Ye are Our Epistle (part 2)

A two part message given the same morning at Glad Tidings Tabernacle and Bible Training School, 1536, Ellis Street, San Francisco, California
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I am going to commence with the sixth verse of the third chapter of Second Corinthians, lest you stop in “the letter.”

Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter; but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was gIorious, 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: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the childrenof Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth tbe same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall tum to the Lord, the vail shall be takm away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into tbe same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:6-18

Think about that; even the glory that was on the face of Moses had to be done away for what reason? For something that had exceeding glory. I am positive we have no conception of the depths and heights of the liberties and blessings and incarnations of the Spirit. We must attain to these positions of godliness and we must be partakers of His divine nature. Praise the Lord!

How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be gIory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.
2 Corinthians 3:8,9

The Lord help us now on this. I see the truth as it was brought to them in the law as we read last Sunday morning. Paul had something to glory in

when he kept the law, and was blameless, but he said he threw that to one side to win Him which is greater even than that.

Now we come to the truth of this: what is there in the law that isn't glorious? Nothing. It was so glorious that Moses was filled with joy in the expectation of what it was. But what is ours in the excellence of glory? It is this, that we live, we move, we reign over all things and it isn't" Do, do, do." It is a "Will, will, will." And I rejoice to do. It is no more, Thou shalt not." It is a will. "I delight to do Thy will, 0 God!" So it is far exceeding in glory. And beloved, in our hearts there is exceeding glory. Oh, the joy of this celestial touch this morning!

TONGUES AND INTERPRETATION: "The living God who is chastening us after this manner, is always building us after His manner that there may be no spot in us. For the Lord Himself has designed the plan, and is working out in us His divine mind, and is taking the man and transforming him in this plan till he loses his identity in the mighty God of possibilities."

Hallelujah! We praise Thee, O God. And we will praise Him forever.

Far above all,
Far above all,
God hath exalted Him,
Far above all.

Amen! Glory to God! Thank God for that interpretation. I shall be glad to read that, I don't know what I said, only I know the joy of it.

Oh, yes, it exceeds in glory. It is an excellent glory. When Peter is rehearsing that wonderful day in the mount, he says, "There came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory." And so we are hearing this morning from the excellent glory. It is so lovely.

If I come along to you this morning and say, "Whatever you do, you must try to be holy," I should miss it. I should be altogether outside of this plan. But I take the words of the epistle this morning by the Holy Ghost that says, "Be ye holy."

It is as easy as possible to be holy, but you can never be holy by trying to be. But when you lose your heart and another takes your heart, and you lose your desires and He takes the desires, then you live in that sunshine of bliss which no mortal can ever touch.

Divine immortality swallows up all natural mortality. And God wants us to see that we have to be entirely eaten up by this holy zeal of God so that every day we walk in the Spirit. It is lovely to walk in the Spirit, then ye

shall not fulfill any part of the law but the Spirit will cause you to dwell in safety and rejoice inwardly, and praise God reverently, and make you know that you are an increasing force of immortality swallowing up life. Hallelujah!

Ah, it is lovely! I will never be cross anymore.

Beloved, it is impossible to go on with God and have the old life jumping up. Glory to God!

For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 2 Corinthians 3 : 9

This is a beautiful word. I want to speak about “righteousness” now. There is nothing so beautiful as righteousness. You cannot touch these beatitudes we are dwelling on this morning without seeing the excellent glory exists right in the Christ. All the excellent glory is in Him. All righteousness is in Him.

Everything that pertains to holiness, and godliness, everything that denounces and brings to death the natural, everything that makes you know you have ceased to be forever, is always in the knowledge of an endless power of a risen Christ.

I want you to notice there is an excellent glory about it. Whenever you look at Jesus you can look at so many different facts of His life. I see Him in those forty days, with wonderful truth, infallible proof of His ministry. What was the ministry of Christ? When you come to the very essence of His ministry it was the righteousness of His purpose. The excellence of His ministry was the glory that covered Him. His Word was convincing, inflexible, divine with a personality of an eternal endurance. It never failed.

The righteousness of God. If He said it, it was there. He said it and it stood fast. It was an immutable condition with Him. When God spake it was done. And His righteousness abideth. God must have us there. We must be people of our word. People ought to be able to depend upon our word.

If there were only five saved in a meeting we should never say there were six. If there were five baptized we should never say there were seven. If the building would hold 500 people we should never say it was packed and had a thousand in it. He is establishing righteousness in our hearts that we shall not exaggerate on any line.

Jesus was true inwardly and outwardly. He is the way, the truth and the life, and on these things we can build; on these things we can pray; on these things we can live. When we know that our own heart condemneth us not,

we can say to the mountain, “Be removed.” But when our own hearts condemn us, there is no power in prayer, no power in preaching, or in anything. We are just sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

May God the Holy Ghost show us there must be a ministry of righteousness. We ought to stand by our signature, and abide by it. And if we were cut through they would find pure gold right through us. That is what I call righteousness. He was righteousness through and through. He is lovely! Oh, truly, He is beautiful!

One thing God wants to fix in our hearts is to be like Him. Be like Him in character. Don’t be troubled so much about your faces but be more concerned about your hearts. All the powder won’t change the heart. All the adorning of silks and satins won’t make purity. Beloved, if I was going down a road and I saw a fox tail sticking out of a hole I shouldn’t ask anybody what there was inside. And if there is anything hanging outside, you know what there is inside. Righteousness in the inward parts. Pure through and through.

Hearken! There is an excellent glory attached to it. We read:

For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. 2 Corinthians 3:9

The Bible is the plumbline of everything. And without we are plumbed right up with the Word of God, we will fail in the measure in which we are not righteous. And so may God the Holy Ghost bring us, this morning, into that blessed ministry of righteousness. Amen! Glory to God!

For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. 2 Corinthians 3 : 10

Come again right to the law. I see that it was truly a schoolmaster that brought us to Christ. I like the thought of it, that law is beautiful, law is established in the earth. As far as possible in every country and town, you will find the law has something to do with keeping things straight. And in a measure the city has some kind of sobriety because of the law.

But beloved, we are belonging to a higher, to a nobler citizenship, and it isn’t an earthly citizenship, for our citizenship is in heaven. So we must see thee is an excellent glory about this position we are holding this morning. For if the natural law will keep an earthly city in somewhat moderate conditions, what will the excellent glory be in the divine relationship of the citizenship to which we belong?

What I mean by excellent glory, it outshines. It makes all the people feel a longing to go. What there is about the excellent glory is this: the earth is filled with broken hearts, but the excellent glory is filled with redeemed men and women, filled with the excellency of the graces of the glory of God. Oh, glorious is the excellent glory! Ah, praise the Lord, oh my soul! Hallelujah!

For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of lsrael could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. 2 Corinthians 3:11-13

Yesterday morning I was preaching to preachers, but we can see that this message is for the perfecting of preachers. The man who is going on with God will have no mix-up in his oratory. He will be so plain and precise, and divine in his leadings, that everything will have a lift towards the glory. And you will always realize he will not play about to satisfy human curiosity. He must have his mind upon higher things altogether, and he must see God would not have him loiter about. He must “use great plainness of speech.” He must be a man who knows his message. He must know what God has in His mind in the Spirit, not in the letter, because no man that is going to speak by the Spirit of God knows what God is going to say in the meeting.

He is there a vessel for honor, His mouthpiece, and all contained there is of God. And therefore, he stands in the presence of God, and God speaks and uses him. But hearken! God is a Spirit working within the human life with thought, with might, with truth and life, and brings out of the great treasury of His mightiness into the human life, into the heart, and sends it right through onto the canvas of the mind, and the language comes out according to the operation of the Spirit of God.

Beloved, shall we any more try any lines but the divine? Every man is not just in the same order, but I could say to the man with faith that there is a touch of faith for that man to come into as a spiritual orator. He has to forget all he has put on his notes because of a higher order of notes.

I always say you cannot sing victory on a minor key. And you never can have a spiritual horizon on a low note. If your life isn’t constant pitch, you will never ring the bells of heaven. You must always be in tune with God, and then the music will come out as sweet as possible.

Let us get away from going into libraries and filling our minds with human theology. Not that I want to discourage anybody, but it would pay the best man here, I don’t care who he is, to go home and set fire to his library. You say that is a silly thing? I would not have said it if I had not the best thing to

put into it after it is burned down. I don't say, Go home and do it straightway. Think over it first. The more you think over it the more you will want to burn it.

I am not here for any other purpose than for the glory of God. God forbid! I have known so many people who have been barren and helpless, and they have used other people's material on the platform. If you ever turn to another man's material you have dropped from the higher sense of an orator from heaven.

We must now be the mouthpiece of God, not by letter but by the Spirit. And we must be so in the will of God that God rejoices over us with singing. Isn't it lovely? We are going forward a little. Let us turn now to the thirteenth and fourteenth verses:

And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:13,14

I have nothing to say about the Jew except this: that I know I am saved by the blood of a Jew. I owe my Bible to the Jews, for the Jews have kept it for us. We have a Savior who was a Jew. The first proclamation of the Gospel was of the Jews. I know that I owe everything to the Jew today, but I see that the Jew will never have the key to unlock the Scriptures till he sees Jesus. The moment he does he will see this truth that Jesus gave to Peter:

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 16:18,19

And I will give thee the key of truth, the key to unvail. The key was brought in the moment Peter saw the Lord. The moment they see Christ, the whole of the Scriptures is opened out to the Jew. That will be a great day when the Jews see the Lord. They will see Him!

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 2 Corinthians 3:14,15

God doesn’t say the vail is upon their mind, but upon their heart. And beloved, God can never save a man through his mind. He saves him through his heart. He can never bring all the glories into a man’s life by his mind. He must touch the deep things of his heart.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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. 2 Corinthians 3:16-18

I must speak about liberty first. There are two kinds of liberty, two kinds of grace. We must never use liberty but we must be in the place where liberty can use us. If we use liberty we shall be as dead as possible, and it will all end up in a fizzle.

But if we are in the Spirit, the Lord of life is the same Spirit. I believe it is right to jump for joy but don’t jump till the joy makes you jump because if you do you will jump flat. If you jump as the joy makes you jump you will bounce up again.

In the Spirit I know there is any amount of divine plan. If the Pentecostal people had only come into it in meekness and in the true knowledge of God, it would all be so manifest that every heart in the meeting would be moved by that Spirit.

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 2 Corinthians 3: 17

Liberty has a thousand sides to it, but there is no liberty which is going to help the people so much as testimony. I find people who don’t know how to testify right. We must testify only as the Spirit gives utterance. We find in Revelation that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

When your flesh is keeping you down, but your heart is so full it is lifting you up - have you ever been like that? The flesh has been fastening you to the seat but your heart has been bubbling over. At last the heart has had more power and you have risen up.

And then in that heart affection for Jesus in the Spirit of love and in the knowledge of truth, you begin to testify, and when you have done you sit down. Liberty used wrongly goes on when you finished and spoils the meeting. You are not to use your liberty except for the glory of God.

So many churches are spoiled by long prayers, and long testimonies. The speaker can tell, if he keeps in the Spirit, when he should sit down. When

you begin to rehearse yourself, the people get wearied and tired and they wish you would sit down. The unction ceases, they sit down worse than when they rose up.

It is nice for a man to begin cold, and warm up as he goes on. When he catches fire and sits down in the midst of it he will keep the fire afterwards. Look! It is lovely to pray, and it is a joy to hear you pray, but when you go on after you are done, all the people are tired of it.

So God wants us to know that we are not to use liberty because we have it to use, but we are to let the liberty use us, and we should know when to end.

This excellent glory should go on to a liberality to everybody, and this would prove that all the Church is in liberty. The Church ought to be free so that the people always go away feeling, “Oh, I wish the meeting bad gone on for another hour.” Or, “What a glorious time we had at that prayer meeting!” Or, “Wasn’t that testimony meeting a revelation!” That is the way to finish up. Never finish up with something too long, finish up with something too short. Then everybody comes again to piece up where they left off.

The last verse is the most glorious of all for us:

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. 2 Corinthians 3:18

So there are glories upon glories, and joys upon joys, exceeding joyous and abundance of joys, and a measureless measure of all the lot. Beloved, we get the word so wonderfully in our hearts that it absolutely changes us in everything. And we so feast on the Word of the Lord, so eat and digest the truth, so inwardly eat of Him, till we are absolutely changed every day from one state to another.

As we look into the perfect mirror of the face of the Lord we are changed from one state of grace to another, from glory to glory. You will never find anything else but the Word of God that takes you there. So you cannot afford to put aside that Word.

I beseech you, beloved, that you come short of none of these beatitudes w have been speaking of, in your life. These grand truths of the Word of God must be your testimony, must be your life, your pattern. You must be in it, in fact you are of it. “Ye are…the epistle of Christ,” God says to you by the Spirit. Then let us see that we put off everything that by the grace of God we may put on everything.

Where there is a standard which hasn’t been reached in your life, God in His grace, by His mercy and your yieldedness, can fit you for that place that you can never be prepared for only by a broken heart and a contrite spirit, yielding to the will of God. If you will come with a whole heart to the throne of grace, God will meet you and build you on His spiritual plane. Amen. Praise the Lord!