

“The Heart of an Apostle” - Part 5

2 Corinthians 3:1-18



“The Unfading Glory of the New Covenant”

Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians spends significant time defending his apostolic authority. One of the marks of his apostleship, Paul defends, is that he is given the privilege to mediate the New Covenant that God made with His people. A covenant where God's glory never fades but is made visible in his people through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

Big Idea: “because God indwells his people through the New Covenant, God's people must display God's glory.”

We Live As Letters From Christ (3:1-3)

“You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3 NIV)

- Paul's enemies were accusing Paul of not having the proper documents that would prove his legitimacy.
- The credibility of the gospel comes to light by our words, attitudes, and actions. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34).

We Live As Competent Ministers Of God (3:4-6)

“Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—” (2 Corinthians 3:4-6a NIV)

- Paul says, that his confidence is “because of” (through) Christ and his right standing before the Father.
- We are called to be competent servers of the new covenant.

We Live As Ministers Of The Permanent (3:7-11)

“Will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! For what was glorious has no glory now in

comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!” (2 Corinthians 3:8-11 NIV)

- The old covenant, though given by the “finger” of God, brought only temporary glory.
- We can approach every day with the full assurance that what we are “serving up” is not some temporary solution to some physical or emotional need, but the unfading, permanent gospel of Jesus Christ.

We Live As Unveiled Faces Of Hope (3:12-18)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV)

- Let us understand, though we serve up this glorious hope, we do so to a people who are veiled to their sin that the old covenant revealed.
- The reason God's glory is unfading in the new covenant, is that his presence is within his people.

So What?

So where is the presence of God and his glory in the midst of a fallen world? It's here, since God's glory resides where God is, it's everywhere God's people are.

- We are called to be the letter of Christ, read as if it were a review read by those who do not know him.
- We are called competent servers of the new covenant, empowered by God for success.
- We are ministers of that which is permanent, to a world whose focus is on the temporal.
- We are reflectors of the very glory of God who resides within us.

Let us go forth and glow for God!

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