

Be Reformed – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is

Be Charismatic – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

Be Community – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up

Be Missional – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3 And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8 will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of

righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 10 Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

12 Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, 13 not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. 14 But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. 16 But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Study Guide 9 October 2011 – Hope, Boldness and Glory



Summary

Here, Paul contrasts the old and new covenants. One is the "letter" (Ez 36) and the other the "Spirit" (Jer 31). The glory of God is His essence – who He is (Rom 3:23, Heb 1:3, 2:10). Jesus is the full representation of the glory of God. He is the one who has written His law on our hearts, to be delivered to others as a recommendation and a witness. This message we bring gives life to others, and shows the unfading glory of God.

We are therefore to be very bold in our witnessing, because all power for effective witness comes from God. We make our best effort, but are confident that our failings do not hamper the power of God.

We proclaim Christ alone as our hope. He is our hope from beginning to end, not just our "fire insurance", and we must be consistent and faithful in our walk.

Key points

It is the Spirit that gives life – trying to follow the letter of the law to gain God's approval is certain death.

Questions

- >>What is the glory of God?
- >>What does this passage tell me about God?
- >>What does this passage show me about myself?
- >>What needs to change about how we witness the glory of God's gospel?

Final thoughts

God and the greatness of His glory is the reason for our hope, and for our boldness in preaching the gospel.