



UNVEILING HIS GLORY **Exodus 34:29-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18**

If you have a Bible, and I hope you do, let me invite you to open with me to Exodus 34. Some of those times were not planned tonight, and so we've cut into the pastor's preaching time. So put your seat belts on. We're going to fly through some things tonight. You can pull out those notes from your Worship Guide. We've got a lot of things that I want us to see in God's Word. In fact, while you're turning to Exodus 34 back in the Old Testament, I want you to also find with me, kind of mark Exodus 34, and then go find 2 Corinthians 3 as well. So Exodus 34 and 2 Corinthians 3. Mark them both. We're going to be looking at them both tonight.

While you're turning there, at the beginning of this year, about two Sundays in, God began to take us as a church in a different direction than we—or at least I—had planned. If you were here on that particular Sunday, we kind of threw aside the plans for the day and looked at some truths that I believe God was desiring to teach us. That began to change everything. This pastor's preaching schedule just kind of got thrown out the window, and we've gone a different direction over the last couple of months. It's revolved around a picture of the Spirit and the glory of God.

The Spirit and the Glory of God...

What I want to do tonight is, in a sense, put a bookend on that. Not that we've arrived, or are there, or are ready to move on to something else, because I believe these truths are just beginning to sink in. But I want to remind you of the truths that we began this journey on at the beginning of the year about the Spirit and the glory of God and let that inform our understanding of the text we're about to read.

You've got in your notes there--and I just want to recap here. This is key. These are bedrock truths that I hope will continue to sink in more and more and more. I believe God still desires to teach us starting with the top there in your notes: Only the Spirit of God knows the fullness of the glory of God; only the Spirit of God knows the fullness of the glory of God. This is 1 Corinthians 2:11. "*No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.*" Only the Spirit of God, He is the only one who knows the fullness of the glory of God. So 1 Corinthians 2:10 and following teaches this, especially there in verse 11.

Second, based on that, if we want to know God, then we need the Spirit to reveal Him to us. Not "We could use some help from..." or "We might talk to every once in a while..." We need the Spirit to reveal Him to us. You can't know God apart from the Spirit. I can't know God apart from the Spirit of God. Only the Spirit of God knows the fullness of the glory of God. Therefore, if we want to know God, then we need the Spirit to reveal him to us.

Now, based on those two truths, the logical conclusion is this: Therefore, a people who are desperate to know God will be desperate for His Spirit. It only makes sense. If you're desperate to know God and only the Spirit knows the fullness of the glory of God, then you will be desperate for the Spirit. This was the primary point of conviction for me—and I hope for us—at the beginning of this year. I looked at my life, and I looked at the church God has entrusted me to lead, and to be honest, I saw a pastor and a people who were not desperate for His Spirit. Starting with me not leading in a way that is desperate for the Spirit, not living in a way that is desperate for the Spirit. I said on that day, "I don't think we as a church are known as a church that is desperate for the Spirit of God."

This was so convicting because I realized and became increasingly convinced of this idea that we have created a means and methods for doing church that, in the end, requires little, if any, help at all from the Holy Spirit of God. We don't have to fast and pray for the church to grow; we can market for the church to grow. We can do publicity for that. The danger is that it is possible for us as The Church at Brook Hills to be a successful church, to be a growing church, to be successful in the eyes of this church culture and do it all without the power of the Holy Spirit of God; do it all in ourselves. The reality is, we'd not really be successful. We'd get to the end of the picture of our lives and this church, and we will have wasted it on ourselves and will have missed out on the fullness of the presence of God.

So, I came to this conclusion. This was what was so penetrating: If we are not desperate for His Spirit, it is a sure indicator that we have grown content with knowing little about God. If you want to know the fullness of the glory of God, then you have to be desperate for His Spirit, because only His Spirit can show you the fullness of the glory of God. If you're not desperate for His Spirit, then that automatically entails that you're content with not knowing the glory of God. Are you desperate for His Spirit?

Put that question back in front of you in your life tonight. Are you, are we, are you desperate for the Spirit? Are we desperate for the Spirit? If not, then that means that we are content with knowing very little about God. That's why we went on this journey in Exodus 32, 33 and 34. We've gone a few different places. Why have we talked about sin in the camp? It's because this picture of God saying to His people in Exodus 33, "I'm not going to go with you. My presence is not going to go with you into the Promised Land." And Moses pleading, interceding, praying. He's saying, "God, we can't take one step without your presence. We're not going to go one step without your presence." That leads him to that climax in Exodus 33:17-18, where he says, "God please show me your glory." He wanted the glory of God. It made him desperate for the presence of God.

This is where I'm praying that God is continuing to take us as a church. I'm definitely not saying by putting a bookend on this tonight that we are there. In fact, I'm still very concerned. I'm concerned because we are so conditioned in the religious south to looking at Christianity in terms of our routines and our practices, and this and that, that we have a dangerous tendency to miss the whole point of Christianity. In fact, this is why we're going the way we're going. After Easter next week, we're going to dive in the following week to study the gospel, the lifeblood of our faith. Because I'm convinced there are many people in this room tonight who, if I were to ask you, "What is the gospel", you would not know what to say. What is the gospel?

That's important! This is the very lifeblood of our faith, and this is what—if I can be honest—this is what haunts me. This is what keeps me awake as a pastor. It's based on the Word. The reality is there are people in this room who think that they are followers of Christ that are not actually followers of Christ. We can deceive ourselves so easily, and we need to look at the reality that it's high time to leave behind that which is superficial and seek that which

is supernatural in the church; to put aside that which is routine and look at that which is real and what really counts in our faith.

So we're continuing on this journey, and I want to ask you tonight—put a bookend on that—do we want to know the glory of God? Really, do we want to know the glory of God? If we do, then let us be a people desperate for the Spirit of God. Desperate for the Spirit of God. If any of this is going to happen, it's going to be because the Spirit does it. And that leads us to Exodus 34.

We're going to start in verse 29. Let me give you a little background lead-in just in case some of you haven't been here the last few weeks and you're thinking, "What in the world are you talking about?" Well, just follow with me here. Exodus 32, God had just finished meeting with Moses on the mountain and giving Moses the law—Ten Commandments, you know the whole Charlton Heston thing—that was happening on the mountain. He gave Moses the Ten Commandment and the law. Moses is bringing the law down the mountain, and before he even gets down the mountain, the people of God have constructed a golden calf, and they're worshipping that. Moses gets down the mountain; he's got the law written on tablets of stone, and he throws them down and they crash; they shatter. This happens in Exodus 32. By the end of the chapter, 3,000 people are struck down dead. God sends a plague on His people.

Exodus 33 is when He says, "I'm not going to go with you." Moses pleads and he prays for them, and he says, "Show me your glory." That leads us into Exodus 34, which we looked at last week when God shows His glory by revealing His name. He meets with him a second time on the mountain to give him the law a second time. That's what happens after the verses we read. We stopped at verse 14 last week. What happens in the rest of this chapter, in the middle part of Exodus 34, is God gives the law a second time. The law is being written on tablets of stone. That leads us to verse 29. It says,

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him. (Exodus 34:29-35)

That's the picture in Exodus 34. Moses literally radiating the glory of God after being in His presence. Now go with me to 2 Corinthians 3. This is one of those texts in the Old Testament that actually has really a commentary on that text in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 3. For the sake of time tonight, we're not going to read the whole chapter, although it would be beneficial. I want to try to keep this picture as simple as I can. Get down to verse 18. Let's just read this verse, and if you don't have this verse underlined in your Bible, I would encourage you to underline it. This is an incredible verse.

Second Corinthians 3:18. Paul throughout this chapter is talking about what was going on in Exodus 34, and he comes to this. He says, *"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."* Now here's what's going on in 2 Corinthians 3. What Paul is doing is he is contrasting the covenant that was given in Exodus 34. Remember, "covenant" is like an arrangement, it's like a marriage. The covenant that was going on in Exodus 34 when God gave this law there, and His covenant in the New Testament, the old covenant and the new covenant.

By the way, just a side note, that word "testament"—Old Testament or New Testament—literally means "covenant". So what you've got is the old covenant and the new covenant. You've got Paul throughout 2 Corinthians 3, and he's contrasting the old covenant with the new covenant. Now, when you read 2 Corinthians 3, you will find two words repeated over and over again. Those two words are "Spirit" and "glory". Together, you'll find those words twenty times in this one chapter alone. You might go back in your time with the Lord and circle every time you see "glory" and "Spirit". They're all over this picture.

Do We Really Need His Spirit?

So what I want us to do is I want us to take this picture in 2 Corinthians 3 that helps us understand Exodus 34, and I want to put two questions in front of you based on the Spirit of the glory of God. The first question is this: Do we really need His Spirit? Do we really need the Spirit of God? There's a contrast here in 2 Corinthians 3 between the old covenant and the new covenant, and that contrast revolves around Spirit. Let me show it to you. Go back up a little bit in 2 Corinthians 3:3. This is where Paul starts this contrast. Listen to what he says. He says, *"And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink..."* Listen to the contrast: *"...but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."*

So catch the contrast here. The old covenant in Exodus 34 was written with ink on tablets of stone. The new covenant is written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is written with the Spirit, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts. This is the difference; this is the contrast here. One, tablets of stone written with ink; the other, human hearts inscribed by the very Spirit of God. This was the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant.

Now, I want you to follow with me here. We're about to just dive into a couple of places in the Old Testament. It's going to get a little bit theologically thick, but I promise you it will be worth it because the implications of these truths, this contrast, are huge for how we live our Christianity today. They are missing in how we live our Christianity today. So let me take you two places in the Old Testament. Go with me to Jeremiah 31. Feel free to use the Table of Contents if you need to to find Jeremiah 31:31. I want to show you two places in the Old Testament in the prophets where the new covenant is being prophesied. What you've got in the Old Testament is Exodus 34, that covenant being played out among the people of God, but you've got the prophets talking about a day when there is going to be a new covenant. It's going to look different, and I want you to see the difference. Look at Jeremiah 31:31. These are some of the most famous verses about the new covenant in the Old Testament.

Jeremiah 31:31, listen to what it says. This is God speaking through Jeremiah. He says,

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. [God just said, "It's not going to be like Exodus, it's going to be different."] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

"I'm going to put my law, not on tablets of stone, I'm going to put my law on their hearts." That was what was going to be new about this picture. Now flip with me over two books to the right. Go to Ezekiel. You go past Lamentations you get to Ezekiel 36. Look with me at Ezekiel 36:26. Another one of the most noteworthy passages in the Old Testament about the new covenant. Ezekiel 36:26, again this is God speaking through his prophet Ezekiel talking about the covenant that's to come. Now follow with me here. Listen to what He says. God says to His people,

And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:26-28)

Now this is what the Old Testament is talking about when it talks about the new covenant. It's saying the law is going to be written on your hearts, and God says, "I'm going to put my Spirit in you." That's going to be the difference. Old covenant: Tablets of stone written with ink. New covenant: Spirit writing on your hearts. This is so huge because I am convinced that much of contemporary Christianity, and many of us in this room, are trying to live New Testament Christianity based on Old Testament principles.

So what I want to do is I want to contrast—and you've got it in your notes—I want to contrast Spiritless Christianity with Spirit-filled Christianity. I don't want to imply by saying that that the Spirit wasn't active in the Old Testament. The Spirit was active in the Old Testament, but He was doing something completely new in the New Testament. We've got to see what He was doing because it radically changes our faith. Spiritless Christianity; Spirit-filled Christianity.

Spiritless Christianity

Three characteristics. Number one: Relies on external regulations; relies on external regulations. The law, written on tablets of stone. Now don't get me wrong; the law was good. The New Testament teaches the law was good. The only problem was people were not able to meet the law. Before the law had even made it down the mountain, they were already breaking all the laws. They weren't able to meet the law. Even when God gave the law a second time, they are still breaking the law over and over again. That's the history of God's people throughout the Old Testament. They're breaking the law over and over and over again. They can't live up to these external regulations that are written down. Spiritless Christianity relies on external regulations.

Second: Revolves around our performance for God; our performance for God. Once the

people were given the law, they began to think, "Okay, how can I keep the law? How can we obey the law?" And what happens was you had not just an Old Testament systems of laws and Scripture, you had Pharisees—teachers of the law—adding all kinds of new laws on top of the Scriptures. You had all kinds of new regulations and rules that you had to follow in order to please God. The list just kept getting larger and larger and larger. This is what the Pharisees and the teachers of the law in the Gospels are pointed out as doing by Jesus. They just add this burden of the laws over and over and over again on the people saying, "You've got to do these things in order to please God, in order to perform for God."

This is exactly what Paul is countering in 2 Corinthians 3 because there were a lot of people in the New Testament who were Jews, who were saying, "Well, you can come to faith in Christ, but you still have to do all the laws in order to be saved. It's the law and Christ." And Paul is countering that.

Spiritless Christianity relies on external regulations, revolves around our performance for God, and third, results in condemnation and death. The law demands that you follow it perfectly, so when you can't keep the demands of the law, then the law condemns you. The law itself sentences you to death. This is what Paul is talking about in 2 Corinthians 3:7. He says it's the ministry that brought death. In verse 9, it says it's the ministry that condemns men. The law pointed out man's inability to obey it, and as a result, condemned him and sentenced him to death. They couldn't keep it. That was the point.

Now, I want to pause here for a second. I want to pause here because this picture—Spiritless Christianity—I think describes how so many professing Christians are trying to live today. I want you to follow with me. We have created a church culture that revolves around the question, "What can I do to please God? How can I please God?" And we've come up with an answer to that question and the answer looks something like this: Step number one is to pray a superstitious prayer. A ritual rite of passage, so to speak. You pray this prayer, and that gets your foot in the door.

Once you've done that, you check that off. Now that you've prayed this prayer, you need to start going to church. An Old Testament idea, mind you; not a New Testament idea. New Testament, you don't go to church; you don't go to a place of worship. New Testament you are the church. New Testament you are the place of worship. You are the place of worship. You worship everywhere because you are the place of worship. That's New Testament. But we don't go there; we stick with the Old Testament. We're going to go to church, and if we're really serious, we're going to take our family to church with us.

Once we get to church, then we need to get involved in activities at church. The more activities the better. If there are not enough activities at church, then we get mad. Or if we don't like the activities at church, we get really mad. We need these activities, because in those activities, we learn what we're supposed to do in order to be a good Christian. Let me rephrase that. Actually, we don't learn what we're supposed to do, more properly said, we learn what we're supposed to avoid in order to be a good Christian. If you avoid this and this and this and this, then you're a good Christian. Stay away from those things, and you're a good Christian.

So, we go to the activities at church, we learn what we're supposed to do, and we go try to do those things. Then, we come back the next week, and we get a new list of things we need to work on, and we go try to do those things. All of the sudden, our Christian life is summed up with working and trying to figure out how I can please God with my life and my family and my work, and going to church to learn how to do that.

The only problem is we end up failing. More times than not, we end up failing. We do good for a while, but then we end up failing, and we start feeling guilty. We really feel guilty when we go back to church. So we pick ourselves up off the ground, and we dust ourselves off. We tell God we're going to try and do better next time, and we move on. The problem is we do this time and time again, and in the process, we begin to get tired. The result is the majority of people at church begin to rest content in a mediocre Christianity or maybe give up on going to church altogether.

Now, I don't want to over simplify this picture, but many of you in this room know that I just summed up your spiritual experience. I don't want to dishearten us unnecessarily, but the reality is much of what passes as Christianity today is a system of rules and regulations that Jesus Christ Himself would reject outright. Our faith for most of us revolves around, "What can I do to please God? How can I please God?" If that question, if that thought, is anywhere near your mind, then hear me; everyone within the sound of my voice, hear me loud and clear: What can you do to please God? The answer is absolutely nothing! There is nothing you can do to please God. Nothing. In fact, any effort to please God only drives you deeper into condemnation. You try and you try and you try, but the more you try, the deeper you go into an abyss of spiritual darkness. And the danger is—this is what's scary—you don't realize you're going there. You actually think you're going the right direction. You think if you're praying more and you're going to church more and you're studying the Bible more and you're being a better husband and a better wife and you're being a good, decent church-going mom or dad or person or student or single, whatever it is, you're getting closer to God and you're pleasing God more.

The reality is, you continue down that road, and one day, you will stand face to face with Jesus Christ Himself, and you will say to Him, "Lord, Lord did I not go to church and read the Bible and pray? Wasn't I a good husband, or wife, or mom, or dad? Wasn't I a good person? Wasn't I a decent Christian?" And He will look at you and say, "I never knew you. Away from me you evildoer." Why would He say that? He would say that because you missed the point. You did not need to do better and to do more. You didn't need to be a better husband, a better wife, a better mom or dad, or better student, or better single. You didn't need to go to church more, you didn't need to pray more, you didn't need to study more. You didn't need any of those things. You needed a new heart! You needed a new heart, and only the Spirit of God can give you a new heart. You can't manufacture that.

God, help us to see the radical sinfulness of our self-sufficient religiosity in the religious south that thinks we can please God. The reality of Christianity is you can't without a new heart. You need the Spirit of God to give you a new heart. Your life for all of eternity is based on whether or not the Spirit of God gives you a new heart, changes your heart.

Spirit-filled Christianity

This is the difference between Spiritless Christianity and Spirit-filled Christianity. Spiritless Christianity relies on external regulations. Spirit-filled Christianity relies on internal transformation. The difference is huge. Internal transformation. This is Jeremiah and Ezekiel both. "I will give you a new heart. I will give you a new spirit." It's Romans 8, "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires. Those who live according to Spirit have their mind set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death." This is what it says in Romans 8:8-9, "*Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you.*" The difference is you have the Spirit or not. Has your heart been changed or not? There is an internal transformation that must happen, and this is what makes--it's not that the picture in Exodus 34 was bad; Paul says this was glorious, but it's even more glorious because now it's the Spirit in your heart.

Spirit-filled Christianity relies on internal transformation. Second, instead of revolving around your performance for God, our performance for God, Spirit-filled Christianity revolves around God's performance in us. Ladies and gentlemen, Christianity is not about your work for God; it's about God's work for you. Does that sound weird? It sounds weird because it strikes at our pride, but it is the astounding, breathtaking, awesome truth of Christianity. It is "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*." It's Christ in you, moving through you.

That's what Ezekiel said. Ezekiel 36:27, did you hear what it said? "*And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*" Do you hear that? "*I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*" (Ezekiel 36:27) This is New Testament Christianity: Not you performing for God, it's God performing in you, for you, for His glory. That's the way He's designed it because then He gets all the glory for anything good that comes out of it.

Spiritless Christianity results in condemnation and death; Spirit-filled Christianity results in salvation and life. That's what Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians 3:9. He says, "*For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.*" Then, you get down to verse 17 right before what we read just a second ago. Listen to this. "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*" There is freedom! When the Spirit comes in there's freedom. Freedom to do what? Freedom to do anything you want? Absolutely! Freedom to do anything you want.

So, you're thinking, "David, I thought when you follow Christ, you have freedom to do anything God wants." That's the beauty of the new covenant. When He puts His Spirit in you, you now want what God wants. For the first time, you are free to do what He wants and He has created you to do. You have freedom for the first time. It's not that we've thrown the law out the window. That's not what Paul is saying in 2 Corinthians 3. In fact, when you have the Spirit for the first time, you are free to obey the law. You're free to obey God.

Now you're free to be the husband and the wife, mom and the dad, the student and the single that He has created you to be. You're free to pray and free to study the Word and free to witness to the glory of Christ. You're free to do all these things. The Spirit of the Lord in you moves you to do these things, and He gives you those wants, He gives you those desires, He gives you life. For the first time, once you have a new heart and the Spirit of Christ regenerates your heart, at that point for the first time, you are free to live the life that you were created to live.

It's the work of the Spirit. Do we need the Spirit? Yes! Absolutely we need the Spirit. If we don't have the Spirit, then we are destined to live defeated and shallow, ultimately un-Christian lives. If we don't have the Spirit in the church, then we will lead and be a part of a culturally successful church but spiritually-starving church that is wasting our lives away. I wish we had time to look at all this and dive into all this.

Remember back in Exodus when God gave the law, Moses brings the law down—we've talked about this—the law's shattered because the people have broken it. And at the end of Exodus 32, people are struck down. Anybody remember how many people are struck down? Three-thousand people struck down dead. The law is given. I mean what an inauguration for the covenant. This is a marriage relationship, and God gives the law, and 3,000 people offed in a day. This is not a good start. Three-thousand people die. The law is given.

Fast forward to Acts 2. Pentecost. Do you remember this? Remember what the feast of Pentecost was? It was a celebration of the giving of the what? The law. Pentecost was the

celebration among the people of God that would celebrate when God gave His law to His people. You get to Acts 2 when Pentecost happens but in Acts 2, who comes down? The Spirit comes down. The Spirit comes upon the people of God, resting like fire above them. It's the same picture we saw back here in Exodus. God, consuming fire on that mountain. Same picture over here. The Spirit comes upon the people of God, awakens their hearts. Peter stands up, and he preaches the Word of God in the power of the Spirit and what happens? How many people respond to the message of salvation that day? Not 3,001. Not 2,999. Three-thousand people! Is this a coincidence? No! This is the picture.

When the Spirit awakens hearts, it brings life and salvation. That is the picture that Scripture is giving us here! We absolutely, desperately need the Spirit. The danger is we are trying to do church in the 21st century based on Old Testament pictures that are devoid of the very Spirit of God, without whom we can do absolutely nothing. We've got to come back to the depth of a desperation for the Spirit of God in our lives and in our families and in the church. Do we really need the Spirit? Yes, we absolutely need His Spirit. Okay we've got to move on.

Do We Really Want His Glory?

Second question, it's based on this. They go together; you put the two together. Do we really need His Spirit? Yes. Do we really want His glory? That's the second question. Do we really want His glory? The answer is obvious if we have the Spirit. If you have the Spirit of God, you will want the glory of God. That means if we are not desperate for the glory of God, that means we may not have the Spirit of God. If there is not a desire in your heart for the glory of God, then you need to ask the question: Do you have the Spirit of God? But do we really want His glory?

That's where we come back to verse 18. "*And we all, with unveiled face...*" We'll come back to that in a second, draw on the parallel from Exodus 34. "*...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.*"

Now the key word there in the beginning is "reflect". This is a beautiful word. Now in order to—think about it with me—in order to reflect something, first you have to be exposed to that thing, and then once exposed to that thing, you begin to express that thing. It's like the reflection pool in Washington D.C. at the Washington Monument. At the Washington Monument, you have this reflection pool in front of it. This reflection pool is exposed to the image of this monument and, as it's exposed to that image on a moment by moment basis, it expresses that image in the pool. You look in the pool, and you see the Washington Monument. You see a reflection. And that's the word that Scripture uses to describe how we reflect the Lord's glory. We are exposed to the glory of God.

You say, "How are we exposed to the glory of God? We don't go into a tent of meeting; we don't go on Mt. Sinai to meet with God." Well that's the beauty. You go over to 2 Corinthians 4:6, and it says God has revealed His glory in the face of Christ. We see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. So how do you get exposed to the glory of God? Through the face of Christ.

And here's the beauty: When you're exposed to the glory of God in the face of Christ, you begin to express the glory of God in the image of Christ. That's what He said. Just like a

pool that shows you this monument, you are now a reflection of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Is that not one incredible picture? Just think about it.

Imagine Exodus 34. Imagine seeing Moses coming, jogging down the mountain. He gets to the bottom, and his face is literally beaming. I don't know how to picture that fast, but it's radiant—enough to really scare you; enough to cause you to say, "I think I'm going to go hang out in my tent." Man, how awesome is that? I mean that would keep people awake on Sunday morning if you had a beaming face. There had to be advantages to this. Imagine that scene! You look at him, and you see the glory of God radiating from this one man. That's the Old Testament picture.

You get to the New Testament to 2 Corinthians 3 and catch the gravity of what Paul is saying here. He says, "*We all...*" (2 Corinthians 3:18) Not one person, not Moses, not the best spiritual leader in this room, not the most spiritual of us; every single one of us, we all who encounter the glory of Christ, who know Christ, who place our faith in Christ, every single one of us in this room has the privilege of beholding the glory of God in the face of Christ. Please let that soak in. This privilege that Moses got when he went on a mountain and went into a tent to meet with God, you and I have the opportunity to experience on a daily basis. Wow!

But not just to behold the glory of Christ, but then in turn, when we walk away from beholding the glory of Christ, our faces aren't shining. You can't have an extra-long quiet time, and your face shines more as a result, and you've got this countenance on you. That's not what it's talking about. What it's talking about in 2 Corinthians 3 is when you behold the glory of God in the face of Christ, your life begins to take on the very likeness of Jesus Christ Himself. And you begin to show the glory of Christ in your life.

We will become like what we behold.

You've got in your notes, and here's the truth: We will become what we behold. When you behold the glory of Christ, you are transformed into the image of Christ Himself. You don't become like Christ by beholding TV all week. You don't become like Christ by beholding the Internet all week, surfing for hours and hours and hours. You don't become like Christ like that. You don't become like Christ when you fill your life with things of this world. You become like Christ when you behold the glory of Christ, and you expose your life moment by moment by moment to the glory of Christ. You begin to be transformed into His image.

Now here's the beauty. Now the Spirit—this is what the Spirit does—He transforms us. Now husbands and dads, you begin to show wives and children what the glory of Christ looks like in person. Wives and moms, you begin to show husbands and children what the glory of Christ looks like in person. Singles, the people you rub shoulders with day in and day out, they begin to see the glory of Christ in person. They are exposed to the glory of Christ in you. Folks from Brook Hills who are in New Orleans right now, or in Romania right now, who are in South Africa right now, are showing the glory of Christ in Romania and New Orleans and South Africa. Small groups that are going out around the world from this body of believers throughout this year, displaying the glory of Christ.

This is what New Testament Christianity is all about. It is not about getting people to come into a place to see the glory of Christ. That's not New Testament Christianity. New Testament Christianity is about sending out a people who are displaying the glory of Christ wherever they go. If we could get our arms, our hearts and our minds around that one truth, it would radically change—I'm convinced—radically change the city of Birmingham. You realize the goal is not to get the city of Birmingham into this building so they can see the glory of Christ. The goal is to send out 4,000 people from this building today all across

this city this week displaying the glory of Christ wherever we go. Letting people that you work with, you live with, you live next to and you pass by in a gas station, letting them behold the glory of Christ in you. This is New Testament Christianity, and it is God's plan for expanding His glory to the ends of the earth. Let us not forsake that global plan and sit back in a building and think this is church.

That's why Paul says what he says next in 2 Corinthians 4. This is a whole other sermon. This is a variety of other sermons. He starts talking about how we proclaim the Word of Christ. Go to 2 Corinthians 4:4-6. We'll just read this. I've pointed us to this passage before; it's such an incredible passage. Verse 4. Listen to this. *"In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."* They can't see because they're blinded. You get down to verse 6—we'll come back to verse 5 in a second—*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."*

What you've got is this picture of the Adversary blinding minds of unbelievers all across Birmingham, all across the country, all across unreached places in the world. You've got true God (big "G" God) is shining light into hearts to show the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. And you've got these folks who have veils over their faces. They can't see. That's what Paul is talking about at the end of 2 Corinthians 3 about the Jewish people. They were veiled; they weren't seeing. You've got this going on, blinded and light shining and in the middle is verse 5. *"For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake."*

Do you realize what this is saying? We're on the front lines, you and I, of a spiritual battle between the god of this world and the true God; blinding minds here, shining light into hearts here and we're in the middle. And do you know what we're doing? We are preaching Christ. We are proclaiming Christ. We're not talking about sports all the time, we're not talking about stuff, we're not talking about all the things this world has to offer us. We're talking about Christ because we want people who are blinded from His glory to see His glory. We want the people we work with to see His glory. We want the people we live with to see His glory. We want the people pass by in our neighborhoods to see His glory. And so we preach Christ.

We don't just display the glory of Christ; we declare the glory of Christ. And we do it with great confidence because we know that the Spirit is shining light into hearts and He is going to open eyes. Is there anything greater than the privilege of standing with someone else and seeing their eyes opened for the first time to the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ? There is nothing greater than this! There are a billion people in the world who have never even heard the gospel who are ready to hear it from you and me. This is why we must preach Christ to the nations, church. This is why we must abandon our lives to behold the glory of Christ, to become like Christ and to declare the glory of Christ wherever we go.

We will preach that which we prize.

We will preach that which we prize. When you prize Christ, you preach Christ. When you prize the glory of Christ, you proclaim the glory of Christ. This is why we come to Birmingham. This is why we give our lives this week to expose people to the gospel to the glory of Christ, because Christ is worthy of the glory of every single person in the city of Birmingham. He is worthy of the glory, and we preach Christ because of that. This is why we go around the world this year. This is why we go to different contexts. Because Christ is worthy of the glory of every person in Africa, every person in Asia, every person in Europe,

every person in South America. He is worthy of their glory, and we are gripped by His glory. We must proclaim Him; we must proclaim Him. See it all. It all comes together.

Do we really want His glory? I mean really. Do we want His glory? And not just for our sakes, but do we want people of this city to see His glory? Do we want unreached peoples around the world to see His glory? If so, then I urge us to leave the Old Testament picture behind. It's not that it's bad; it's that there is a more glorious picture. Let's embrace these truths; embrace the Spirit of God in desperation and live to display the glory of God.

I'm going to ask these guys to come and lead us in a song about living for the glory of Christ, and what I want to invite you to do is I want to invite you to reflect for a couple of moments; I want to ask you to avoid reflecting on what's next for dinner or what's next in your schedule. Let these truths soak in. I want you to let these two questions soak in: First, do you really need His Spirit? And by that I mean do you recognize your need for His Spirit? Some of you may realize tonight, as we've studied the Word, the Spirit has opened your eyes, and you've realized, "I need a new heart, and I don't have a new heart. You described my religious experience to the tee, and I need a new heart."

As you reflect, I want to invite you to pray and say, "God give me a new heart." This is what He does. The Spirit does this by the blood of Christ; by Christ's death on the cross for your sins. The Spirit of God opens your eyes to His salvation. Do you recognize your need for His Spirit? What would it mean? Reflect on this: What would it mean for your life to be desperate for His Spirit? And following from that, what would it look like in your life to really want His glory? I mean really want His glory and to live to display that glory as you behold it. Reflect on those things as these guys sing over us.

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