

**From the Pastor's Desk (Rev. Nathan Ondego)**

**Read the Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:12-18**

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 (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

The apostle reminds the Corinthians immediately that the Lord is in their hearts, in their human spirits. Their hope of freedom comes from that great fact, for the one who is within them is God Himself. Paul identifies Him: the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Freedom is being out in the open, having boldness, having nothing to hide. Those who are free are those who do not have any reputation to defend, no image to hide behind, nothing to preserve about themselves. They can be themselves. Everywhere today people are longing for this type of freedom. People want to be themselves. I've got to be me, we hear, and there is nothing wrong with that. God wants you to be you, too. The only thing wrong is the way we do it. We are being taught in the world that the way to be me is to think about my advantage, my efforts, and to defend and demand them.

The Word of God teaches us it is quite another process. Being yourself and having freedom does not mean denying the potential for all the evil that is possible in your heart and in your life, because you have another basis on which you receive God's acceptance and approval. His acceptance and approval are gifts to you. The faith He gives continually accepts anew the gift of righteousness of already being pleasing to God, and, on that basis, you serve Him out of a heart of gratitude for what you already have. You do not have to earn His favor, and your performance is not going to affect it. When you start looking at the one who is doing this in your life, the Lord Jesus, and beholding Him with all your veils taken away so you are not afraid to look at your own evil capacity, then a wonderful thing happens. Without even knowing that you are doing it, just by rejoicing in what you have and serving the Lord who gave it to you, you suddenly discover--and other people will discover--that you are becoming a loving person. And love is the fulfilling of the Law; the very demand that God made in the Law that you tried so hard to fulfill by your self-effort will be fulfilled without your even realizing it when you begin to love out of the grace and forgiveness of God.

It is a process of growth. It does not happen in one great transformation when you are suddenly sanctified, filled with the Spirit, or baptized. It happens as you keep your eyes on the glory of the Lord and not on the face of Moses, not on self-effort but on what He is already giving you. When you do, you suddenly discover the Spirit of God has been at work making gradual changes. You are becoming a loving person, easier to live with, more attractive, more compelling. Your life is deepening as it is losing its shallowness; you are more understanding of things. That is the work of the Spirit. Notice what he says: this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. It is not you who does it; it is He.

***Lord, thank You for the promise that as I look at You, I become like You***