

47-03-02b-The Spirit of Freedom

July 4th, freedom, rules, holiness, transformation, glory

2 Cor 3:17-18

Freedom is the Holy Spirit's guideline for our spiritual transformation.

INTRODUCTION:

–*Christian faith* isn't the keeping of *holy rules* that make us acceptable to God. A right relationship with God is *by grace through faith*. Holy conduct flows from that grace to show we have *genuine faith*.

–*Christian faith* brings *freedom*, but sometimes we encounter religious attempts to *regulate holiness* with rules not even found in Scripture.

–God's way to holiness is seen in 2 Cor 3:17-18. *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* **HOM.idea.**

I. We Humanly Gravitate toward WORKS

A. “For everything worth anything you must pay something!” (God's grace says: (Nothing we pay can earn it, but *all* can have it.)

B. The “*You-owe-me-one!*” idea reverses, or even cancels grace.

1. Jesus questions our “*I gave, so I should get in return!*” thinking– Mat 5:46. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? (*Giving-to-gain* contains **no grace**.)

2. A *give-and-take* focus turns *keeping God's Law* into a cry of “*You owe me one, God!*” (“*I kept the rules, I deserve a blessing!*”)

TRANS: It makes perfect *human sense*: *good works* => *sanctification* => *salvation*. But it's just the opposite: *salvation* => *sanctification* => *good works*. God makes our end-point His starting point of *freedom* which is both *His goal* and *His guideline for our transformation*.

II. God Chooses to Change Us by GRACE

A. Undeserved grace comes straight from *God's character*– Mat 5:44-45. But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

B. *God is love*, so His grace is relational, not *regulatory*.

1. God has rules... but they're *family rules* rooted in *relationship*.

2. v.17, “*where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom*”: *family freedom!*

a. When God freed Israel from Egypt, His *command* in Lev 11:45 (ESV) was a relational promise: “You shall... be holy, for I am holy.”)

b. By the Holy Spirit, God lovingly graces us with new birth into His family [*salvation*], but He then lovingly graces us into the divine family likeness [*sanctification*], giving us His holy lifestyle.

C. By grace, this *divine family tie* frees us from OT ceremonial duties [like *circumcision*] that were fulfilled in Christ– Gal 5:1 (NKJV), Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

TRANS: This *family freedom* liberates us from trying to establish *our own glory*. We need and get His glory, which the Holy Spirit lovingly graces into us. His guideline for this spiritual transformation is a freedom from our *religious effort*, but not from our *relational effort*.

III. Spiritual Transformation Requires Spending Time with Jesus

A. Jesus said in John 8:32, “you will know the **truth**, and the **truth** will set you free.” In John 15:26 (NKJV) He said, “when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the **Spirit of truth** who proceeds from the Father, **He will testify of Me.**” (*The Holy Spirit shows Jesus to us!*)

B. If we get *nakedly honest and open*, when the Holy Spirit brings us *face to face with Jesus*, we will be transformed– v.18, “*all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another*”

1. The only measure of spiritual growth is “*the glory of the Lord*” Jesus Christ. (The Holy Spirit holds up Jesus, so we can let *His glory* penetrate those areas of our lives where it is lacking.)

2. *Religious rule-keeping* can't penetrate our lives with the *glory of Christ*, but a *spiritual discipline* of spending daily, intimate time with Jesus opens us up to becoming “*transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*”

CONCLUSION:

–As a closing, I want to read the lines of a song taken from 2 Cor 3:18:

From glory to glory He's changing me,
Changing me, changing me,
His likeness and image to perfect in me–
The love of God shown to the world.

For He's changing me, changing me
From earthly things to the heavenly,
His likeness and image to perfect in me–
The love of God shown to the world.