

TRANSFORMED

Text: 2 Cor. 3:7-18

INTRO: Best and Worst Dressed of 1990. The world is concerned with outward fashion. Rom 12:2 -- We are not to be outwardly fashioned according to this world, which is the world's foremost concern, but we are to be changed in our real being.

The purpose of salvation is to make us like Jesus Christ. Not merely to provide a sure escape from hell or a safe passage to heaven, but in the words of Romans 8, that we might be conformed to the image of God's Son.

Calvin: "The design of the Gospel is precisely this, that the image of God, which has been defaced by sin, may be repaired within us -- and the progress of this restoration is continuous through the whole of life, because it is little by little that God causes His glory to shine forth in us."

This is what Paul is saying in verse 18. The Christian life is a life of transformation. Here Paul is not speaking of that ultimate and final transformation when we shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye.

There is a process going on right now. MEANING OF THE WORD: To change the inward reality to something else.

We have met this word before-- Rom 12:2, Mark 9:2, Matt. 17:2. This is the same verb that was used to describe the transfiguration of Christ on the Mount. The heavenly glory with which He was then transfigured is the heavenly glory with which those who are His are even now being progressively transfigured. "Morphe" implies not the external accidents but the essential attributes. Morphe means real being as contrasted with outward appearance; it is in respect of our real being that we are changed. It is a transformation of the essential man.

In Justification the image of God is IMPUTED to us; in sanctification, it is IMPARTED to us; in glorification it will be IMPRESSED upon us.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR THIS TRANSFORMATION?

I. It Begins with a TURNING TO THE LORD. Vs. 16: "But whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."

Primarily, of conversion, but more: cf Roman 12:2, the negative, "Be not conformed to world," precedes the positive -- turn from the world and to the Lord.

II. LIBERTY -- vs. 17: "Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." And then verse 18 is connected with the preceding by the simple particle of transition, "But," indicating the natural consequence of the liberty mentioned in verse 17 is stated in verse 18.

This is a liberty from the bondage of the law (see Moses) which prevents us from seeing Jesus as the end of the Lord and the full and final revelation of God.

skin-deep religion

This liberty is stated in two ways:

1. WE ALL -- All Christians, without exception; this is an experience which is common to all believers. In the old dispensation only one man, Moses, gazed with unveiled face on the divine glory. Now, in the gospel age, it is the privilege of all.

2. With Unveiled face: The tense indicates that the veil was removed and remains removed. EMPHASIS: Openness to the Lord.

BUT ALSO "unveiled face" means: For him who has turned to Christ the veil which shuts off the glory from his apprehension has been removed.

III. LOOKING -- "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord."

To gaze by faith into the gospel is to behold Christ.

To see Him is to see the Father. And to contemplate Him who is the Father's image is progressively to be transformed into that image. The effect of continuous beholding is that we are continuously being transformed into the likeness of Christ -- and increasingly so.