

Series: 1 Corinthians

Title: The Glory of God in the Face of Christ

Text: 2 Corinthians 4: 6

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2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit of God takes us back to the first creation of the heavens and earth: it was in the first creation that God commanded the light to shine out of darkness.

Proposition: God's first creation pictures how God saves his people from our sins by making us his entirely new creation.

Isaiah 65: 17: Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. 18:...behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

The current creation shall remain until God finishes creating all his people in regeneration then this first creation shall be dissolved.

1 Peter 3: 12...the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat. 13; Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Our Lord gave the apostle John a view of the new creation in Revelation 21. John said,

Revelation 21: 1: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2: And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3: And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5: And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

So in our text, the Spirit of God takes us back to the first creation to declare how God creates his people anew in righteousness, making all his elect his new creation. May God be pleased to work this work today!

LIGHT

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light...

The first thing dead, dark sinners need for life is light. Where do we get spiritual light? The first creation began by God. Likewise, the new creation begins by God. "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" (Gen 1: 1) God was the creator of the first creation; God is the creator of his new creation.

The earth did not bring forth light of itself. "*And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.*" (Gen 1: 2) Nor do God's people bring forth light of ourselves. When Adam disobeyed God, we disobeyed and became "*without form, and void*"—unrighteous. When born of Adam's

corrupt seed, *deep* in our very nature we were conceived in sin so that “*darkness is upon the face of the deep.*”

It was by all three persons in the Godhead that the Light shined in the first creation and it is by all three persons in the Godhead that the Light shines in our hearts. God the Holy Spirit moves upon us like he did in the first creation. “*And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” (Gen 1: 2) God the Father spoke and by his word there was Light. Likewise, in the new creation, God the Father speaks his word through his gospel, “*And God said, Let there be light.*” (Gen 1: 3) Scripture says, “*The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*” (Ps 119: 130) In the first creation the Light that shined in the darkness was the Son of God, the pre-incarnate Christ. Likewise, when God makes his child a new creation, the Light that shines in our hearts is Christ, “*and there was Light.*” (Gen 1: 3) So all three persons in the Godhead get the glory for shining light in our hearts!

Notice, the word “Light” is singular. That Light shined on the first day. That Light was not made. Then on the fourth day, God made the sun, the moon and stars and all other lights. “*And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*” (Ge 1:14-19)

That Light that was in the beginning with God that shined in the darkness was the Word, the Son of God, the pre-incarnate Christ.

John 1: 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: The same was in the beginning with God. 3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4: In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5: And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7: The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8: He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9: That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10: He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11: He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Lord Jesus declared he is the Light of his people wherever they are in this sin-dark world!

John 8: 12: Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 9: 4: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work 5: As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 12: 35: Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. 36: While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light...46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Christ is the Light of the new heavens and new earth.

Revelation 21: 23: And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

So every believer gives glory where glory is due, we say, “*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light...*”

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalm 18:28: For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

Isaiah 29: 18: And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

KNOWLEDGE

2 Corinthians 4: 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In order for spiritually ignorant sinners to know the true and living God, God himself must give us knowledge of himself. It is in Christ the Light that we are given the light of the knowledge of God. Christ is made Wisdom unto us! We learn all looking to Christ the Light.

Ephesians 5: 13: All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14: Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The knowledge we are given when we are made to behold Christ with the eye of faith is *the knowledge of the glory of God*. We see the glory of God that Moses saw in the cleft of the rock! Moses asked to see God's glory. So God put Moses in the cleft of the rock.

Exodus 34: 5: And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6: And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7: Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*. 8: And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. 9: And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it *is* a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

The first thing God proclaimed was his name, “*The LORD*.” Beholding Christ we behold Jehovah, God. Christ said, “*He that seeth me seeth him that sent me*.” (Jn 12: 45)

Next, he beheld, “*The LORD God*.” God uses these two names together when he makes his covenant with his people. When we behold Christ we behold God's everlasting Covenant. Christ is the Covenant. God said to Christ, “*I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*.” (Is 42: 6) The Lord Jesus Christ is “*the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises*.” (Heb 8: 6) The reason the

new covenant is better and the promises are better is because *“all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”* (2 Cor 1: 20) When God shines the Light and we behold the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus we are made to know that all the required works to make us accepted of God are finished by Christ. He is the Covenant glory of God!

Then God made Moses behold his abundant goodness by which he saves his underserving people. Beholding Christ we behold the glory of God’s abundant goodness by which he saves totally depraved sinners like us. Moses behold God as *“Merciful”*—from eternity God looked to Christ therefore God was merciful, withholding from his people what we deserved. *“Gracious”*—in Christ God freely gives to us what we do not deserve, blessing his elect with all spiritual blessings in Christ according as he chose us in him. *“Longsuffering”*—for sake of Christ, God is longsuffering toward us when we sinned in Adam and not destroying us all the days of our rebellion. *“Abundant in goodness and truth”*—in Christ we behold God’s glory in how abundantly good he is to us in truth. Everything God declares and does for his child is true in Christ the Truth. Beholding Christ we behold all the goodness of God. We made to behold that in Christ he *“hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”* (Eph 1: 8)

When God makes us behold Christ, in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ we behold the glory of God’s righteousness—*“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.”* Beholding Christ we behold how God can be just so as to uphold his law in pouring out justice upon all his guilty people. And beholding Christ, we behold how God can at the same time be merciful to us in that God himself has justified us in the person of his Son. Beholding Christ, God gives us the knowledge to know in our hearts that we are standing before the Lamb of God—who bore our sin, bore our stripes, bore our death and satisfied justice in our room and stead. At the same time, we realize we are standing before the Mercy Seat—the Propitiation for our sins. Beholding, Christ’s blood covering the broken tables of the law for us, we see the glory of God’s righteousness, how he can be just and the Justifier of his people by the sacrifice of Christ his Son! This is made personal to me the sinner!

Then in Christ we behold the glory of God’s justice toward all who reject him, *“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”* (Ex 35: 7) Sinner, soon you shall die. Without Christ you will stand before infinite majesty, holiness and glory and suffer the just condemnation of God! *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* God is so glorious, so full of light that it is written, *“God is a consuming fire!”* Then you shall be cast into outer darkness! But Christ said, *“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”* (Jn 12: 46) O dear sinner, flee to Christ now! Believe on him and you shall not abide in darkness—not now, not ever!

Beholding God’s glory in the face of Christ Jesus is sure to have a saving effect upon God’s vessel of mercy. This is what we are sure to do, *“And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.”*

Beholding the glory of God in Christ makes us repentant in haste. When God works this in the sinner, we do not linger—*“the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.”* (Rom 2: 4) Then we bow, worship God and pray for the first time. When Paul behold God’s glory in the face of Christ Jesus, Christ said, *“behold he prayeth!”*

This is our prayer to God—*“I pray thee go among us, for it is a stiff-necked people.”* Beholding Christ, we never want God to remove his presence from us for we see we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. And he assures us for the sake of Christ he never will!

“Pardon our iniquity and our sin.”—beholding Christ, we know ourselves sinners in need of pardon, forgiveness—and for Christ’s sake God freely forgives!

“Take us for thine inheritance!”—for the sake of Christ, God does! *“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory who first trusted Christ!”* (Eph 1: 11)

A WORD TO REMEMBER

Moses saw only the back parts of the living God; but upon the Mt. of Transfiguration, he saw Christ’s “face shine as the sun.” (Mt 17: 2) Now we see the glory of God who is invisible in the face of Christ Jesus through faith. But we see only through a glass darkly, we know in part.

Yet, soon we shall see him face to face! *“In my flesh shall I see God!”* (Job 19: 26) When we see him, we shall know as we are known and we shall be like him. (1 Cor 13: 12; 1 Jn 3: 2)

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

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

Until then remember *“ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”* (Eph 5: 8) How foolish we would be if we gave all our time and strength to other things, neglecting to give all diligence to *“grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.”* (2 Pet 3: 18) If we would walk in the Light we must make use of this means by which Christ first revealed Christ unto us—the preaching of the gospel of Christ from his holy word. *“In Thy light shall we see light”* (Ps 36:9). So let us walk in Christ’s light, using God’s means and in his Light we shall see more light as God continues to grow us in grace and in the knowledge of Christ!

Amen!