

The Book of 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 4:6

Session 31: The Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Corinthians 4:6 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.

We see the glory of God in His wondrous plan of salvation, especially when we realize that God interrupted His program with Israel, so that we who were “far off, and strangers from the covenants of promise, we who were without hope and without God in the world, could be saved. God’s glory is vested in that; whether we trust the gospel or not. But, when we trusted Christ and believed the gospel, God’s glory in that becomes known to us.

But the glory that comes from our salvation is not the only knowledge God wants shining in our hearts. But, as we are conformed to the image of God’s Son by the effectual working of His word in us, there is more of His glory revealed! And that knowledge works to change us from “glory to glory.”

As we put Paul’s doctrine into practice when we are suffering, more of God’s glory gets revealed to us, and that glory changes us.

The “light” shining in our hearts illuminates the glory of God, where else but “in the face of Jesus Christ.” The light shining in our hearts from salvation is not the sum total of the glory that God wants shining in us. In other words, God doesn’t only want us to have “knowledge of the gospel,” He wants us to have knowledge of everything in the mystery of Christ.

This is a similar thing to the believing remnant (BR) being told they are “the light of the world.” And, when the true Israel becomes what God designed for them to be in His plan and purpose, they will be the light of the world.

What about us? I would refer you back to Ephesians where we are “light in the Lord!” Not only so, but back in Romans, we were told to “put on the armor of light!”

Romans 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and **let us put on the armour of light.**

That armor is doctrinal armor, which we have gotten up to this point in the book of Romans, and when we “put it on,” it means we are putting the doctrine into use in our lives, as we come under the attack of the policy of evil (PoE).

God has shined in our hearts to give us the ability to understand the knowledge of the glory of God. We need to talk about this “glory of God,” but before we do, Paul gives us two more prepositional phrases, “in the face” and “of Jesus Christ.”

2 Corinthians 4:6 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 reason for these two phrases is to tell us where we will need to look to find the knowledge of the glory of God. We won't find it anywhere else.

The glory of God is revealed in Jesus. The glory of God will be known and experienced by looking at Jesus Christ. When I say “looking at Jesus Christ” I don't mean “gazing at His picture,” I mean knowing who He is, what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do. And guess where these come from? How can we know who Jesus is? From the word of God. How can we know what Jesus has done? From God's word. It is the same for what He is doing and what He will do; we learn these things from the Bible.

There is a lot to know about Jesus Christ because there is a lot of glory to be revealed about God the Father. Let's just talk for a moment about one of these; the person of Christ.

The more we know about Jesus Christ, the more we will see of God's glory. And don't forget, this is what God wants shining in our hearts, the knowledge of His glory. And how do we know about the personhood of Jesus Christ? We know it from the word of God, rightly divided. Knowing about the person of Christ is the first half of the doctrine of Christology. Think about all the information about the person of Christ in the Scriptures.

Let me give a few examples of things we can study in the person and work of Christ.

- Who He was prior to His Incarnation
- His Virgin Birth
- Proofs of His deity
- The relationship of the Son to the Father
- The humanity of Jesus
- The sinlessness of Christ
- The character of Christ
- The intercessory ministry of Christ
- And we haven't even mentioned a single thing about the person of Christ as the "head of the body" or the "blessed and only potentate," or anything He is doing within the Mystery.

And while there is real value in everything in this list, this item is extremely important for a member of the body of Christ (BoC) living in the dispensation of grace (DoG).

When it comes to the knowledge of the glory of God, it is especially important to know about the work of Christ within the Mystery.

Why? Remember what we were told back in chapter 3?

2 Corinthians 3:18 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.*

Back in chapter 3, Paul is making the point that we do not glory in that which Israel gloried in, the Law, which made them distinct and separate from other nations. What are the Corinthians supposed to glory in? Not the old testament and its rituals, but the Mystery revealed by Jesus to Paul and the riches that are ours in Christ.

At this point, I think it will be very helpful to quickly recap the last 6 verses, one by one. You will see why this is beneficial when we get into verse 6.

In 2 Corinthians:

3:18 – As we behold the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory

4: 1 – Therefore, we faint not (we do not quit)

4:2 – We commend ourselves to men in the sight of God

4:3 – Satan blinds men’s minds to the gospel

4:4 – The light of the gospel shines unto us when we were lost

4:5 – We proclaim ourselves as servants to others for Christ’s sake

Now, let’s look back at our verse.

2 Corinthians 4:6 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.**

Put this verse together with verse 18 from chapter 3.

2 Corinthians 3:18 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.**

In other words, as we behold the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image! Think about it, we won’t be changed into something we have not beheld. And where will we behold it? In the word of God, for that is what will effectually work to produce a knowledge of that glory in our inner man. If we are not “beholding” the image of Christ by means of the word of God, then we are not being changed from glory to glory. As we “see” (behold) the glory of God which is in Christ Jesus, then we are changed into His image.

I can think of a time in the past where I observed something taking place. I had a desire to live for God and to be in the ministry. I would notice that there would be something about me that I identified as not being good, but it was a reaction of my flesh. Let’s say, losing my temper over something. So, I would work at trying to fix it. But, I didn’t know how, and I didn’t know that I didn’t know how. I would ask God to fix it, but that’s about all I knew to do. I would try to control my flesh, but even if I didn’t let it come out, it would still bubble up inside of me. In my outward appearance, I would be better and I thought that was a sign of growing

spiritually. But then, something would happen and I would act like I did before, and when I did, it took me by surprise. I can remember thinking, I thought I had overcome that, I wonder why that cropped back up. Do you know what that was? It was an indicator that real change had not yet taken place in me. I had trained my flesh to an extent, but eventually it showed itself.

I realized that the Bible was telling me how I ought to live, what I didn't realize was that the Bible contained what I needed in order to live according to its instructions. I thought that was up to me.

What I really needed was to know how to interact with God's word so it could actually work to change me, to produce a glory in me, and conform me to the image of Christ. And that is why I am constantly talking about Bible reading, Bible study and prayer going hand in hand, for those are at the heart of how we are edified.

If all you are doing is listening to the sessions, then real edification is going to happen very, very slowly, if at all.

When 2 Corinthians 3:18 talks about being changed from glory to glory, it is describing the process of being conformed to His image. And that transformation will only happen by the spiritual process of the life of Christ being formed in us, no matter how "good" we try to be in our own efforts.

There is a danger here, a danger of being in the word, and accumulating information, learning the proper doctrine (which is right and necessary), but failing to engage it in such a way that it works to change us from glory to glory. We have to read study and pray with that intention in mind. We need to behold the "face" of our Savior on purpose. The change that takes place in us must be intentional, which is why we are being told about it; so we can do it.

Sometimes people misunderstand when we talk about this issue of being the "glory of God in Christ." Sometimes when we talk about how the word is working in us, people may take that as us being prideful or setting ourselves up above others. If they are right, then we need to change that. But if we are not boasting of ourselves, but calling attention to the glory of God shining in us, that is how it is supposed to be. Still people may mistake what we are doing.

This is exactly what was happening to Paul. On the one hand, Paul was accused of being so unorthodox in his doctrine, yet at the same time, they accused him of being egotistical and self-promoting.

Their attitude is like this: “How dare Paul think his doctrine is better than someone else’s! Where does Paul get off talking about being changed from glory to glory, and then have the audacity to say that this can only happen by his doctrine! What gives Paul the right to say there is no other way to be truly edified? How dare Paul insinuate that he has something I don’t have. That looks very egotistical to me. Paul is just being prideful, and therefore, I reject him and his message.”

It is true that if we aren’t careful, our flesh will become prideful over godliness taking place in us. We can never allow ourselves to boast in ourselves, but we do (and must) boast in God the Father and the Lord Jesus for the glory that shines in us.

When we glory in what is ours in Jesus Christ, and the work that He does in us (for we are His workmanship), as we glory in how God is shining in our hearts, and by that shining we are being changed from glory to glory, we are not bragging on ourselves, we are boasting in God.

Paul boasted in the Lord. When we do this, we should be doing it for several reasons:

- 1) To reveal the glory of God and exalt the Lord Jesus
- 2) To express our awareness of what God is doing in us
- 3) To encourage other saints to do the same

- a. To continue in the glory of God

We are trying to challenge each other to continue in this process, instead of being jealous over the glory in another, we rejoice over the glory of God in them.

- b. To provoke to jealousy other saints to edification. We do so to show those who may not know the glory of God

- c. So that God’s glory can shine in us, so that they also might want that for themselves. In a sense, we are “provoking them to jealousy.”

If you are reading / watching this session, do you know you can join us live on Zoom? We publish session notes and note-takers that allow you to interact with the lesson. You can request these resources or inquire about how to join us live on Sundays or Tuesdays by contacting us by phone at (888) 605-3202, or email staff@mbiworldwide.org.

If you are not sure about where you will spend eternity, we care about you and we want you to have eternal life. Scan the QR code below to watch a short video that will explain how you can have salvation through Jesus Christ.



The Most Important Decision