

Beholding the Glory of God

Sermon delivered on January 18th, 2015

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Text: [2 Corinthians 3:1-18](#)

Introduction

Last Sunday, I shared with you what our theme for this year 2015 is, which is - **Behold your God!**

These words are taken from ...

[Isaiah 40:9](#) O Zion, that bringest **good tidings**, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest **good tidings**, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, **Behold your God!**

We will have a year-long look at the attributes of God. I will be bringing series of messages on the nature of God, **who God is and what He is like.**

And **what do I hope to accomplish** in these messages? **What do I pray would take place** as we gaze upon God in a conscious, consistent, and concentrated way and effort?

[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.

My prayer is that, not only that we would have **a deeper hunger and thirst for God** but that **our lives would be transformed.** That this would be a life-changing journey and experience for us, individually and corporately.

Today, I would like to talk about **the importance of beholding God.** My prayer is that we at GTBBC will discover or rediscover **the practice of beholding the glory of God.**

I - With unveiled face beholding

[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.

But we all, with open face, that is, we all, with unveiled face ...

Moses was given the privilege to talk to God face to face. **He beheld the glory of God when he went to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments.** And being in the presence of God, his face shine brightly, reflecting the glory of God. Coming back to the people, from the presence of God with **his face shining bright with he glory of God he had to put a veil on his face,** because the Israelites were unable to behold the glory that shone from Moses' face ([Exodus 34:29-35](#)).

7: But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that **the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold** the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

14: But **their minds were blinded**: for until this day remaineth the same **vail untaken away** in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. 15: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, **the veil is upon their heart**.

But we all Christians, with open face, with unveiled face, unlike the Jews of old, who had veiled hearts, answering to Moses' veiled face. We Christians can behold the glory of God, without the veil, and have access to the throne of God and presence freely and boldly.

The veil being removed at conversion ...

16: Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, **the veil shall be taken away**.

This is what happens when the heart is turned to the Lord, the veil is removed. But now, we all, whose heart and eyes the Lord opened, with open face, behold the glory of the Lord,

II - The glory of the Lord

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.

What is the glory of the Lord?

The glory of the Lord is the glory of His name, His character, His nature, His person, His being.

The glory of the Lord is His divine attributes, His wisdom, power, and goodness; His truth, justice, and holiness; His grace, mercy and love; etc.

Exodus 34:5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6: And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

His moral perfections are His greatest glory.

To behold the glory of God is to contemplate on His perfections as He is revealed in the Bible. As someone has said, **the Bible a photograph of the Almighty**.

Take the word of God, the written revelation of God, and **meditate** and **contemplate**. To take time and **think upon God**, who He is and what He is like and ask myself what it means, and to ask what He requires of me, my life, and my practices and my possessions, and my family.

Job 22:21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

God calls us to constantly gaze upon Him; to constantly stop and look and see Him for who He is; to get to know Him, to walk in intimate fellowship with Him.

III - As we behold we are being changed

We are changed as we behold

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed** (metamorphoumetha) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul is saying that there's a change, a transformation that takes place as we behold the glory of the Lord in the scriptures – an inward transformation.

The word "**are changed**" comes from the Greek word **metamorphoo** and translated in our KJV **change, transfigure, transform**. (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18)

It's used to describe Jesus on the **Mount of Transfiguration**

Matthew 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2: And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

He was transfigured before them and His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light.

So the Greek word **metamorphoo** means "**to change into another form, to transform, to transfigure.**"

The word "**metamorphosis**" is derived from this word, which we use to describe the process of a caterpillar changing into a butterfly.

As we behold the glory of the Lord, metamorphosis takes place, transformation takes place.

As Moses' face or countenance was changed as he beheld the glory of God, so our transformation takes place as we "behold..."

Biblical change comes **not by looking within yourself**, but **by looking outside yourself** to the strength and glory of another, namely God and His Christ.

IV - What we behold we become

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.

We are being changed into the same image. As we behold God and His Christ we are being changed into divine likeness, which we lost through the Fall, but is recovered in the gospel.

The change is **not merely of opinion**, or **feeling**, or even **conduct**, but a **change of being**. It is not something connected with ourselves, but our very selves which are changed, and changed so as to be like Christ.

This is consistent to the whole plan of redemption ...

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 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.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus** unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

V - Transformation in progression

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.

From one degree of glory to another.

The Christian life is not to be static, but a dynamic process, in which changes are taking place, in which a person is **becoming more and more like their Savior, Jesus Christ!**

It does not happen all at once, but gradually. As Paul said we are "**being transformed**" (present tense), not "have been transformed" (past tense).

We become more and more like Jesus, and this inner transformation occurs progressively throughout our life in Christ.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

When transformation does not take place, something is wrong, and it may be a failure to appreciate and utilize our second point gleaned from this passage.

VI - By the Spirit of the Lord

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 transformation is a supernatural work. We need a **power outside of ourselves** to cause this change. **We are not changing ourselves.** We do not change ourselves.

We cannot work this change, yet we can "turn to the Lord," that it may be worked. As we turn to the Lord, He removes the veil, He removes the blindness, He opens our eyes, He gives us light and sight, that we may be enabled to behold the divine glory. And as we behold His gaze upon Him we are being transformed into the image and likeness of Christ by the Spirit.

VIII - Closing thoughts

1. To those whose veil has been removed

Who's heart the Lord opened, who once was blind but now see, keep beholding the glory of God. I believe this is the key to Christian growth and life.

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.

Though we are enabled to behold the glory of the Lord without the veil, we still are **beholding His glory through a glass**. The glass here is **not like the prescription eye glasses** that we have today, but it is through a mirror. And the mirrors back in the ancient times were made of **polished brass or silver or other metals**, giving, of course, a far dimmer image than "glasses" do.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly (dimly, blurry); but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

The contrast is between the inadequate knowledge of an object gained by seeing it reflected in a dim mirror (such as ancient mirrors were), compared with the perfect idea we have of it by seeing itself directly.

Now in this present life, we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror; now we see a blurred image in a mirror, but then we will see clearly, we will see God with perfect clarity. We will know God even as God knows us.

This is the beatific vision

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, **we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is**.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Now, we do not so much "know" God, but "rather are known of God" (comp. 1 Corinthians 8:3).

There will be no need of assistance, there being no need of anything or any person.

There will be nothing to intercept the sight; the objects will be nigh, even face to face; the view will be full and clear, the sight will be perfect.

We are not there yet, but meanwhile keep on beholding!

2. To those whose veiled has not been removed

You hear the name Jesus and you don't see any beauty in Him. You hear the name of Christ and you still don't get it. You still don't see it. He is not precious to you.

Why?

2 Corinthians 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel

of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 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 god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

Do you want that veil taken away?

16: Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away

Look to Jesus with the eye of faith? Do not look to Moses. Do not look to the law or the Ten Commandments, hoping by keeping the Ten Commandments will save you. The Ten Commandments was not meant to save us. It was meant to point us to the Saviour, who alone can take away your sins? Look away from the law, look away from yourself, look away from your fellow human beings. But "[Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.](#)"

Look to Jesus Christ who is able to remove your sins completely.