

II CORINTHIANS 2

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Corinthians chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God and this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth.

Keep in mind that Paul wrote this second letter to the church in Corinth probably less than a year after his first letter, putting the date around 57 A. D., on his third missionary journey.

He wrote his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus and now this letter he wrote from Macedonia, some early translations speak of it specifically being Philippi.

Also, there were some in Corinth who didn't like Paul, they did not appreciate him. They attacked his character and even his claim that he was an apostle!

And we saw in II Corinthians chapter 1 that Paul had to defend himself against the accusation that he wasn't a man of his word. Why did they feel that way?

Because Paul told them that he would come and visit them, and his travel plans changed, and he didn't make it as he said!

And in II Corinthians 1:18-22 Paul shows that he is a man of his word. Yes, plans can change, God can change them, but it doesn't negate the fact that Paul is a man of his word!

Please understand that Paul did not just come into Corinth, get a few converts and leave. As you may remember when we went through the book of Acts, Paul established the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey in Acts chapter 18.

And Paul spent 18 months or a 1½ years teaching them the Word of God, helping them to grow in the Lord! Paul poured his heart into these people and now they are fighting against Paul.

How can that be?

Because people are fickle! If you don't do what they want, it doesn't matter how much time you spend with them, how much love you pour into them, they end up coming against you.

I have seen this over the years, and it is not pretty, and it does hurt but here is the lesson I have learned. Don't let your heart grow hard and cold towards people!

You will be hurt, you will be crushed, it is going to be difficult, but you love them as Christ loves you. It doesn't mean you agree with their behavior, and you may even have to rebuke or correct them, but you do so in love with the idea of restoration.

That is what we will see here in II Corinthians chapter 2, restoration of someone who was living in sin and now has come back!

As we concluded last time, I said that II Corinthians 1:23-24 flows right into chapter 2. In fact, those first four verses of II Corinthians chapter 2 we can place with the end of chapter 1.

So let's start reading in II Corinthians 1:23-24 and then we will move right into chapter 2 of II Corinthians this evening.

Paul wrote, "**Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.**" II Corinthians 1:23-24.

II CORINTHIANS

VERSES 1-2

This is sad to me that Paul has to continue to defend himself on why he didn't go to Corinth.

The last time he was there Paul had to deal with their carnality, their sin and it was difficult. Not everyone accepted what Paul had to say.

And Paul did not want to come to them at this time because he did not want to come down upon them again. He loved them, he wanted them to grow and he wanted to see them again with joy and not sorrow.

Thus, Paul, not wanting to hurt their relationship or damage it more, stayed away and instead sent them this letter.

Of this Clarke tells us, “Because of the scandals that were among them he could not see them comfortably; and therefore he determined not to see them at all till he had reason to believe that those evils were put away.”

VERSES 3-4

Some feel this letter Paul spoke of is another letter to the Corinthian church, there may have been as many as four, but only two became part of the Scriptures.

Keep in mind that not every letter written became part of the Bible! The Holy Spirit, working through men, put it together.

So, instead of coming to them and rebuking them, which would have been hard, he sent them a letter with the hope that the church would handle this problem and deal with this guy so that when Paul finally did visit them, everything would have been dealt with and they could rejoice together in the good things the Lord was doing in their fellowship.

Paul had the heart of a pastor, full of love, concern for those he ministered to.

For the most part, people don't understand all that pastor's do. I am not talking about work, but dealing with issues, dealing with problems, dealing with false teaching being brought in.

And for me, I do what I do to help people, to watch over them, to protect them from the dangers that are trying to be brought into the church.

We are told in Proverbs 27:6, "**Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.**"

If you are a true friend, you will deal with the sin in your brother or sister's life. It is not easy; they always don't receive it well. But it is what is needed!

But if you ignore sin. If you sugar-coat false teaching, you are not a friend to that person, but their enemy because you are letting them continue down that path.

Paul loved them so much that he was not willing to sugar-coat the message but told it like it was with the hope that there would be healing, there would be restoration!

And that was Paul and yet, they still came against him. Again, hard to believe but we do see that even today.

As Trapp put it, "St. Paul's epistles were written rather with tears than ink."

Now, as we read on here in II Corinthians 2:5-11 Paul is going to deal more with this incident that led to this painful letter that he had to send to them.

VERSES 5-11

There is a debate regarding who this man is that Paul is speaking of and encouraging the Corinthian believers to forgive and restore back into the fellowship?

I don't think it is that difficult to figure out. You see, I believe that this is the man spoken of in I Corinthians chapter 5 who was having sexual relations with his stepmother and the Corinthian church ignored his sin, they tolerated his sin.

Paul tells us in I Corinthians 5:1-5, **“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - that a man has his father’s wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”**

Thus, the Corinthian believers listened to Paul and we see that they ex-communicated this man from the fellowship.

Keep in mind that the stepmother was not a believer so there was nothing the church could do in terms of discipline for her, she needed to get saved.

Paul says that this man should be turned over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh and outside the church, the body of Christ he lost that protection from the Devil.

Paul's purpose is not for destruction of this man but for restoration.

Yes, the destruction of the flesh nature needed to occur, he needed to repent of his sin, and now that he has, he is to be restored into the fellowship.

It would seem that they had a hard time forgiving this man even after he repented, and Paul says that they are not only to forgive but restore this man, don't add to his pain, he has returned.

Morgan tells us, "If discipline is largely lacking in the Church of today, so also is the grace of forgiving and comforting those who, having done wrong, are truly repentant. How often, alas! souls have been indeed swallowed up with overmuch sorrow because of the harshness and suspicion of Christian people toward them in view of some wrong which they have done . . . love never slights holiness; but holiness never slays love."

Please keep in mind that when discipline, when correction is needed, may you punish the sin and love the person.

That doesn't mean you condone the sin, but you love the person and I truly believe discipline done in love will cause people to repent.

Obviously not always, but I believe in many cases.

By excommunicating this man from the church because he refused to repent and stop his sin showed that they loved him and now that he has repented, how much joy that should have brought to them as they see this man restored, not destroyed!

And notice what II Corinthians 2:11 says once again, "**lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.**"

Make no mistake about it, Satan tries to take advantage of us, to cheat us out of something that belongs to us in Jesus!

He has devices, schemes that he uses but how can we know them?

Not by studying them but by allowing the Spirit of God opening up the Word of God to you and He will show you what is right and what is wrong, how to get right when you have gone astray and how to stay right.

Don't let Satan come and rob you of the peace, the joy, and all that God has for us. Let's be wise!

And here, by not allowing this man to come back into the fellowship after he repented, it would have given Satan an opportunity to cause problems in the church. The man would continue to be alone and defeated and the church would become unloving, unforgiving. Don't be ignorant of his devices!

VERSES 12-13

Paul is talking about his plans and what happened.

We see that Paul left Ephesus and journeyed to Troas in hopes of meeting Titus there and receiving news from Corinth.

When he got to Troas, some wonderful door of opportunity opened up for him by the Lord for preaching Christ's gospel.

I like what Jesus said in Revelation 3:8, **"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name."**

Thus, as God opens doors for us, we are to step through them instead of trying to kick them down ourselves.

Not only does God open the door, but He brings others to our side to help us out, we are not alone, we are not a one man show.

Now we also see that Paul was concerned that Titus was not there because he was a fellow laborer in the work! He encouraged Paul.

Now, should Paul stay in Troas and preach the gospel of Christ? Or should he press on into Macedonia? He tells us here that he made his decision, he would cross over into Macedonia.

Here in II Corinthians 2:13 Paul speaks of departing for Macedonia.

Then, when we get to II Corinthians 7:5 he speaks of his arrival in Macedonia.

VERSES 14-17

Paul was not some loose cannon that did as he pleased; he followed the Lord, his general!

And look at the picture that Paul is painting for us here. It is a picture that the people of Corinth were well aware of.

You see, what Paul is doing here is he is painting a picture for us that is taken from the Roman Triumph Parade that was given to generals who were successful in battle, returning home in victory.

Of this Barclay tells us,

In a Triumph the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome to the Capitol . . . first came the state officials and the senate. Then came the trumpeters. Then were carried the spoils taken from the conquered land . . . Then came the pictures of the conquered land and models of conquered citadels and ships. There followed the white bull for sacrifice which would be made. Then there walked the captive princes, leaders and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and in all probability almost immediately to be executed.

Then came the lectors bearing their rods, followed by the musicians with their lyres; then the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. After that came the general himself . . . finally came the army wearing all the decorations and shouting lo triumphe! Their cry of triumph. As the procession moved through the streets, all decorated and garlanded, amid the cheering crowds, it made a tremendous day which might happen only once in a lifetime . . .

That is the picture that is in Paul's mind. He sees Christ marching in triumph throughout the world, and himself in that conquering train. It is a triumph which, Paul is certain, nothing can stop.

- William Barclay

Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that he was not leading the way, but the Lord is the One and Paul, as well as the Corinthians were following the Lord!

You see, as Christ marches in He is leading us, and as we are close to Jesus the fragrance of our Leader, Jesus Christ permeates our lives and those around us will smell the fragrance of Jesus.

Think about it like this. If you hang-out around a campfire, what are you going to smell like?

You are going to smell like a campfire because of your close proximity to it, the smell of the campfire has permeated your life!

That is true as we spend time with Jesus. The fragrance of Jesus will permeate our lives, not because we have done this or have done that, but just because we are close to Him.

So, the question is, "What kind of smell are you leaving behind?"

Also, we have to remember that wherever we go, it doesn't matter who we are around, to all we are the aroma of God just as the incense burnt to the gods in a Roman Triumph Parade spoke of the aroma, the power of the Roman general and Rome itself.

But Paul tells us that this smell affected people differently. How so?

First of all, if you were part of Rome it was wonderful, joyous!

But if you were the defeated enemy it was the smell of death!

That plays out for us as well. As we share our faith, as we see people come to Christ, the smell, the fragrance from our lives, it speaks of everlasting life to them!

But for those that reject Jesus it is the smell of death, eternal separation from God!

Same smell, just the effects are different!

Now, as we look at II Corinthians 2:17, where Paul says, "**For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ**" it is almost embarrassing today as so many are "**peddling the word of God.**"

This word speaks of "adulterating" or "watering down" for their own personal gain.

Think of it as someone who waters down wine to make more of a profit.

Now, let's apply this to the church. Look at the church today and how the Word of God is watered down, it is edited to make people feel good about living in sin.

You see, the profit may not only be monetary in nature, but it enables people to live lives that are immoral.

That is why we teach the Word of God verse-by-verse here at Calvary Chapel, you get the whole counsel of God and then it is up to you to either listen to what God is saying or disobey what God is saying.

The thing is, you will not be able to say you didn't know because the Word of God is not watered down or adulterated!

Paul preached the Word of God with sincerity, as if God was present each time and I will let you in on a little secret, He is! I don't understand how some can speak such blasphemy regarding the Word of God and do so with pride, with arrogance and they don't realize that God will judge them for it!

For Paul, his pure life and unadulterated message would stand up to the closest scrutiny. Any man can proclaim a whittled-down false gospel, but those who preach the true gospel can do so only by means of divine power.

As we move into II Corinthians chapter 3 this evening, we will continue to see Paul defending his position as an apostle, his character. False teachers came in and were confusing and swaying the Corinthian believers, some even going back to the keeping of the Law and thus, Paul is going to continue to deal with these issues here in this chapter.

I like what Pastor Chuck Smith once said about this, "It's sort of tragic that many times little people feel that the only way to elevate themselves is by pulling others down to their level. So they feel that their ability to criticize someone, sort of elevates them. But I've always discovered that whoever throws mud only loses ground."

II CORINTHIANS 3

VERSE 1

Keep in mind that back in II Corinthians 2:17 Paul was speaking of false teachers and when Paul speaks of “**some others**” here in verse 1 of II Corinthians chapter 3 he is continuing to refer to those false teachers.

These false teachers came to Corinth with letters of commendation, trying to justify who they were so that they would be accepted!

And it is even possible that the church in Corinth sent these false teachers with letters of commendation from them! Again, these letters were to validate their ministry!

And Paul is not putting letters of commendation down, even though for these false teachers they were meaningless, but he is defending himself against those who were criticizing him for not carrying any letters of commendation for himself!

This was a common practice in the early church. And we still, in a sense, do that today!

I don't just let anyone come up here and share the Word of God on Sunday or Thursday or for that matter, any day of the week without knowing them, having letters of commendation you might say or validating their ministry, what they believe!

And, like I have said, Paul is saying “***Do I really need to validate my ministry to you or get letters from you to prove or validate my ministry to others?***”

I can understand how hard this was on Paul. Think about this. Why did he need letters?

They all knew Paul, he spent 18 months ministering to them. (Acts 18:11)

Because many rejected his authority, his apostleship, even though it was the Lord who gave him this position in the body of Christ.

So how did Paul defend himself here?

Let's read on and see.

VERSES 2-3

Notice what Paul says to them here, he puts the ball back in their court you might say!

Paul says to them, ***“You want proof? You are our proof! You are the fruit that was born out of the ministry!”***

You might say that they were living letters that validated Paul's ministry.

Even today that is still true, fruit is our testimony.

People today wonder what right I have to be pastor of this church. What degree do I have that has placed me in this position?

All I can tell you is that God has placed me in this position and the evidence, the validation for this position that God has placed me in this position is ***YOU!*** You are the testimony of what God is doing here at Calvary and that testimony is manifested in so many different ways as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is brought to a lost and dying world!

Let me give you this example from the Scriptures. Remember in Numbers chapter 16 as Korah rose up against Moses and Aaron, challenging their position of leadership they had, and God judged Korah for their rebellion.

Then in Numbers chapter 17 God shows the children of Israel who is to be called by God as priest and Moses gathers 12 rods, one from each of the 12 tribes of Israel and placed these rods before the Lord in the Tabernacle of witness.

Then in Numbers 17:8 we are told, **“Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds.”**

Fruit is the evidence of God’s calling or as Poole put it, “Nothing so commends a minister as the proficiency of his people.”

In Exodus 24:12 the Lord told Moses He would put the Law on tablets of stone, but that was only temporary, for in Jeremiah 31:33 we are told, **“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”**

And in Ezekiel 36:26 we are told, **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”**

Thus, as we come to Christ, our hearts of stone are replaced with hearts of flesh that are now sensitive to the things of God.

Also, as people look at us, they don’t see some cold, lifeless monument made of stone, at least they shouldn’t!

But a living, breathing epistle or letter of Christ and what He has done in our lives for people to see and read! We are a story that continues on as we live out our faith!

As I have said so many times before. The only Bible people may read is your ***LIFE!***

VERSES 4-6

Please understand that Paul was not boasting about what he was able to accomplish. And Paul did not want the Corinthians to think he was boasting in what he accomplished, and he tells them it was Christ working through him that enabled him to do these things or as Paul said, “**our sufficiency is from God.**”

Back in I Corinthians 2:1-5 Paul tells us, “**And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**”

How many of you feel you are ready for God to use you now? Folks, we are never ready, we never feel adequate and that is the point.

Paul did not say, “*Our sufficiency is in ourselves, our education, our experiences, our talents or whatever*” but that “**Our sufficiency is from God.**”

If you truly believe that then you can rest in Him for it is the Lord working in you, and through you, and that truly takes the pressure off of you!

Spurgeon put it like this, “Brethren, if Paul is not sufficient of himself, what are you and I? Where are you. . . . Do you indulge the dream of self-sufficiency? Be ashamed of your folly in the presence of a great man who knew what he said, and who spoke under the direction of the Spirit of God, and wrote deliberately, ‘Not that we are sufficient of ourselves.’”

He also wrote, “Our sufficiency is of God; let us practically enjoy this truth. We are poor, leaking vessels, and the only way for us to keep full is to put our pitcher under the perpetual flow of boundless grace. Then, despite its leakage, the cup will always be full to the brim.”

Praise God for His amazing grace that He bestows upon us and our sufficiency is from Him!

And notice what we are ministers of – ***THE NEW COVENANT!*** In the Greek, this word, “**new Covenant**” is DIATHEKE, (dee-ath-ay’-kay).

Of this word Moulton and Milligan tell us that it is “An ‘arrangement’ made by one party with plenary [unlimited] power, which the other party may accept or reject, but cannot alter . . . a covenant offered by God to man was no ‘compact’ between two parties coming together on equal terms.”

In other words, it is a unilateral covenant based upon the faithfulness of God and the finished work of Christ and all we must do is receive it by faith.

That is what we bring to people, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the grace of God for we are saved by grace through faith and not by the Law through works.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:2-4, “**For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**”

You see, the Law is good, but man is not. The Law can’t save us, it can only show that we are sinners separated from God, thus, it brings death to us.

But the Spirit of God brings to us the grace of God found in Jesus which gives us life.

Remember as Moses went up on Mount Sinai to get the Law the children of Israel were already breaking it and God judged them for it, 3,000 men died that day when the Law was given. (Exodus 32:28)

Then, on the Day of Pentecost, as the Gospel of Grace was given, 3,000 men were saved! (Acts 2:41) Thus, the Law kills but the Spirit gives life!

Warren Wiersbe put it like this regarding what the Law does, and it is not good. He wrote, “A legalistic ministry brings death. Preachers who major on rules and regulations keep their congregations under a dark cloud of guilt, and this kills their joy, power, and effective witness for Christ. Christians who are constantly measuring each other, comparing ‘results,’ and competing with each other, soon discover that they are depending on the flesh and not the power of the Spirit. There never was a standard that could transform a person’s life, and that includes the Ten Commandments. Only the grace of God, ministered by the Spirit of God, can transform lost sinners into living epistles that glorify Jesus Christ.” Amen to that!

VERSES 7-11

Let me first say this. The Law is not bad, the Law is not evil!

Then why does Paul speak of it as “**the ministry of death**”?

Because that is all the Law could do. It shows us how far short from God’s standard we are and in that, there is only death for the sinner!

The Law is good, the Law is perfect, but we are not.

Listen to what Paul tells us in Galatians 3:19-26 regarding the Law. He wrote, **“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”**

The purpose of the Law is to show us that we are sinners, as I have said.

But it does not end there, the Law then points us to the Messiah and just as Moses could not take the children of Israel into the Promise Land, neither can the Law take us into the new life.

Thus, Joshua, or Jesus took them in just as Jesus takes us into the new life!

The Law is good, but it pales in comparison to the New Covenant, for one brings death and the other life!

Now I know that there are those who try to keep the Law, follow the Law, thinking that is what God desires of them.

But Paul speaks of the face of Moses and how it glowed when he spent time with the Lord and Paul then makes the point that the face of Moses was fading and the point that he makes is that as glorious as that was, it is passing away!

In other words, the Law was passing away and the New Covenant, which is more glorious, which will never fade away is now established!

One writer put it like this,

The spiritual meaning of this is that the glory of the Old Covenant was temporary. The law had a very definite function. It was given to reveal sin. It was a display of the holy requirements of God, and in that sense was glorious. But it was given until the time of Christ, who is the fulfillment of the law for righteousness to those who believe (Rom. 10:4). It was a shadow; He is the substance. It was a picture of better things to come, and those things find their reality in the Savior of the world.

- William MacDonald

I think the Scriptures are clear on that and I am so thankful we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by me keeping the Law, I would never make it!

VERSES 12-16

What *hope* is Paul speaking of? What Paul is talking about here is the assurance that the glory of the Gospel will never fade away, it will never grow dim! And because of that hope, that assurance, he can speak the Gospel with great boldness! He had nothing to be ashamed of!

But Moses, he covered his face because he did not want the children of Israel to see the fading glory of the Old Covenant.

Also, the children of Israel didn't see the glory, it was covered, it was concealed but now in Christ the glory is revealed, we can see it and it is glorious!

Then what is the problem?

This goes for both Jews and Gentiles. The god of this age, Satan, has blinded, covered the face of people so they will not see Jesus.

It doesn't matter how much you show them, if their eyes are covered, they can't see!

Then what can we do?

First of all, only Jesus can remove that veil so they can see, and thus, we pray for the lost, that the eyes of those who can't see will be opened and they will see Jesus! It truly is a spiritual battle for the lives of men!

And look at what people hold onto today for their salvation!

It is a works salvation. You just have to be good enough, do this and don't do that! In other words, they go to the Law for salvation and, as we have seen, the Law can't save, it only condemns us and points us to the Savior, to Jesus!

As one writer sums it up for us in regard to the Jewish people. He wrote, "The veil over the face of those who live by the Old Covenant blinds their own eyes to the reality and identity of their Messiah, Jesus Christ. That is why you can talk by the hour with Jewish people about the way Jesus perfectly fulfilled Old Testament prophecy - and they still won't see Him as their Messiah. There's a veil over their eyes. And because this veil is done away in Christ, it is only as they turn to Christ that they are able to see clearly." (Source Unknown)

VERSE 17

Look at the number of people that place themselves under the Law today, just as they tried to do in Paul's day?

And what I find it interesting is that this is a growing trend with Gentile Christians, going back to the Law through the Hebrew Roots Movement, Messianic Torah Observant Israel and others!

And the Scriptures are so clear teaching against these things and yet, many are being swayed back into that which has passed off the scene, the Old Covenant, the Law.

And if you think about just the one organization, Messianic Torah Observant Israel, can you give me one example where the children of Israel were Torah Observant and when I say that, I mean keeping it perfectly? You won't find one so don't waste your time. And yet, we think we can? Foolishness!

Remember, **“For if what is passing away [the Old Covenant] was glorious, what remains [the New Covenant] is much more glorious.”** II Corinthians 3:11.

For the New Covenant to be established, that means that the Old must be done away with it. You can't pick and choose what you want out of it, we are saved by the blood of the Lamb and not by our good works!

Now, for those who want to try to keep the Law, you may be able to shine for a while as you try to keep the Law but you will fail and fade because you are a sinner, we all are and we can't keep the Law perfectly, as God requires!

And what ends up happening many times is the person becomes angry, frustrated, they just drop out or they are holier than anyone else because they see themselves keeping the Law, but they are not!

Thus, where the Spirit of the Lord is, leading us to the grace of God through Jesus, we have liberty and we have freedom!

This is not a license to do whatever you want but a freedom to live honoring the Lord!

What happens as we do?

Let's read on and see.

VERSE 18

What does Paul mean when he speaks of a "**mirror**"?

I think James tells us as he wrote in James 1:22-25, "**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.**"

Paul is speaking of the Word of God being a mirror to not only helping us to see God's Son, but as we read and apply the Word of God to our lives the Spirit will transform us into the very image of God!

This metamorphosis that is taking place in our lives is not just a façade or an outward change. No, God begins this change on the inside, and it is manifested outwardly. It is a transformation and not just make-up!

And this transformation is a life-long process as John tells us, "**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**" I John 3:2.

And notice that Paul doesn't say, "*from backsliding to glory*" but "**from glory to glory.**" That is how it should be!

David said in Psalm 17:15, **“As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.”**

May that be our hearts desire, to be satisfied as we are transformed into the likeness of God and that happens as we gaze upon Him and allow the Spirit of God to transform us! And folks, He will complete the work in us, so don't give up, He doesn't!