

A Glorious Change

II Corinthians 3:5-4:18

Theme: Because of the incredible working of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, every believer has the opportunity to glorify God by being changed.

Background:

1. Paul planted the church of Corinth on his 2nd missionary journey
2. The church caused great anguish to the Apostle Paul's life and ministry.
3. Paul didn't give up but spent much time communicating with the church.

Communication Timeline:

1. Paul wrote a lost letter to the church he had planted
2. The church wrote a letter back to him with questions and problems
3. Paul wrote I Corinthians to answer the questions and deal with specific problems that had been brought to his attention by the house of Chloe.
4. Paul made a painful visit (II Cor 2:1) to the church to deal with problems (especially false prophets who were defaming Paul's reputation)
5. Paul wrote another lost letter rebuking the church for its behavior
6. Paul received word from Titus that the church was doing better so he wrote II Corinthians in response to their repentance.

I. The Process of the Change (3:18)

But we all

-All whom the indwelling Holy Spirit has made free through Salvation (including Paul)

With open face

-A face that is unveiled or uncovered

As in a glass the glory of the Lord

-This literally means as in a mirror—Looking face to face with the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Changed into the same image

-Transformed into the same image that is being beheld in the mirror—Jesus Christ.

From Glory to Glory

-This is the progressive nature of the process of changing and bringing glory to God.

By the Spirit

This change is made possible by the Holy Spirit of God which indwells every believer.

II. The Possibility of the Change (3:5-17)

The change is possible through the working of our Triune God.

A. Made possible by the triumphant working of Christ on the cross

1. The glory of the ministry of Christ superseded the less glorious ministry of the old covenant (3:6-16)
2. Christ did away with the blinding veil (3:13)

B. Made possible by the enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit

1. Brings freedom through Christ's work (3:17)
2. Brings enlightenment in the change process.(3:18)

C. Made possible by the Authoritative Power of God the Father

1. God's same power expressed in the creation is expressed in our hearts. (4:6)
2. God is all sufficient in giving us the privilege of the New Testament/Covenant (3:5,6)

III. The Product of the Change (4:1-18)

A. A commitment to faithful ministry (4:1-2)

1. That faints not
 - to become discouraged or lose heart
2. That has renounced dishonesty
 - to disown shameful ways
3. That does not walk in craftiness
 - conducting self in deceit or trickery
4. That does not handle the Word of God deceitfully
 - distorting the Word of God
5. That by truth lives with a good conscience to God and man
 - living truth so no one can accuse you of wrongdoing

B. A confidence in being a useable vessel (4:7)

C. A confidence in future blessing (4:13-18)

1. By faith (4:13)
2. Through the resurrection (4:14)
3. Despite present suffering (4:16-18)

So What? Consider these questions:

-Do I realize and appreciate that God has given you the opportunity to become more like Christ—to Change?

-Do I appreciate what God has done for you through Christ?

-Am I willing to change? Am I pliable? moldable?

-What is keeping me back from beholding Him with open face as in a mirror?

-God reveals Himself through the Word of God—Am I in it?

-Do I behold the face Jesus Christ daily?

-Am I discouraged in the projects and ministry that God has given me on this earth or am I confident, like Paul, knowing what kind of ministry He has entrusted to me?

-Am I faithful through suffering because of what He is doing to and for me?