

POWER OF SPIRITUAL FREEDOM

INTRODUCTION:

In Romans 12:1-2, God's compassion for us motivates our sacrificial service for Him. We grow into this sacrificial mindset through transformation, which is the renovation of our thoughts. God empowers us to exchange our old beliefs for His new beliefs which change us to be like Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul discusses God's power in the New Covenant and the freedom we have been given to use His power. Paul's ministry had been rejected by many in the Corinthian church. He was forced to be very tough in his first letter and remind them of his credentials as an Apostle. He now explains to them that he needs no earthly recommendations because his ministry and theirs operate by God's power in the lives of transformed believers.

Chapters 1-3 -----Proof of ministry

Chapters 4-6 -----Power to Serve

Chapters 7-16 -----Power to See

Chapters 17-18-----Power to Be

1-3 - Proof of Paul's Ministry – Results - Commend ourselves? Need letters of recommendation like some? Rhetorical questions expecting the answer NO!

- Paul does not feel the need for the testimony of men to prove his worth as a minister of God
- What others think of your ministry is far less important than what God thinks
- Paul's assurance of his ministry comes from the growth he sees in the lives of those he teaches

You are our letter of recommendation; God has written the letter on your hearts; letter of Christ as a result of our ministry; not like the law was written with ink and on stone; written by God the Holy Spirit in your hearts

- The proof of his ministry was the results seen by everyone in the changed of believers
- The proof was seen in the changes in their hearts could only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit
- God the Holy Spirit was able to use Paul's teaching to change hearts because it was the truth of God

4-6 Power to Serve - Ministry

Paul is confident before God but will wait for God's evaluation; his competence comes from God's power that has enabled him to minister the New Covenant by GHS who gives life; not law that condemns and kills.

- Paul is confident because he sees God working in their lives – wait on the final evaluation

- He is competent in his ministry because God has empowered him to serve – only what God does counts
- His ministry is empowered by GHS to give eternal life; he has abandoned the law which only brought death

7-16 Power to See – Spiritual Sight

Old Covenant - The Law – ministry that brought death and condemnation – glory but a fading glory
 New Covenant – The Spirit – ministry that brings righteousness and life – surpassing glory that is permanent.

- Paul compares the old and new covenants asserting that the new has greater glory New fulfills Old
- Veil of Moses – hide the fading glory; minds made dull by veil that remains over Old Covenant and the hearts of those who see law– spiritual blindness; veil removed and taken away in Christ – turns to the Lord – spiritual sight
- Some read the scriptures and see law/condemnation – some see grace/freedom in Christ
- Veil of Moses hid the reality that the Old Covenant was temporary – veil remains so that some see law
- 4:3-4 – veil indicates spiritual blindness – blind people cannot see the grace offered in Christ
- Those who turn to Christ have the power to see the truth of grace in Christ – spiritual sight

17-18 Power to Be – Transformed to be like Christ

The Lord is the Spirit and the Spirit is the Lord. God the Holy Spirit gives freedom. Unveiled faces as we observe the Lord's image are transformed into His likeness.

- The saved person has been freed **from**: condemnation, death, blindness, opinion of people
- The saved person has been freed **to**: serve the Lord, see the truth, be like the Lord

1. Man is born into bondage

- Bondage to death and condemnation from Adam's Original Sin – can't break free
- Bondage to blindness – can't see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (4:4)
- Bondage to the opinion of others – seek to be recommended and praised by man
- Bondage to the old man belief system built to deal with life – man centered defensive approach

2. The work of Christ has opened the door to free us from bondage

- Free from spiritual death and condemnation – door to life and justification
- Free from spiritual blindness – able to see the truth through ministry of God the Holy Spirit
- Free from opinion of others – able to look only to God for our approval
- Free from old man belief system – able to take on the belief system of Christ

3. Mankind stays in bondage by choice.

- Freedom has been achieved - freedom has been offered – freedom must be chosen
- Unbeliever prefers his veil – prefers to see a conditional relationship with God – law
- Unbeliever prefers his old man beliefs – stay with the pitiful security system he knows
- Believer prefers his old man beliefs – free to change but afraid to surrender to God
- Volition is the key to life – content we choose for our belief system
- Unbeliever is free to choose to trust in Christ – Believer is free to choose to become like Christ

4. Spiritual freedom is freedom from and freedom to

- From: death and destruction – all that would keep us from life with God
- To: life and blessing – all that God has provided to bless us forever
- From: blindness and ignorance – all that would cause us to self destruct in life and relationships
- To: sight and truth – all that God has provided to be victorious and a blessing in relationships
- From: old man belief system – life of fear and self protection from hurt and pain of devil's world
- To: new man belief system – life of faith, divine protection and victory over hurt and pain of devil's world

5. Believer is free to see and free to be

- Free to see Christ in the word and free to be transformed into His image
- Free to see the old man operating in us and exchange it for the new man in Christ
- Free to abandon sinful, fearful, destructive view of life – adopt life of faith, confidence and courage
- Free to trust needs of self to God and focus on the needs of others.

6. The mirror of the word of God

- Jms 1:23-25 – sees himself in the mirror – perfect law of liberty – word of God
- 2 Cor 3:18 – sees Christ in the mirror of the word of God
- Transformation requires we see ourselves in comparison to Christ – see our depravity and His perfection
- Transformation requires we choose to take off the old and put on the new as we see in the mirror