

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: LIBERTY!

Text: 2 Corinthians 3: 12-4: 7

Date: May 14, 2017

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

2 Corinthians 3: 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: 14: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16: Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. 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.

LIBERTY FROM THE VEILED TO REVELATION

In context, Paul speaks much of the contrast between the veiled revelation of the old covenant and the dishonesty of legal preachers—with the openness and honesty of the gospel ministry—“*Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: 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:*”

We saw how Moses wore the veil when he came from talking with God. Paul uses that veil as picture of the old covenant dispensation. The old covenant law was full of shadows and types, and prophecy. It gave a partial revelation but it never took the veil off and gave a full revelation. They could not see Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

Then Paul uses the veil to describe the men of his day in the Jewish synagogue who read the law of Moses to the congregation—“*But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*”

They say that in imitation of Moses, men in Paul’s day would put on a veil when they read the law in the synagogue. So in one respect, Paul was speaking literally when he said “*until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament.*” It was a superstitious ritual, just a vain tradition to wear a veil when reading the law.

But Paul says that outward veil was symbolic of an inner problem—“*But their minds were blinded: ...But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*” Their hearts are veiled by God not removing it. And by hardness of heart and unbelief, by prejudice and defense of the old letter of the law and so on. And as we will see in the next chapter, by the prince of the power of the air.

Yet, he declares the ministry of the spirit is opposite to the old in that God gives us is liberty of revelation—“*Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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 Spirit of Christ removes the vail on the heart and gives liberty of revelation—not a veiled revelation.

LIBERTY NOT TO A FEW BUT TO ALL

Under the ministry of the old covenant, God only allowed Moses alone to come up to the mount to behold Christ when he gave the law. But the Spirit of the Lord gives liberty of revelation to all his redeemed people no matter who we are or what our condition—“*But we all...*”

Natural religion likes to have their clergy and laity; their big “I’s” and their little “you’s.” Christ sets us free from that bondage. He gives his revelation, not just to a select few, but to all his people who he bought with his blood. All kinds of people, with various sins and difficulties, have liberty of revelation given to us to behold Christ. Those who are weak, low, ignorant, compassed about with sin, he shines his light upon us all and gives all of his people liberty of revelation whatever state he finds us.

Isaiah 25:7: And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

All kinds of his elect, in all distresses, wherever his elect be in any nation the Spirit of the Lord gives us liberty of revelation. He does not reveal Christ to just Jew but also to his Gentile elect. It is not just to his elect in the nation Israel but his elect scattered in all nations. There is no privileged class; Christ reveals himself to all His people who he has purchased with his own blood. We saw it begin on the day of Pentecost when this prophecy of Joel was fulfilled in that the Spirit gave liberty to behold Christ to all kinds of sinners. That is the point of this passage,

Joel 2: 28: And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: 29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit...32: And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

LIBERTY FROM VEILED DECEIT TO TRUTH

2 Corinthians 3: 18: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,...

Christ gives liberty from the old veiled, dishonest preaching we once believed so that we are free to declare and hear the gospel of Christ openly and honestly in spirit and in truth. This glass is the preaching of the gospel. We behold with open face—open, honestly, with full revelation, with nothing hidden or veiled.

Legal religion will not declare Christ openly, honestly and plainly. They will not declare the believer is not under the law but under grace. They will not declare Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. They will not declare that Christ will not remember our sin nor impute sin to a believer. They will not declare salvation is of the Lord beginning to end: of God the Father choosing, Christ redeeming, the Spirit quickening and keeping. They will not declare Christ, they keep preaching man’s works. It is bondage not to be able to speak and hear the gospel of Christ freely and plainly and truthfully.

Christ sets his people free to hear and declare the truth boldly and plainly. Paul said, “*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: ...which vail is done away in Christ.*”

The vail upon the heart is only removed by the Spirit of Christ through the truth of the gospel of Christ so we want our hearers to look steadfastly to the end of that which is abolished to behold *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to the believer*. We want them to behold Christ is the one who abolished the law toward his people by fulfilling it in every jot and tittle. We behold with open face and we want everyone else

to behold Christ with open face so we preach the truth openly and truthfully. Christ has given us this liberty from deceitfulness to speak the gospel in truth using this one means of gospel preaching.

2 Corinthians 4: 1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God...5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. [how did you receive this liberty Paul?] 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. 7: But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

It is such great liberty to be able to declare God's word from every page of this book and not have to skip around for fear of offending sinners!

LIBERTY FROM LAW TO GRACE

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.*

The Spirit of the Lord reveals Christ so that we are given liberty from the law and works so that we are now grown in grace by Christ himself through the gospel.

The Spirit of the Lord made us behold "*as in a glass*"—not in the law, but in the Gospel of Christ, not with the natural eyes but with the eye of understanding and faith; not by carnal but by spiritual sight. This glory excelleth that of the old carnal ministry of the letter—this is the ministry of the spirit and that Spirit is the Lord and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.

The Spirit of the Lord made us behold in the gospel, not the glory of Moses, not the glory of our works, but *the glory of God*

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 behold in Christ "*the glory of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.*" We beheld Christ the Wisdom of God, Christ the Righteousness of God, Christ the Holiness of God, Christ the Love of God, Christ the Longsuffering of God, Christ the Goodness of God. We beheld God when we beheld Christ working his miracles and doing good and hanging upon the cursed tree. God said,

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, [the Spirit of the Lord made us look upon Christ whom we pierced] and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.

We see there was no other way for God to save us and yet be just than by Christ bearing our sin, bearing our curse and making us the righteousness of God in him. And as we beheld Christ, the Spirit of the Lord *made Christ unto us Wisdom and Righteousness and Sancification and Redemption and we began to glory in the Lord alone!* We heard God say "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased hear ye him.*" We heard God say, "*This is the work of God that you believe on him whom he hath sent.*" We began to believe on Christ and God declared "*Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in him.*"

By beholding Christ, the Spirit of the Lord *changed us into the same image of Christ*. He put on us *the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness*

Colossian 3: 10...the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 11: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

He made us a new creation where old things are passed away and all things are become new. He made Christ to have preeminence in our new heart:

Romans 8:29: For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

He changed us from that old glory of old covenant law to this glory that excelleth of the new covenant of grace. He continues growing us up into Christ "*from glory to glory*"—that is from one degree of grace and knowledge to another—the same way he began this work, that is through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

The Spirit of the Lord began this work, the Spirit of the Lord continues this work. He began and so he continues not by making us behold Moses and the law but by making us behold the glory of God in Christ; not in the hearing of our works but hearing of Christ's works. This change began by beholding Christ and it continues by beholding Christ.

By the Spirit of the Lord, through hearing the gospel of Christ, we were given liberty to behold Christ who gave us liberty from sin's guilt, liberty from sin's penalty, liberty from sins' dominion in that he enabled us to believe on him and liberty from the fear of death.

And having begun this way, by the same Spirit of the Lord in this same glass hearing the gospel of Christ's person and works beholding this same glory of the Lord—"*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.*"

He gave us liberty from going back to the law and my works and liberty to be grown in grace by the Spirit of the Lord making us beholding Christ's person and works. He gave us this liberty from the works of the law teaching us that, "*in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*" (Gal 6: 15)

Romans 8: 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death...4...that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Amen!