

Seeing Christ's Glory And Becoming Like Him

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the contrast between the old covenant and the new covenant, emphasizing the transformation from a life of fading glory to a life of increasing glory in Christ. It highlights the importance of maintaining a clear conscience, purifying oneself, and seeking to become more like Jesus in order to truly live in the new covenant. The speaker urges listeners to focus on seeing the glory of Jesus in everyday life and to prioritize spiritual growth over earthly achievements.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 3:2, 1 John 3:3, Acts 23:1, Acts 24:16

Topics: "New Covenant vs Old Covenant", "Spiritual Growth in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

What is the primary thing beyond what we've already considered about God being our father and the devil being defeated in the new covenant? Here's another very very important thing and that's from 2nd Corinthians chapter 3. By the way, 2nd Corinthians chapter 3, like Hebrews chapter 8, is the two great chapters that contrast the old covenant with the new covenant. 2nd Corinthians 3 especially, where it says here that the old covenant was of the letter that kills, verse 6, but the new covenant is a ministry of the Spirit that gives life. It doesn't mean there was no glory in the old covenant.

It says here in verse 7, even that ministry of death came with glory because there was a glory in the face of Moses, verse 7, but that glory faded away. In the old covenant, you could come to a wonderful life and then slowly backslide. That's the meaning of the glory fading away.

Do you find that in your life? That when you were first born again, you really got excited, you're all fire for God. A little while later, it became less and less and less. That is an old covenant life.

That's the life you've been living. You thought it was a new covenant. It was not and the devil doesn't want people to know it.

In the new covenant, it is not a glory that fades away like it was, it says in verse 7. On the contrary, it is a glory, verse 18, that becomes from glory to glory. It's not just steady, but goes up and up and up and up. So, if you find that the glory in your life is going down, you immediately say to yourself, whatever you may believe in your head and understand, you are under the old covenant.

Maybe you were not some time ago, but you backslid into the old covenant again. If your life is steady, you're still under the old covenant. You say, well, I'm about the same level as I was one year ago.

You're under the old covenant, brother. Absolutely, without a doubt. And if you don't accept it, if you're not honest with it, you'll remain like that for the next 20 years.

But if you're willing to face up to it, a steady life is an old covenant life. The new covenant is described in verse 18, where it says, we see the glory of Jesus in a mirror and are transformed by the Holy Spirit from glory to glory to glory to glory. When does it stop? It stops when we become like Christ.

Never before that. Here's another way to discover whether you're living under the old covenant or new covenant. And many of you have been sitting here for years listening to new covenant, calling yourself new covenant Christian fellowship.

You may discover you've been living in the old covenant and the devil wants you to live like that forever and call yourself new covenant Christian fellowship. Don't trust in a name. Don't trust in a phrase.

Look for reality in your life. You can sit in an old covenant church and live a new covenant life if you're wholehearted. And you can sit in a new covenant church and live in an old covenant life because you don't take, you're not gripped by the truth of God's work.

From glory to glory to glory. 1 John chapter 3. 1 John chapter 3. Here it tells us what is going to happen when Christ comes again. Here's another thing which most people don't realize.

If you ask a Christian, most Christians, if you don't believe me, test it out. Dear brother, sister, what is your hope? What is your hope at the second coming? Christ will come again and I will see him face to face. Anything else? Well, that's about it.

I'll be in heaven forever. No more suffering and all that. That's not what the Bible says.

I'm sorry. The Bible says the hope is twofold and it has got nothing to do with going to heaven. It's got nothing to do with mansions or nothing to do with crowns.

Absolutely nothing. If you're looking for all that, you're an old covenant person looking for mansions and crowns. Jesus spoke about that because that's the level those disciples were in John 14.

I'm going to prepare a place for you. There are mansions, there are crowns, all that. But how many mansions do you read of in Ephesians or Colossians? See, Jesus spoke to them in word pictures.

The reality in the new covenant is the reality of those word pictures. For example, the fire of hell is not a physical fire, let me tell you that. It's being eternally forsaken by God, which is worse than any worm or fire or anything.

But Jesus had to picture it in a way that all covenant people would understand. So here in 1 John 3, it says the hope we have, verse 2, is that we will be like him, number one, and we will see him. Because we see

him, we will be like him.

So what is my hope? Not just that I will see Jesus, but I will see Jesus and I will be like him. I hope you'll always remember. You've got the right answer now.

It doesn't mean you're going to pursue it. But if you keep that right answer before you, you'll see what is the next thing. If you have this double hope, and I'll tell you most Christians do not have this double hope.

They only say Jesus will come again. So what should you do? Oh, somehow keep my conscience clear and make sure I've forgiven everybody and ask forgiveness. Is that all? No.

Everyone who has this double hope will keep on purifying himself until he reaches Christ's standard of purity, 1 John 3, 3. If you're not doing that, you do not have this hope. Now, I want to be very plain with you. I don't want to speak smooth words with you and make you miss out on God's plan for your life, miss out on God's wonderful purpose for your life, miss out on the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I don't want you to lose that and that's why I speak very firmly and I will not hesitate to say that. You all know me well enough to know that I speak in love. Everyone who has this double hope will keep on purifying himself.

How do I purify myself? We saw that in 2 Corinthians 3. Allow the Holy Spirit, verse 18, to show me the glory of Jesus Christ in the mirror. James 1, verse 22 to 25 says, the mirror is the Word of God. The law of God in God's Word is a mirror and as I look into the mirror, many people look into the mirror of God's Word to get a message.

Those are the self-centered preachers who are trying to get a message to get honor. They listen to YouTube and listen to so many messages and read books and prepare a sermon. What for? It's not to challenge people to become Christ-like, it's to get honor.

Did you discover what a great preacher I am? I don't judge them. I was like that myself first. When I started preaching, I must say, I was very conscious.

What did people think about that? Did I impress people enough? I finished with that years ago. I'm not saying I started in grade 10. I started in the kindergarten.

I started in pre-kindergarten like all of us. We don't know ABC of the Christian life, but we shouldn't be there forever. I mean, if you've been a believer for four or five years and you're still seeking honor, brother, when are you going to get out of the pre-kindergarten class? How do you get out of it? So, we look into the mirror, the God's Word, not even to get a doctrine, but to see the glory of Jesus Christ.

Do you see that? We all, without a veil on our face, the veil is the thing that blocks off the image of God in the Old Covenant. We see in God's Word the glory of the Lord, the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit showed people the law.

Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not worship idols.

Thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy. Pay your tithe. There are people taken up with all these things even today.

But today, I don't need those laws. I'll tell you why. Because I see Jesus constantly before me.

How in the world can I commit adultery? How in the world can I lust after a woman, leave alone commit adultery? I see Jesus in front of me right all the time when I'm standing talking to my wife. How in the world can I get angry with my wife then? You wouldn't get angry if Jesus was standing there between you and your wife. You wouldn't even get angry with your wife if a brother is standing there in your room.

Why is it that we do get upset and angry with people? I'll tell you because we haven't got the presence of Jesus. We're not seeing the glory of Jesus. This is the wonderful thing about the New Covenant.

That I can see the glory of Jesus all the time in front of me. It may take time for you to get there because we've been blinds for so long. Sometimes like that blind man whom Jesus touched, we need a second touch because we can't distinguish between trees and human beings.

Yeah it's true. We can't distinguish between those people whom we are supposed to love and those that which you're supposed to use. You know where it says God has created things to use and people to love.

But God, the devil's made it all upside down that we love things and use people. You find yourself like that? You love things, money and all of earthly things and people are to be used? No. It's all upside down.

We need a second touch to see that men and trees are different. Many things we need to see more clearly and that'll happen when I see Jesus. So the Holy Spirit has come to show me the glory of Jesus Christ in Scripture and that's been a tremendous blessing to me to read the Gospels.

I would encourage you to read these Gospels like this where you read the Gospels not to hear the story. That's alright for Sunday school but to see what do I see of the glory of Jesus here. For example in a little thing like Jesus sleeping in the middle of the storm.

I see a lot of things there. First of all he had a pillow. He wasn't this rough Spartan type of saying hey I don't want a pillow I'll just keep my head on the wooden board.

No it's good to use something comfortable. I have no objection to using a pillow when I sleep. Jesus wasn't ascetic.

That's what I learned from that and secondly it didn't matter to him if the storm was all around. He had a father in heaven to care for him. What a wonderful thing to know that and that that father was still the storm at the right time.

These are the thing lessons that I see the glory of Jesus or at other times I see his compassion for people who were hungry after listening to him for so many days. Don't charge them any money let's provide food for them freely. His compassion for how he would care for the lepers or nobody would touch his arms would be around the leper.

Compassion, compassion. I see the glory of Jesus and I say Lord that's what I want to see. I don't want to just see that you did a miracle.

I'm more interested in having your compassion than in having the ability to heal a leprous person. Can you say that to the Lord? I've said that I don't want the power to heal a leprosy person but I want to get that compassion that you had and I leave it to you to decide how to heal these people of leprosy. So these are little examples.

I think of that other time when it says after the Jesus preached a message in the end of John 7 everybody went to their home and Jesus was alone in Jerusalem with no home to go to and he says he went to the olive mountain of olives and slept there. Came back next morning and continued teaching completely undisturbed by the fact that nobody asked him Lord where did you sleep last night? Not even a mention of it. Lord I never want to be disturbed when people are completely ignorant of my needs, of my physical needs.

I don't even want to think about it because I have a father in heaven always cares for me. These are little examples of seeing the glory of Jesus. When people called him Beelzebub, prince of devils, he says you're forgiven.

This is what I mean by seeing the glory of Jesus not through just reading stories in the gospel. There's so many examples of this and I could go on and on and on and on right from Matthew chapter 4 onwards to see the glory of Jesus even when you're hungry to say Lord I still want to live by your word and not long for food. So these are little things and the secret is to see Jesus clearly without a veil.

What are the things that bring a veil? I believe one of the main things is having a bad conscience. If I have a bad conscience I cannot see the Lord. That is impossible.

Most important see what the Apostle Paul said and I believe this is one of the great secrets of his life. Acts chapter 24 which is not possible in the Old Covenant. Not at the standard that you know let me show you first of all Acts 23.

Paul said in Acts 23 1 all my life I have lived with a perfectly good conscience till this day. That means that in the time he was a little kid as a Jew under the Old Covenant he had lived with a perfectly good conscience. What did it mean? He kept the Ten Commandments but in Acts 24 16 he raises it to a higher level.

He's now talking about the New Covenant and says I keep my conscience blameless before God and before men 24 7. That's possible only through the Holy Spirit where every single moment I can live without a veil before God. I can see the Lord Jesus clearly before my eyes. I can talk to my father without any disturbance in my conscience because as soon as I'm aware that I have failed in thought, word, deed, attitude towards someone, motive immediately I say Lord I slipped up I'm sorry and if I've hurt somebody I go immediately to that person and say I'm sorry for what I did and like you've often heard me say don't ever confess your sin like this if I have hurt you please forgive me.

That means I don't think I've hurt you but if you're so stupid to think I've hurt you please forgive me. That is insulting people. Be honest and say I'm sorry I hurt you please forgive me.

Whether it's husband to wife, wife to husband or to anybody. Keep your conscience clear and I really believe this my brothers and sisters if you're not becoming more and more like Christ year by year there is one answer to it. Please listen among others you are not keeping your conscience clear all the time.

There's a veil. You don't see the glory of Jesus you will not become like him. Follow the simple rule there are there's more to it than that but I'll give you one simple thing now start with the clear conscience Acts 24 16 I do my best.

Can you see this I do my best like you teach your children to do your best when they're going for some SAT course or some other entrance course. Do your best come on work hard don't go to sleep study study

why not do your best to keep a good conscience which do you value more some earthly advancement or becoming like Christ that is the test that often comes to us. I say Lord to become like you is the most important thing for me in my life because that's I'm gonna be like you and I want to purify myself until I become like you.

The new covenant is a wonderful thing.

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