

## Transformed for Freedom

- ✠ **Hope makes us bold. (3:12,13)**
- ✠ **from glory into glory (3:14-18)**
- ✠ **Shine the truth unveiled. (4:1,2)**

In the name of Jesus, our glorious Lord and Savior, dear hopeful disciples of Christ,

In this winter of our discontent is it not amazing how Americans still have great expectations? Change is in the air. But is it the kind of change God wants in our hearts? Safeguards were supposed to prevent another day when investors could use their stock certificates for wallpaper. But what change is commanded in God's Word? *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”* (1 Timothy 6:17-19 NIV) We need to change from the inside out. Today in Christ we are being **Transformed for Freedom** as...

### ✠ **Hope makes us bold. (3:12,13)**

High on a mountain, probably Mount Hermon, north of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus showed His inner circle – Peter, James and John – His spectacular Transfiguration. The bright cloud and Jesus' brighter glory seemed to fit all their hopes and dreams of a conquering Messiah for the Jewish people. Peter was ready to go to work and preserve heaven on earth. Mountaintop experiences are hard to let go. He hoped to house Jesus, Moses and Elijah in tent shelters forever. But Peter's housing bubble burst.

How often are our hopes built by ignoring the evidence? **Hope makes us bold**, but what if our hope is empty? Peter was looking at evidence right there in Moses on the mountain. In spite of all the glory at Mount Sinai, Moses had a problem. The *“old covenant”* was obsolete; the glory would not last. Whenever Moses talked with God, His face would shine. But when he finished, *“Moses...would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.”*

Before our text the Holy Spirit has been explaining that Moses' ministry of law, gloriously chiseled in stone, brought death because no one can keep the Ten Commandments. Most church people think they've never committed murder. But that's by ignoring God's Word that says hatred is murder in our heart. If we do not help our neighbor in need, we break the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment too. Faithfulness to your spouse and earning an honest living still crash head-on into the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Commandments because we all have coveted what belongs to others. We totaled out our holiness on the rock of God's perfection. And no way can we rescue ourselves from the wrecking ball of God's justice.

That's why God promised through Moses, *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”* (Deuteronomy 18:15 NIV) God planned from eternity a new covenant of pure grace, one-sided forgiveness from God who does everything to set us free from sin and give us **Hope** to make **us bold**. This would totally trumped everything with Moses back on Mount Sinai. And so His Father spoke from heaven at Jesus' Transfiguration: *“This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”* (Mark 9:7 NIV)

Is that not the key to total transformation? From the hopeless, helpless cowardice of sin, God's Word in the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ changes us from the inside out. We have no reason or desire to cover our faces with a veil because the glory of God's new covenant in Christ will never fade away. In fact, while **Hope makes us bold**, the **glory** of Christ's goodness keeps increasing...

### ‡ from glory into glory (3:14-18)

Jewish religious leaders ignored the clear evidence in their holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and taught that the Messiah would never suffer and die. So they rejected Jesus who told them, *“If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.”* (John 5:46 NIV) And Paul says, *“Their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”*

In my Bible Information Class we hear the story of a young Jewish girl my wife and I babysat while I was at Sem. She said we were not allowed to play with her Torah. “The rabbis say we can’t understand it.” “I know a little Hebrew,” I answered. “Let’s just look.” Her plastic scroll had English beside Hebrew, so I checked Deuteronomy for the blessings and curses God promised under Moses’ old covenant. They could keep the Promised Land in prosperity by obeying the LORD, but would lose it in horrendous shame for disobedience. To my dismay I discovered only promises, but none of the curses. Suddenly I could see why *“the veil [of] the old covenant”* remains to this day.

How can we know our need for change inside unless we pay attention to the law of Moses? That is the glorious reason God gave it. Yet the law can only condemn and kill us because we cannot keep it perfectly. But God’s Son did. Jesus always loved God as His Father and lived among us in absolute holiness. He honored His parents even when they were wrong. He loved His neighbor as Himself.

This new covenant of Jesus Christ enables us to follow Him **from glory into glory**. Jesus descended the Mount of Transfiguration in order to climb a hill called Golgotha, carrying His own bloody cross. There all our crimes against God’s commandments were crucified with Him. Christ’s gory shame in our place has become our **glory** that keeps increasing. The dear Holy Spirit removes the veil from our hearts by a miracle called sanctification. We love God and our neighbor because Jesus loved us first. *“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.”* While His **glory** is still hidden under the crosses and difficulties of our lives, Jesus uses us to...

### ‡ Shine the truth unveiled. (4:1,2)

*“Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”* Only two things can be done with truth: Either say it clear, or you’re distorting it.

One member answered a boy’s ridicule of our belief that we receive Christ’s body and blood in Lord’s Supper: “I won’t argue about this miracle. I believe Jesus, ‘This is my body. This is my blood.’”

Years ago a couple stormed out of a WELS church because of Close Communion. A few weeks later they shocked the pastor by coming back. They explained, “We visited all the other churches around here and now we see why you need to protect God’s truth by teaching people first. We want to attend where the pastor teaches what God says no matter what.”

“Nearly 98,000 Americans die each year [from] medical mistakes.”<sup>1</sup> Wrong amputations, misdirected drugs – if truth matters in what we can see, what about our unseen souls? We need God’s Word to heal our hearts and guide our lives. Christ’s **glory** remains hidden, but **the truth** of His forgiveness is meant to **shine unveiled**. That’s medicine I’m glad to keep taking while we are being **Transformed** by God’s promises to enjoy the eternal summer of contentment. We have complete **Freedom** in Christ as we pass with Moses, Elijah and all believers **from glory into glory**. Beyond great expectations we will drink of the river of His pleasure forevermore. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> “Don’t Let a Hospital Make You Sick,” by Dr. Ranit Mishori. *Parade*, February 8, 2009, pp. 12ff.