glory of the Lord')
Romans 8:29: *29 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.* (cf. Colossians 3:5–11)
- God makes us more like Christ when we submit to his plan for our lives (Romans 12:1–2)
- God makes us more like Christ when he frees us from bondage to sin (Romans 6:1–14)
- God makes us more like Christ when we experience consistent spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18)
- God will complete our transformation when Jesus returns (1 John 3:2)

-We are being transformed 'from one degree of glory to another'

- Our transformation is gradual (Ephesians 4:17–24; cf. 1 Timothy 4:15).
- Our transformation is measurable (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5)
- Our transformation is eternal (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18)

APPLICATION:

- If you want to know God's plan for your life, place your trust in Jesus Christ.
- Encourage each other to make progress towards Christlikeness. Endure to the end.