

The Transforming Power of the Glory of the Lord

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at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.
by S. Michael Durham
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2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

It does not take much knowledge of the Bible to see that Christianity in America has seen better days. It would seem that we are seeing the oppression of evangelical faith ramp up. The churches of our country are not what they once were. We read the accounts of Dr. Luke telling of the early days of the church of Jesus Christ and we see wide gulf separating us from them.

Is it because the glory of the Lord has departed? Could this be a possible answer? Are we living in an era where the glory of God has been absent so long that we really don't know what it is? I could say that those forty and below, maybe even my generation and below, the glory of God has been absent. They have not seen what the glory of God looks like. We are very unfamiliar with the manifestation of that glory within and without the body of Christ so that we don't know what we are missing. We don't have any idea. If you ask a Christian what the highlight is of their spiritual life they will most likely say their conversion because little afterwards has happened. How sad that is the most glorious experience you've had—the day you were saved. But this is not what our text says—"transformed . . . from glory to glory." Your conversion is the beginning not the end! Many of you should be able to stand and recount of other glories, other manifestations where you beheld God and it was awesome, like getting saved again only better.

The twentieth century saw a remaking of evangelical Christianity that has robbed it of the increasing view of the glory of God. We've made the Gospel more or less sin management. It's forgiveness of sins and that's about it. The only glory you can expect is when you die and go to heaven. But that's not what the text says—"transformed . . . from glory to glory." The life of the believer is to be a glorious one with a glorious experience beholding the beauty of Christ.

It's an interesting way to defend one's self. 2 Corinthians is a defense from the Apostle Paul on his ministry and apostleship. There were some who had infiltrated the church at Corinth and were actually publically proclaiming that there ought to be a revolt against the leadership of Paul. They said Paul was not with it. He was simply a plain man with plain methods and they contested they had outgrown those plain methods. His ministry, they said, was very ordinary and simple. Can you imagine saying that about the Apostle Paul, that His ministry was ordinary and there was nothing special about it at all? Here is the church of Jesus Christ barely out of diapers and already men have come in arguing that the old ways are no longer sufficient, "We need a new way, a new

technique. Simple preaching and praying is not enough. We Greeks at Corinth don't need this kind of preaching. We need wisdom and knowledge because we are an intellectual people. We're a people of great learning, you can't build a crowd with plain preaching like Paul's."

We find that what we're experiencing in American Christianity is neither new nor novel. It's been going on since even the apostolic days, teachers saying they have a new and improved way, a better methodology, a better technique. So they want to throw out the old ways of prayer and preaching.

I have staked my ministry and life on the principle that says "unless the Lord builds the house they that labor, labor in vain." I have proclaimed to you that I believe the only way in which God builds His people is through prayer and through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are living in an hour where people will say to you and me and to Oak Grove, "You are wasting your lives. You are giving a portion of your lives to something that does not work anymore. There are better ways. Look at us—we found new methods and a new technique that will bring people in and build strong churches." I have staked my life, my ministry, and my reputation on this one simple fact: God's methods have not changed, the glory of the Gospel is still sufficient to save anyone, and I cannot imitate or manufacture that.

You say, "Well, where's the glory here?" I ask you the same question. I'm not afraid for you to ask me. Are you afraid of it? Are you afraid to examine your own heart? Is the glory there? Are you beholding and being transformed from glory to glory? Or did you look and see and live but have since cast your eyes somewhere else and you are not beholding the Lord?

Paul is defending his call and method and that what God has called him to do will work because men's methodologies and techniques cannot do what the human heart needs. The human heart needs God in His glory to do what only God can do—remove the veil that is on their heart and mind.

I want to direct your attention to three specific things I think Paul is saying in this text as he defends why he ministers the way he does. There's an unveiling, a beholding, and a transforming. Let's look at them.

I. The Unveiling

"But we all, with unveiled face"

A. An Unveiling Suggests a Veiling.

If you unveil—that is you remove a curtain—that which has been hidden is now visible. There's been a hiding. Paul said there has been a veiling in verses seven and eight of this same chapter.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? (2 Corinthians 3:7-8)

What's he talking about here? He explains further in verse 13.

Unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. (2 Corinthians 3:13)

What is the veil that Paul is referring to? Paul is telling us that what happened here with Moses and the people of Israel was merely an illustration. The Bible tells us that after Moses had come down from Mount Sinai with the law of God in his hands that his face so shone with the glory of God, from being in God's presence, that he had to put a veil over his face in order for people to communicate with him. Paul says that is symbolic, it's illustrative, it's a sermon. God is saying the old Law, even though written on stone, was glorious. It was amazing. It was incredible. It was the revelation of the glory of God and Moses' face shone with it.

B. The Veiling of the Glory of God.

But, there's been a veiling of that glory. They put a veil over Moses' face. The people of God would rather not see the glory of the living God.

“But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. (2 Corinthians 3:14-15)

“Can you imagine? Here were the people of God. They've been delivered from bondage and have seen one miracle after another, even hearing the very voice of God as He descended upon Mount Sinai. But they come complaining to Moses that they would be content to not have such dramatic views of God's glory. They'd rather be absent of that glory than to be forced to see it. They say to Moses, “You let tell God tell you what we are to do and then you can come and tell us. And we can't talk to you either, Moses, your face terrifies us. Put a veil on! Cover the glory. We don't want it.”

I find that man's heart hasn't really changed. I ask you to examine your own heart this morning. Do the painful analysis. Do we really want to see God's glory? Do we love that glory? Or have we put a veil over our own hearts and minds so that we can see other things more attractive to these hearts? Beloved, there is only one hope for our children who are not yet converted. There is only one hope for mothers and fathers who are not yet converted. There is only one hope and it is a glimpse of the glory of God as painful, terrifying, and fearful it may be. No matter how awe-struck you might be having seen the glory—it's the answer! For this glory we are praying, that God will show up in such powerful ways that no one can see it and deny the existence of God. Yet, I wonder, have we veiled our hearts so that our children cannot see the glory of God in us? Is the prayer closet absent? Is the Bible not pursued in study, thoughtfulness, and meditation? Is the glory not there and therefore they do not witness it in the home? If they don't witness it in the home, how will they witness it here?

If you come and ask me to show them the glory of God, I'm afraid it's not enough. One man can't do it. This is not the days of the Old Covenant; I'm not a mediator, I'm a sheep among other sheep. There is only one mediator between God and men and it's the God-Man Jesus Christ. We need to see Him in all of His glory. But have the things of this world veiled our minds? Has the entertainment of this age veiled our mind? Has money and security veiled our mind? Oh, there's a veil. Paul goes on in the fourth chapter in verse three and says,

But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

One of the complaints against the Apostle Paul by some of the Corinthian leaders was that Paul doesn't see as much success as he ought to see. "If he would just adopt our technique, he would see more converts, his ministry would be more powerful." Paul cuts through all of that and gets to the heart of the matter. The problem is not technique or methodology; the problem is supernatural. Our children's unsaved state is not a problem of the intellect only. It's not school or culture either, as poor and as ungodly as that may be. The problem is their hearts are bound in darkness. The mind has been veiled. A veil is over the minds of them that do not believe and therefore the heart is left in darkness. The heart cannot perceive the glory of God. The heart cannot understand how gloriously good God is because the mind has this veil covering it so that it cannot comprehend.

I didn't say they couldn't understand it. This is a common mistake. The mind can actually understand the Gospel. They can understand that Jesus died. They can understand they are sinners. In fact, most people will not argue with you about that. If you say, "Are you a sinner?" "Yes, we're all sinners." The problem is not that they don't understand the elements of the Gospel, the problem is they don't comprehend its glory. They cannot see its worth, its value, its power. They've not seen the glory of the Gospel that they've heard. I'm a case in point. I preached the Gospel and yet I had never comprehended its power and glory until God took the veil away, then I could see it. And when I did I was changed immediately.

See, young person, the need of the hour is not for you to reform your behavior, as much as mom and dad would like for you to reform your behavior. That's not the answer. The answer is supernatural. It's spiritual. There is a veil over your mind that is not allowing you to see the attractiveness of Jesus Christ. You are not able to see His beauty because if you would, I guarantee you would have no hesitation. You would run immediately and give yourself to Him as a young lady would give herself to a man she loved. The heart would not be closed to Him. The god of this world, Satan, has blinded you. You are under a demonic deception and only God can remove that. Technique, methodology, celebrities, or famous preachers cannot remove the veil. No man can do that, not even the Apostle Paul. But thankfully God can!

"Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:16-17)

There's the answer we need here at Oak Grove. This is what Paducah needs. This is what this nation needs. It needs the veil to be removed so that Christ is seen. But the text says that we are being transformed into that very image. That means they ought to be able to see you and see that glory.

Paul said when he came to Corinth, he did what he did purposefully. His methodology was purposeful. He didn't need a lesson in church growth. He knew what he was doing.

“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. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

Paul wasn't there to call people to him because he could not save anyone. He knew he was not that glorious but only a reflection of that glory. The glory is actually Jesus. When you see Jesus, the veil is lifted and you see what you really want. Oh yes, I maintain that every unbeliever in this room wants Christ. They just want Christ their way.

Paul had come to the position that all godly men who lead flocks must come to. He came to the place where every congregation must come. That is you have to leave the results to God and His glory. When Paul was in Ephesus he had large numbers. It seemed as if the whole city had turned to Christ but when he was in Athens there was only a few meager results. But he said it didn't matter whether it was small or large results, it was only God and God alone who could remove the veil, the mist over the eyes of those who have been blinded, and cause them to see. So the veil is only lifted by Christ and seeing His glory. This where is the Spirit of the Lord working, in the heart, internally.

II. The Beholding

“beholding as in a mirror”

The ancients had mirrors but it not like yours. Glass had been invented but not the mirror. They didn't know how to take glass and turn it into a mirror. So a mirror for them consisted of a highly polished or burnished piece of metal. The Apostle here is saying we are beholding or seeing a reflection in this shiny metal. We're seeing a reflection. That's what happens when you look in your mirrors. It doesn't have to be a piece of metal. That's what a mirror does. It's just reflects. Light refracts off of you and reflects in the mirror. The Apostle says we are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. There is a reflection we are seeing.

What is the object being reflected and what is doing the reflecting? That's what we have to find out.

A. The Reflection is the Glory of God.

“beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord”

This mirror is showing you how great, glorious, good, and worthy is Jesus Christ. The reflector, that which is giving off the glory of Christ, is the Gospel of the New Covenant.

B. The Reflector is the Gospel of the New Covenant.

who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if the ministry of death, written [and] engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which [glory] was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation [had] glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. (2 Corinthians 3:6-9)

What is this thing that's shining? What is that which is giving light here? The ministry of the New Covenant—the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When I look in my mirror, I see my image. When you look in your mirror, you see your image. Yet, Paul says when you're beholding this mirror, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, you don't see you, you see the Lord. How is it possible that while you're looking in this mirror you don't see you, you see the Lord? It's the same in any mirror. You can look squarely into your own face at that precise angle, but what if someone was standing beside you or, better yet, what if you took that mirror and angled it? You could see someone else in the room, could you not? This is a mirror that is focused completely on Jesus Christ and not on you.

Here's our problem. We are entirely too fascinated with ourselves. Look how we primp and groom and do all that we do to make ourselves look halfway presentable. Every time you pass by a mirror don't you stop and look? Most of us do. But this is not about you. The more you look at you the less hopeful you will be. You will find little glory in your own soul, looking at yourself, examining yourself, taking inventory all the time, cataloguing yourself, categorizing who you are and what you are. Forget all of that. Get your eyes off yourself! Look to Christ! Behold Him! There's the glory. The glory is in the Gospel.

*“whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the **light of the gospel of the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4 emphasis mine)*

There is the mirror. It's the Gospel of the glory of Christ. As you and I behold the Gospel something happens to us. Look at this word *beholding*.

C. The Beholding is a Constant Gaze.

Beholding is an interesting word, isn't it? How many times do you use the word *behold*? Have you been to a car lot or a dealership lately? Did the salesman escort you to the vehicle and say, "Behold, the car!"? I doubt it. "Behold, the tires!" No.

Behold means more than *look at* it; it means *a constant gaze*. Behold. This is something remarkable. Don't just have a passing glimpse. No, you need to stare. You need to take this in. I guarantee you, you cannot go to some scenic place in God's creation and just take a passing glimpse. Every time I've been to the Grand Canyon, I have never wanted to leave. I hate when the time comes that I have to leave because I can't get enough of the beauty of God's creative ability. The same is true for some mountain or even the ocean. You don't just glance at it, say, "That's nice," and continue on. The scenes capture you.

Well, in the same way we are to behold the Gospel of Christ. Behold! Behold the glory of the Gospel!

How do we do that? That's the question.

D. The Beholding is By Faith.

You take the truth of the Gospel and you believe it. It's as simple as that. You take the truth that you know, as you're reading the Scriptures, and you stop and think about it. You gaze. You behold. Prayerfully. And as you're gazing upon the truth you're asking, "What can I see of my Savior here?" "What does this tell me about the Lord Jesus Christ?" Remember the night of His resurrection? He told the apostles that everything He had said to them from the law, the Psalms, and the prophets was about Him. The entire Bible is about Him—that's how you are to read the Scriptures. Don't just read your Bibles. You're wasting your time if you do that. You heard me right. You're wasting your time if you just read a chapter, close it, and go on without thinking about it, without praying about it. No! You read the Scriptures to behold Christ. Behold in the mirror the reflection of the glory of Jesus! Ask the text to show you the Savior. "How does this point to Christ? What does this say about Him? What does this say about me? How does this reflect the changes I need to make in my life, in light of who He is?" That's what it means to behold, to stare into the mirror the Gospel and its reflection of the glory of Christ. Look at Him!

Look at Him there as an infant in Bethlehem's stable. Think about it. What's He doing there? This is God Almighty but He's in a feeding trough. Why is He there? Because He humbled Himself. He considered Himself of no reputation. He saw that losing His reputation for your eternal salvation was worth it. Look in the mirror! See it!

Look at Him there as a child prodigy teacher at the age of 12. He's baffling the scribes and Pharisees and lawyers. What does that tell you? Look at it. Stare at it. Let it speak to you. Pray. Ask God to show you by His Spirit what we can see about our Jesus there. Look at Him. The tenderness of a child yet God Almighty.

Look at Him as He's being baptized in the River Jordan by His cousin, who needed to be baptized by Him. What's He there for? He's never sinned. He can't repent over anything. Yet He said it fulfilled our righteousness. He was there to fulfill your obedience for you. He was there to identify with you. He was saying, "I am allowing your sins to come upon Me and I will have them washed away. You watch. I'll do it."

Look at Him as He takes a towel and wraps it around Himself and washes the feet of these men. Here's the One who created the constellations above and named them one by one and yet He takes their toes and washes them. He's as familiar with their feet as He is the stars above. Ask yourself how this can be. Look at Him! Behold Him there in the posture of a slave and think—this is your God. He cares for you that He serves you. He serves you.

Behold the man! Isn't that what Pilate said? No truer words did he ever speak. It's our text! It's 2 Corinthians 3:18. "Behold the Man." Yes. See Him there bloodied, beaten, already bruised beyond recognition. See the crown of thorns shoved down on His brow as droplets of blood flow from the points of the thorns. Behold Him there! Why is He there? He's there bearing your sin.

Don't pass and glance away. Stare. Look. You do that by faith. Take what you see in Scriptures and—regardless of emotions, regardless of circumstances—say, "This is true." What happens? Unbeknownst to you, it's not always spectacular; the Spirit of God is working inside your heart and transforming you.

III. The Transformation

"are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."

A. Our Transformation is Immediate.

One glance at Jesus. One sighting of this glory and you're forever changed. Salvation is not a process where you are saved over months or years, no, the Spirit of God is given at a moment. The regenerating power of God takes out the old heart and gives you a new heart with new dispositions. New loves are implanted within you. You are a new person and you immediately respond in repentance and faith. This is the testimony of all who are saved. There was a glance of His glory. How many times have you heard of His beauty, you've heard someone tell how great God is to them and it never registered until that moment when the Spirit of Liberty came and took the veil off. Immediately you were changed because we are the creations of God.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

B. Our Transformation is Ongoing.

There is also the truth that we are involved in this transformation. Not in your salvation as in your regeneration, no, and I'm not even talking about your repentance and faith in God at the moment of conversion; I'm talking about afterwards. You and I have a responsibility in this transformation. We continue to be transformed by staying fixed upon the reflection of the glory of God through the Gospel. This is what Paul is saying when he says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed..."

Albert Barnes in his commentary says this,

The figure is one of great beauty; and the idea is, that by placing ourselves within the light of the gospel—by contemplating the glory that shines there—we become changed into the likeness of the same glory, and conformed to that which shines there with so much splendour. By contemplating the resplendent face of the blessed Redeemer, we are changed into something of the same image. It is a law of our nature that we are moulded, in our moral feelings, by the persons with whom we associate, and by the objects which we contemplate. We become insensibly assimilated to those with whom we have intercourse, and to the objects with which we are familiar.

In other words, when he says "insensibly assimilated," insensibly means you're not aware of it. It happens without you even conscious of it. It just happens—you become like those around you.

We imbibe the opinions, we copy the habits, we imitate the manners, we fall into the customs of those with whom we have daily conversation, and whom we make our companions and friends. Their sentiments insensibly become our sentiments, and their ways our ways.

That's what happens when you behold the glory of Jesus Christ. Something happens to you. Once again, you're not necessarily aware of it, you may be lamenting that you're not holy enough but that doesn't mean something isn't happening in the secret places of the heart. You're beholding the glory of Jesus.

May I suggest to you this is all revival is. It's a beholding of the glory of Jesus Christ afresh and anew. It's taking my eyes off of that which I have fixed them upon. Something attracted me and swept me off my feet, but now I see the beauty of Christ and I think, *What am I doing over here looking at this thing?* You return your heart's gaze back to Gospel.

How do you know you're being revived? You find disgusting what you once found attractive. That's how you know. The old television shows you used to watch, you now think, *How silly is this? What did I ever see in this?* What's going on? You're being transformed. What are you being transformed into? The likeness of Jesus. And you're not even aware it's happening. You don't make yourself like Jesus. Jesus makes you like Him. But you must behold Him. You must be fastened upon the Gospel, learning to think with the Gospel, learning to let the Gospel address every issue and challenge about your life. Learning how the Gospel applies and where the glory of Jesus is.

When I preach the Word of God to you it will be dead unless the glory of God is present. I don't care how biblical, factual, and theological it may be, if the glory is not there. If I'm not beholding the glory as I'm speaking to you there will be no life. The life is not in the man or in the woman, the life is in Christ and we're beholding Him, "the Light of Life."

Notice what he says. The glory increases. This is why I am so grieved. We have, by mass, taken in millions and millions—if not billions—of people and deceived them into thinking the Christian life is about getting their sins forgiven and their guilt removed and when they die they get to go to heaven. No, this verse says you're transformed from the *same* image "from glory to glory." The initial glory begins at salvation, yes, we don't minimize that, but that's not all there is to this thing. If that was it, I would be miserable. If all I had in experiencing the glory and beauty of Christ was what happened to me 28 years ago, I'm telling you, I would be miserable because that was enough to change me but that day is not enough to satisfy me. If you're a believer and you're miserable, that's the reason. You're looking somewhere else and you're not in the Gospel, you're not thinking according to the Gospel, you're not looking at the Gospel, you're not beholding the glory. The glory is not before you.

The more we receive the glory of God in the Gospel or face of Christ the more we look, the more we look the more we have, the more we have the more we reflect that glory. And in Moses' case the glory faded but in our case the glory increases. This is what revival is. Revival is the glory of God beheld by the individual members of a church so that collectively they are light reflecting the light of what they're beholding.

C. Personal Transformation Leads to Value Transformation.

This is where the Moral Majority of the seventies and eighties failed and could not ever succeed. You cannot legislate the morality of men's hearts. You can legislate their behavior—and we need laws to do that—but you cannot legislate the changing of the values of an individual. Value transformation comes from this personal transformation of beholding Jesus Christ and as a result of your personal transformation your views of life transforms.

Look at what he says in chapter 4:7-15. Paul talks about how this glory is put into an earthen vessel, in other words, a flawed and failing body. He talks about how the glory has been put in a flawed body, earthen treasures, and about the hardships he faces. But in the end his analysis is in verses 16-18:

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

Do you see what he said? Do you see the glory aspect again? He says, “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” This was the passion of the Apostle Paul—the glory of God. He had seen it for himself on the road to Damascus and it literally blinded him. But that was not the only time he saw it. From that moment on God gave him eyes by faith to look upon the beauty of Christ all during his life and even though he suffered much, that weight of glory and the promise of glory to come so transfigured him, changed him, that the glory of God was his passion.

This word *transformed* is the same word *transfigured* used of Jesus in Matthew 17. You’re changed. Not your physical appearance per se, although that sometimes happens. I’ve seen men who were sour, women who were terribly forlorn, not very happy in their appearance, and see the glory of Christ and their countenance changed forever. But we’re not talking about something outward, we’re talking about something internally that is transformed. You’re changed. This change happens also in the way you see life.

Notice he says these *light afflictions*. The problems of life do not go away nor do we pretend that they do not exist. Rather we gain a perspective of more glory that gives us the proper perspective of our problems. They become to us what they are—temporal, and only light afflictions. Being transformed from glory to glory brings you to a place where no matter the severity of your problems, no matter how much you are challenged and tested, you see them differently than you used to see them. They’re light, momentary, temporal, and they’re working for you a greater weight of glory than you could ever imagine.

Henry Venn, a recognized Anglican preacher of the 19th century, told his children one day that he would take them that evening to see “one of the most interesting sights in the world.”

He led them to a wretched house that was more a shack than a home. The walls were dilapidated and windows were broken. It was a miserable place. Venn said to his children, “Now, my dear children, can anyone that lives in such a wretched place as this still be happy? But that is not all; a poor young man lies upon a miserable straw bed inside, dying of disease at the age of only nineteen, consumed with constant fever and afflicted with nine painful ulcers.”

He then led them into the cottage and, addressing the poor dying young man at the age of 19, said, “Abraham Midwood, I have brought my children here to show them that it is possible to be happy in a state of disease, poverty and need; and now, please tell them if it is true.”

The dying young man, with no hesitation replied with a smile, “Oh, yes Sir! I would not change my state with that of the richest person on earth, who was without the views which I possess. Blessed be God! I have a good hope through Christ of being admitted into those blessed regions where Lazarus now dwells, having long forgotten all his sorrows and misery. Sir, that is nothing to bear while the presence of God cheers my soul and while I can have access to Him through prayer and faith in Jesus. Indeed, sir, I am truly happy, and I trust to be happy and blessed through eternity. I thank God every hour, who has brought me from a

state of darkness into His marvelous light, and has given me to enjoy the unsearchable riches of His grace.”

He may have been 19 but he was far wiser than his years. He had learned to behold the glory. When you learn to behold the glory and not your problems, the glory changes your perception of the problem.

We sing a song every now and then, and with this I shall conclude,

*It will be worth it all when we see Jesus,
Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ;
One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase,
So bravely run the race till we see Christ.*

Are you serious? Do you really mean that? Do you really believe that one day seeing Jesus all sorrows will erase? If your answer is “yes” then I pity you. That song is neither factual nor Scriptural. If you only have a Christianity that can make you happy when you die and see Jesus but not happy now then something is wrong with your Christianity. No, it will be worth it all as I see Jesus *now*. Life's trials do seem so small when I see Christ. One glimpse of His face does all sorrow erase, let me therefore run bravely ‘*as I see Christ.*’ That's how the song should have been written. That fits this text much better.

Oh yes, there will be a much greater weight of glory to behold when we get to heaven but, my dear friend, I'm beholding that glory through a mirror *now* and what I'm seeing *now* is transforming me *now* so that whatever comes my way I am able to bear it cheerfully because Jesus is with me all the way. I want to behold His face with not a glimpse but a gaze. I want to behold and fasten my gaze and never take my eyes off, I curse the moment I do—I hate it! But may God help us to make those times more and more brief so that we turn all the more quickly the next time to look upon His dear face again. Oh, the glory!

My dear friend, if you're not a Christian today, I tell you all you need is the glory. How can you get it? It's here. Look at the children of God here. Look at them. It's there. Can you not see it in the eye? Can you not see it in the countenance? If they look forlorn to you, if they look dejected and down today, it's because they're not doing what you're not doing. But look at those who are beholding the glory of Jesus and you will not see one shred of sorrow, not one hint of disappointment. Why? Because they have found the glory that God is offering to you. I refer your mind's attention one more time to verse 16 of this text.

“Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:16)

There's your answer. Would you turn away to the Lord? What does it mean to turn away? It means you're turning away from the things you called glorious hitherto for. Everything you thought was worth your life's investment, you turn from that and turn to Jesus and the veil will be taken away.

Why? Because the Spirit of the Lord is there and where He is there's liberty. He will set you free. He will deliver you from your sins and the bondage of your own flesh. He will deliver you and bring you into a good land. He will show you a place where the sun does not set and no cloud dims the eye and the beauty thereof. He always shines and His glory is always to be seen.

Look up! Look! Cast your eyes upon the Lord. Turn to Him and you will be saved. It's sure. It's certain. I am convinced of it. I would not tell you this otherwise. I would not tell you a lie—you've been deceived long enough. The enemy has told you there's a better way than the Son of Glory but that's the lie! Come to Christ! I plead with you. Do not tarry another moment when you could behold the glory of the Almighty and be so changed by it that you will know only the beauty of heaven, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim *now*. Not someday, *now*. Amen.