

WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY - GLORY FROM HIS FACE

Jonathon Wills, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 21 June 2026

Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 3. This morning, we are going to consider the ministry that we have received. Paul rejoices in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 as he says, 'Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.' He then continues. We want to consider the nature of the ministry of the New Covenant of the Spirit as the Holy Spirit ministers the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord not only to us, but also that we would be made adequate ministers of the Spirit ourselves - of the glory that is shining from His face. The key thought here is that as the message is being proclaimed, it is also being portrayed in the one who is proclaiming it. We ourselves are looking into the face of Christ. The ministry then is enabling others who hear our message to also look into the very same face of Christ where the glory of God shines to everlasting life.

Let us read 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verse 12. Again, there is a very big 'therefore' here that makes reference to what has come prior. Paul says 'therefore' in relationship to the ministry of the New Covenant of the Spirit that we have received. It has a glory that remains to eternal life. It is not passing like the glory of the Old Covenant, but rather there is an enduring quality that belongs to the New Covenant of the Spirit. Why? Because we are born of it. So, it is not just that we are looking at something and admiring it and saying how wonderful this is, and because I have looked, I derive all of the benefit of it. Rather, I am born of that glory, which is His life. I am now granted a participation in the fellowship of the Root, which is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the glory that is shining.

Paul says, 'Therefore [in relationship to this ministry], we have such hope.' Why does it fill us with such hope? Because with the New Covenant of the Spirit, the glory endures. Paul said that the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. That is the context of its glory; it is

life-giving. It is glorious in Him; and it is glorious in you and me because we are born of that life.

Paul says, 'Since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech - unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily... [We are able to look steadily into the face of Jesus Christ, and the glory is not such that we are unable to continue to look - nor do we have to turn away because it is fading. Rather, we are able to continue to look steadily, whereas the children of Israel could not. Moses needed to put a veil over his face] ... they could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. But their minds were blinded... [Why were their minds blinded? Their minds were blinded by unbelief. It is not as if Satan is going around blinding your eyes as though you have no say in it and you are helpless against the schemes of the devil. No, no, you can resist him if you would believe the word that is being proclaimed to you] ... Their eyes were blinded [because of unbelief and self-righteousness]. For until this day, the same veil, remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. Even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart [and we can say over the heart of all who do not believe and who continue to live self-righteously]. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, the veil [of unbelief and self-righteousness] is taken away. Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord, this veil can be taken away. Now the Lord is the [Holy] Spirit; and where the [sevenfold] Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty... [There is freedom. This is the glorious freedom of sons of God. Firstly, it is the freedom to choose to believe and to choose to turn to the Lord. Why? Because the ministry of the Holy Spirit, as He ministers the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord to someone, they receive the freedom through prevenient grace to choose to turn and to look upon Christ and to believe.] ... Nevertheless, when one turns to the Lord,

the veil is taken away. The Lord is the Holy Spirit; and where the [sevenfold] Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled face [that is because we have turned to the Lord and the veil is taken away], are beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ [the glorious image of the first Man brought forth in the image and likeness of God and in Him (who is the Beginning and the End; the Alpha and the Omega), we also see the glory of whom He has brought us forth to be. We see that glory like we are looking into a mirror. This is the ministry of the New Covenant of the Spirit.] We are then being transformed... [We have already sung that this morning.] ...We are being transformed into the very same glorious image [that is the resurrected and glorious Son of Man] ...into the same image from one degree of glory [from one day after another - all of the way through until we breathe our last] just as by the ministry of the [sevenfold] Spirit of the Lord.'

I will summarise this: The Holy Spirit is the Lord. Where the Holy Spirit is ministering the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, there is freedom for us. That glorious freedom is firstly the freedom to choose. Then having chosen and continued to choose, it is the glorious freedom of sons of God. That is, we are free from living by another law; free from the infirmity; free from bondage to sin, and free to live according to the Spirit. The enduring glory of the New Covenant of the Spirit is that it has the power to change the heart of a man. This is what the Old Covenant could not do. It could highlight the failing of the heart of man, but it could not circumcise the heart of man. By birthing us of the life of God and by anointing us with the Spirit of the Lord, we are able to change. As we have received mercy through the forgiveness of sin and the debt accrued against us, we are granted a participation in the fellowship of His seven wounds where the other law is circumcised from our heart, enabling us to cease from sin as we are joined to the dying of our Lord Jesus. It is here that we receive the capacity to live as a son of God through the resurrection life of Christ as we

are joined to the living of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the same seven wounds, we receive the comfort of His resurrection life. This is the 'as we have received mercy'. We are granted a participation each day in the fellowship of His offering journey where the dying of Jesus is present within us and the living of Jesus also is - His resurrection life. The sevenfold Spirit of the Lord enables a person to look upon Christ, the Author and Perfecter of their faith. They are enabled to see that, for the joy of their sonship, Jesus endured the cross. Can you see that today? For the joy of your sonship, He endured the cross. As He endured the cross, we understand the capacity by which He endured it because the joy of your sonship was by the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. That is how the Holy Spirit was both strengthening Him and also comforting Him at each wound. With every blow, He was strengthened by Eternal Spirit and He received the comfort of Eternal Spirit from the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. So, for the joy of your sonship, Jesus endured the cross and He despised the shame. He despised the shame. Even for the joy of your sonship that was set before Him, He despised the shame. Yet you and I have hidden our face and turned our face from Him. We have loved the darkness of our own unbelief and self-righteousness and our own way, rather than loving the light that is flooding us and proceeding toward us. He despised that shame. Even though there is a finished work in relationship to our glorious sonship and the overcoming of our sin, we can still choose instead to try to transform ourselves, instead of being transformed by the Spirit of the Lord. He endured the cross; He despised the shame, and He has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God as the first Man brought forth through death, burial and resurrection in the image and likeness of God.

As we turn to see Jesus, the veil of our unbelief and self-righteousness is taken away, and we are made able to behold the glory of the Lord Jesus as though we are looking into a mirror. We see Him and we see

ourselves. We know Him and we are able to know ourselves. Part of that knowing is that we see how far we have fallen and the grief of that. The Spirit of the Lord moves upon that image that we see that is so far less than the heights of the glory of what He has perfected for us. But as we look into the mirror, we see how far we have fallen short and how far He has raised us in glory. We have a choice there. We can hide our face from that, or we can continue to look steadily and believe. The Old Covenant Law judged the heart, but it could not circumcise the heart. It was a tutor to lead people to Christ. Now by the Spirit of the Lord, we do not just see Jesus, but we are being transformed in our mortality into His image from glory to glory, each day by the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. What the Law could not do is now happening in Christ.

What we are talking about here ought to be the testimony of every messenger in the right hand of Christ and the testimony of every believing household that belongs to a lampstand church. Our testimony is that 'we have received this ministry'. Our testimony is that 'we have received mercy'. And our testimony is that 'we are not losing heart'. We are finding comfort in the fellowship of Christ's offering as we receive His resurrection life, and our other law is being circumcised from our heart.

We also find freedom from the 'hidden things of shame', from 'walking in craftiness' and from 'handling the word of God deceitfully' and from meeting what is in the Spirit with the law of our own mind. This is part of our testimony. We are finding this freedom from the 'hidden things of shame' where we cover and hide and live based on our own judgements of ourselves and others. It keeps us in the dark instead of walking in the light. As we have heard, the self-righteous shame that causes us to love darkness rather than the light is a bigger problem than the evil deeds, because every evil deed can be dealt with in the light. The problem is the unbelief that causes the shame. This causes us to hide

away and love the darkness rather than the light.

'Walking in craftiness' is operating in a carnal mode where, instead of being transformed as we lay our lives down in the weakness of Christ's offering, we seek to transform ourselves and rely on the strategies of our own mind and trading. We walk in deception and craftiness like Satan. It is Satan's deception that then takes hold.

We are finding freedom from 'handling the word deceitfully' to now manifesting the truth whereby the truth of the word is true in us. This is where there is a consistency between what is being proclaimed and the way a person is living. Paul said, 'We preach and we portray Christ as crucified to you.' Then we further testify of the freedom (I have put it this way): freedom from the mind games to meeting spirit-to-spirit, where we are able to find genuine fellowship with one another.

Let us come to the revelation of Jesus in glory. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus is the immortal Head of His body. He is enthroned in His Spiritual body as the first Man in the image and likeness of God. He is at the right hand of the Father in the third heaven - in the heavenly city in the heights of Mount Zion. In Revelation chapter 1, when John turned to see the voice that spoke to him, he firstly saw seven golden lampstands. I think this is amazing! He is turning to see the voice. He wants to know who the One is who is speaking to him and the first thing he sees is where He is. And where is He? He is in the midst of seven golden lampstands. John then sees One, like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to His feet, girded about His chest with a golden band. It is significant that the revelation of the glorified Son of Man, the King of glory, is from the midst of seven lampstands. This is the context from which His face is shining toward us. John's attention is drawn toward His head, and he sees all the glory of His headship. He then sees down to His feet and then he sees the ministry of His mighty right hand.

This is what Paul said in Ephesians chapter 1. We are going to pick up midway through what is being said. We will read from verse 19. I want us to catch the elements of His head, His feet, and His hand. We know that the hand is the expression of the Spirit of might. We know that that is not speaking of the intrinsic might of Christ, but rather the Spirit of might that belongs to the fellowship of Yahweh. It is Eternal Spirit that the Holy Spirit is strengthening Christ with, which means that that ministry does not belong to Him alone. It belongs to Their fellowship. Let us see in these verses. Kids, as we read through this, can you hear the expression of the Spirit of might which belongs to His hand, His head and His feet?

Ephesians chapter 1 verse 19. '...And what is the exceeding greatness of His power [This is the Spirit of might - of His power] toward us who believe... [And for those of us who believe, we have an unveiled face, and we are beholding His glory] ...His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power [This is the Spirit of might now. It is not immediately talking about what is in Christ's right hand, as though it only belongs to Christ. This is now in relationship to the Father. This is the working of the Spirit of might from the Father] ...according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet [Why did He put all things under His feet? The Spirit of understanding - feet as burnished bronze that every man might understand His way and His steps], and He gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.'

We can see that John is turning and seeing five attributes of Christ that belong to His head. Another belongs to His mighty power in His hand and the other to His feet. Paul is

bringing these same attributes to our attention here. The five attributes of Christ that belong to His face are 'His head and hair - white like wool'. We are reading out of Revelation chapter one here. White as the snow is the Spirit of the Lord. 'His eyes were like a flame of fire' - the Spirit of wisdom. 'His voice was like the sound of many waters' - the Spirit of counsel. 'Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword' - the Spirit of knowledge. And 'His face shone like the sun shining in all of its strength' - the Spirit of the fear of the Lord which is the outcome of seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

In the midst of this, John turns and sees. He sees His face; he sees His feet and he sees His hand. He sees the King of glory dressed in His robe that fills the temple; and he sees that the ground of Yahweh's fellowship is 'holy, holy, holy'. What does John do? In the Spirit of the fear of the Lord, he falls at His feet as dead until that ministry of the Spirit of His mighty power (which is now in His right hand, through the seven stars in His right hand) is extended in a fellowship toward John. [This is then] that he might be raised up to then further participate in the ministry of this revelation. The seven symbolic attributes that belong to Christ demonstrate that He possesses the seven Spirits of God as the anointed One. The glorified Son of Man is revealing the seven Spirits of God.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 4 to 6, Paul described this same vision (or revelation) that John received. I will say it this way: The light of the gospel that declares the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, shines in our hearts to give us... (There is the necessity to receive something. The light is shining. The glory of Christ, who is the image of God, is shining in our hearts) ...to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God that is in His face.

The light shining from the face of Christ (which is the light of the seven Spirits of God) is revealed and ministered through the stars in His right hand. The seven stars are not the seven Spirits. Rather each star, when

connected to Christ's right hand, reveals the ministry of the seven Spirits of God. That is why this hand that is ministering the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord is outstretched to us. Today, His face is shining like the sun. His face (in all of those other five attributes that belong to it) is what we see. We also see the ministry of His right hand outstretched to us. And we know that all things are under His feet that we might, through a Spirit of understanding, understand His way so that His way might become our way.

Each star connected to Christ's right hand is revealing the ministry of the seven Spirits. This is then manifest as the light of seven Spirits in a lamp. This light of seven Spirits is then reflected and focused by all of the members of a local congregation. We read in Ephesians, that He is Head over all things to the church, which is His body. We are the mortal members of His immortal body, and He is ministering from His immortality to us in our mortality. Our participation here is as petals within the flower. The lamp is placed there through the ministry of seven stars in His right hand, ministering the light of seven Spirits to us; and we have a participation. 'We have this ministry' for all of us to participate together now in the ministry of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. The anointing that was upon Him is now upon us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is not just sitting here going, 'What have You to say to me today? Lord, I have been feeling like this through-out the course of the week. I am hoping to feel good about myself as I head into next week.' Rather, we are sitting here - eager participants in the ministry of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord. The manner in which you are participating right now will be evidenced in the manner in which you participate at the agape table at morning tea. If you sit here now enduring the songs just as a recipient (not participating in anything), all you will have, will be mind games at the table because you have not met in the fellowship of one spirit together. You have just sat there listening with your mind, and then going, 'What can I remember to say to make sure that I have said something?' Or

'What happened during my week? I am here to tell people what happened during my week, but I am not here as a petal within the flower to reflect the ministry of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord.'

The Holy Spirit is the Lord, and where the Holy Spirit is ministering the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord, is where freedom is found. Our freedom to participate is found here, instead of this continued lockup within us where the Spirit of the Lord is not being ministered (either at all, or particularly well) because of our own mind games and the manner in which we have chosen to receive and to participate or not to participate. This is where the mirror is so important. Paul says that it is like we are looking into a mirror. So, we ought to be able to see at a particular point the manner in which we are participating or not participating and say, 'That falls a little bit short.'

But thank the Lord that He is the Beginning and the End; the Alpha and the Omega; the Author and the Perfecter of my faith. He has journeyed it for me so that I can find deliverance from the hidden things of shame; from walking in craftiness; from handling the word of God deceitfully and playing mind games in agape fellowship instead of the genuineness of meeting spirit-to-spirit. 'What we have seen and heard and looked at and touched and handled, we proclaim to you that you would have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the Father and with the Son [in one Spirit together].' We are looking into His face.

Having turned to see Jesus and having believed the word of faith that gives us hope, 'we, now with an unveiled face... are being transformed [by the power of His resurrection life in our mortality] into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord... [In our mortality, we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. How? By our own best efforts? By trying really hard? Through mind games?] ... just as by the [sevenfold] Spirit of the Lord.'

How is that transformation going for you? This is a good question for husbands and wives to ask one another. Households - how is the transformation going for you? Having looked into the mirror, do not be the man, the woman or the child who looks, and then immediately forgets what he looks like - forgets what kind of man that he is.

This man, as James said, who doubts and is double minded in his ways will not receive anything from the One who gives liberally and without reproach. This almost sounds like a contradiction. If you are lacking wisdom, then you ought to ask for wisdom, and the One who gives liberally and without reproach will give you the wisdom. But he then says, but do not ask as one who doubts, because the man who doubts and is double minded in his ways, will not receive anything from the Lord even though he is asking for wisdom. This is the one who is forgetting what he looks like. Let us not be that man, woman and child today.

What I would love to do now is look at the progression of this glory that we have been birthed of that is in Christ's face. I am going to run it quickly from Abraham through. There might be some momentum to what we do, but I want you to be caught up in the momentum of it as we watch it proceeding.

Abraham saw the revelation of the glory of God when the God of glory appeared to him and called him to get out of his country and to receive the land of promise. The God of glory brought to Abraham the promise of sonship. He said, 'In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' Abraham is meeting and interfacing with the God of glory. He is now proceeding in faith.

In Exodus 24 verses 15 to 17, Moses saw it when he went up into the mountain and a cloud covered the mountain and the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai for six days. On the seventh day, He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. What did this cloud look like? The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

This is awesome! The glory of the Lord - the God of glory appeared to Abraham and said, 'In you all the families of the earth are going to be blessed. I am going to birth My life within your seed.' This glory is then a cloud of consuming fire atop a mountain. Moses comes out of it and his face is shining. But not being born of that glory, the glory faded and therefore Moses put a veil over his face so that the people would not see the fading glory that belonged to the Old Covenant. While the Lord did bring blessing, its glory was passing.

When Isaiah saw it, the King of glory was 'seated on a throne, high and lifted up and the train of His robe filled the temple'. This is Isaiah chapter 6. And the seraphim, the messengers, the angelic messengers worshipped saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.[The Lord of hosts is the King of glory]; the whole earth is full of His glory!' Then Isaiah said, 'The posts of the door were shaken by the voice of the seraphim, and the house was filled with smoke.' We could say, 'from the enfolding fire of Yahweh's fellowship' because Isaiah is seeing the same thing - the consuming cloud of fire that was atop Mount Sinai. It was also the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. And the King of glory is enthroned. Isaiah now focuses on the King of glory who is enthroned within this enfolding fire. The whole ministry shakes the posts of the door, and the house is filled with the smoke of this fire.

Peter and John experienced this same outcome as they worshipped and prayed in this fellowship of messengers who are declaring, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the King of glory. The whole earth is full of His glory!' This is in Acts chapter 4 verse 31, as they worshipped and prayed. 'When they had prayed [and their prayer was for 'boldness to speak Your word'], the place where they were assembled together was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they all spoke the word of God with boldness.' This is the same activity of the King of glory meeting them as they

worshipped and prayed. All of them were now granted boldness to speak. The seraphim are speaking, 'Holy, holy, holy, King of Glory, Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory!' Peter and John participate, and they now receive the boldness to speak, and everyone is filled with the Holy Spirit.

As Isaiah interfaces with it though, and as he sees and hears the glory of the Lord, what does he say? Isaiah chapter 6 verse 5: 'Woe is me, for I am undone! [Why?] Because I am a man of unclean lips [This is the same fellowship of prayer here. Isaiah's desire is to be a man of clean lips - to be a minister of the gospel to 'not handle it deceitfully' or 'in craftiness' or to transform himself, but rather to speak with clean lips], and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King of glory, the Lord of hosts.'

When Ezekiel saw it, the glory of the Lord was a great cloud of enfolding fire engulfing itself. And the fire was bright. This is Ezekiel chapter 1. I will just summarise it through for us. The fire was so bright, and out of the fire, the four living creatures ran back and forth like flashes of lightning. In each of these revelations, they are seeing the same glorious fellowship, but the Spirit is drawing their attention to a different aspect of what is taking place. Ezekiel is seeing the four living creatures running back and forth like flashes of lightning. John saw this very same expression of lightning when he saw the glorified Son of Man holding seven stars in His right hand - the Spirit of might. The seven stars are the messengers sent by Christ to walk among lampstand churches.

Habakkuk saw this same glory, and he said that it covered the heavens. He saw flashes of lightning coming from His hand. And there in His mighty right hand, His power was hidden. Again, it is the Spirit of might.

Ezekiel saw wheels within wheels that were awesome in height, and their rims were full of eyes. John saw these same eyes when the Lamb stood to take the scroll from the hand

of the Father who was seated upon the throne. He was told that 'the seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God sent into all of the earth'. When Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord, he fell on his face. Can you see the integration of what we are seeing here? When John saw the glory of the Lord, he said, 'When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. When Paul first saw it, he fell to the ground and was blinded.

In contrast to Paul (and I love this), when Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, saw it, he was strengthened and he was comforted by the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord such that heaven was opened for him and he was able to intently gaze into heaven to see the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand. He took him all of the way through to the time when the Father would take His seat and the administration of the Son would stand up and move to the centre of the Father's throne so that the whole earth would be filled with the kingdom of the Father and of His glory. What have we understood took place through there? The glory of the Father revealed a glorious company of sons. 'When He appears, we will be like Him. for we will see Him as He is.' I love this. Stephen gazes, strengthened by the Holy Spirit with the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord and is comforted as they stoned him to death. He gazes in, not just to see Jesus standing at the right hand (which is the most glorious image), but to see the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand. He is seeing the glorious company of sons of the Father. The God of glory who appeared to Abraham is seated upon the throne. The King of glory, Jesus, is standing and this company of glorious sons. Now the glory of God is shining. And Stephen... (not letting go of the ministry that he had received; and the mercy that had been extended to him; the participation in seven wounds that he held fast to and cherished) ...and Stephen did not lose heart. As they stoned him to death, he did not lose heart and he continued to minister the hope of the New Covenant, even to those who had set themselves as his enemy, saying to them, 'Look, behold, the

Holy Spirit is the Lord, and where the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty for the veil to be taken away in Christ and for you to see the glory that shines from His face. You ought not to continue to live in your unbelief where Satan (because of your unbelief) blinds your eyes.' In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, Paul says, '...lest you might look and see the light of the gospel of the glory of God that is in the face of Jesus.' Here is a minister of this. 'Look, I see heaven open and the Son of Man [the glorified Son of Man] standing at the right hand of God, having overcome every enemy - every principality and power. All things under His feet; the Head over the church - all of it according to the working of His mighty power.'

When Jesus came, John said in John chapter 1 verse 14, 'The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' This was the glory of the Son of God in the flesh, seen from His birth, His baptism and His offering journey. It was also the glory of the Son of Man when He was begotten by the Father a second time on the day of His resurrection when He was revealed as the first Man in the image and likeness of God. The glory of God and the glory of who we are to be was revealed.

We have received the blessing that was given to Abraham when the God of glory appeared to him - being born of God's divine nature and being brought forth in the image of His resurrection. As we participate with Him, resurrection life is coming out from Christ the immortal Head of the body to us as the mortal members of His body. When Jesus breathed on the disciples and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit', they were born of God, and the glory of God was now manifest in them. Sons of men now born anew as sons of God. The glory that covered the mountain with storm and fire was now birthed in the hearts of men and women - a treasure within an earthen vessel. The God of glory who appeared to Abraham and gave him the promise of being his faith and being his reward. His life had fulfilled His promise and

come to dwell in the hearts of men that we might all be rooted and grounded in Their love. Philippians 3 verses 20 to 21: 'For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working [we can say 'by the working of the Spirit of might'] by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.'

Let us get past any thought here that I am incapable of getting beyond any impediment that might be there - as though Satan is the one that has me locked up and I cannot get out. He blinds our eyes and sets us in bondage because we have not believed. But if you believe, you can resist the devil and humble yourself under God's mighty hand and His grace will be ministered toward you. Paul says in Romans, 'There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.' He gives the big, long list of everything that we could think could possibly in some way have power against us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. He says there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. There is one thing - unbelief. Unbelief belongs to the freedom of choice. That is the dignity that He has given to us. When we choose and when we believe, there is nothing that can separate us. We can believe today that when we turn to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Romans chapter 8 verses 18 and 19. 'For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.' The statement of how we are living now is the earnest expectation of even creation. We are part of that creation, and our earnest expectation is to eagerly wait for the revelation of the sons of God.

This is our ministry to those who belong to a lampstand church. As we said to begin with, this is to be the testimony of every messenger in the right hand of Christ and every believing household that belongs to a lampstand church. If we do not believe,

Satan gains access with his lies, and our unbelief becomes a veil over our eyes. It means we do not see what is true when we look to Christ, because we are looking through the veil of a lie. We cannot see the truth of who we are, nor the truth of who He is, nor the truth of one another. Can we turn today? Turning, as we believe, we are able to see and then we are able to understand what our repentance is. How did Jeremiah put it? 'Turning, I repented.'

As we finish, I want to make a point in relationship to the ministry of comfort. Come back to 2 Corinthians chapter 1. Paul often puts his proposition up front to us; and then he builds on it; then moves around. He does this in chapter 1 by presenting the ministry of comfort. In this regard, we can say that the ministry that we have received (which is the ministry of the New Covenant of the Spirit), is the ministry of the comfort of God.

Let us read this from verse 3 of 2 Corinthians chapter 1. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort [This is, 'We have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart, because He is our comfort] who comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able [this is the ministry now] to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ abound to us, so also our consolation abounds through Christ.'

The comfort of God is God Himself. He offers Himself as our comfort. As we receive Him, His resurrection life is our comfort. Comfort also means 'to call to one's side'. He is our comfort as He comes to our side. He is also our comfort as we come to His side where blood and water flows. The psalmist spoke of this, concerning Christ's offering journey in Psalm 22 which is prophetic of Christ's journey. In verse 19, Christ is crying out to the Father, 'You, O Lord, do not be far from Me... [He is seeking the comfort now - the comfort of God that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter is going to minister to Him, which is the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord] ...You, O

Lord, do not be far from me [This is the name that He gives]; O My Strength... [See how it is all capitalised? This is His name.] ...O My Strength, hasten to help Me [to comfort Me]! God Himself, 'O My Strength' was comfort to Christ as the Holy Spirit (who is the Comforter) strengthened Him with the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord to continue to pioneer that pathway of offering for us. He is not encouraging us with motivating words, but with Himself. This is what He said to Abraham, 'I am.' 'I am your shield; I am your exceedingly great reward. I am your faith. I am your life.' This is the comfort - the ministry of comfort.

We are now ministers of the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord of, 'O My Strength' to one another in our times of need. The comfort that we receive from 'O My Strength' is now the comfort that I am bringing. It is not just nice, helpful words. 'O My Strength' is ministered to you that you might know your participation in the fellowship of His offering and suffering; that you might know the comfort of the other law being circumcised. Then as you are joined to His dying, you might know the comfort of His living as He is raised up. But if you are uncomfortable with the dying, there is no comfort of the living. 'I am your faith and your life.' This is our great comfort. He is our faith. This is our ministry.

Jesus received this ministry from the Holy Spirit on His offering journey through seven wounds where He established the process of our participation to be brought forth in His image. As He suffered blow after blow, the sevenfold Spirit of the Lord was both the capacity by which He was strengthened to continue to offer, and also the comfort of God toward Him. The powerful ministry of the church is to minister the comfort of God to one another and to the world.

Paul testified of Philemon. I love Stephen and Philemon. You can incorporate them into any sermon - Stephen and Philemon. Young men and women, devote yourselves to having a look at the life and faith of these two men who were full of grace and the Holy Spirit - Stephen and Philemon. Paul's

testimony of Philemon in Philemon verse 7: 'For we have great joy and consolation [the comfort of God] in your love [your expression and ministry], because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.' 'The word is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little, that we might know rest and refreshing', and that this might now be the word that is in us that would cause the weary to find rest. Philemon is exemplifying this.

Paul's testimony in 2 Corinthians 1 verse 9 ought to be our testimony too. 'Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves [Why? Because we are conformed to the death that He died] that we should not trust in ourselves [So that death is delivering us of our propensity to lean on our own understanding and to trust in ourselves. But when that sentence of death is in us, we cease from trusting in ourselves], rather in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death [There is our testimony in terms of what the Lord has done] and He does deliver us [There is my present confidence that He is delivering me], in whom we trust that He will still deliver us [What He did and He is doing, we know that He will continue to do as we continue to find this participation], you also [are ministering toward us] helping together in prayer for us [Paul is even then testifying of receiving this ministry as they also together help in a fellowship of prayer, the fruit of which is], that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through the many.'

This is the gift that he has asked that the Lord would grant him (you and me) boldness to proclaim this glorious gospel of sonship that we have received. This is how our inward man is being renewed day by day as the outer man is perishing. But we are not losing heart because of this ministry and the glory that is shining from His face. Bless the Lord.