

Beholding God's Beauty: Encountering God's Emotions

I want to talk about beholding the glory of the Lord, or the beauty of the Lord. Specifically, I want to discuss the revelation of God's emotions. An essential emphasis of the Holy Spirit in the generation of the Lord's return is to reveal the emotions of God and the beauty of God. That is a familiar theme to most of you; to some of you it is a brand new thing: this idea of God's emotions. We must study not just the power of His hand extended in miracles, but actually His inner life and how He feels. King David emphasized this 3,000 years ago. Psalm 27:4 is the verse the Lord gave us back in 1983. Psalm 27:4: "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That I will seek; That I may dwell in the house of the LORD, All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple."

TWENTY-FOUR HOUR PRAYER IN THE SPIRIT OF THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

God instructed me to do twenty-four hour prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David. God spoke that audibly many years ago. Twenty some years ago, God spoke Psalm 27:4 to me, even though we did not really understand it very much. This is what King David said, "This one thing I have desired, that I will seek. That I would dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." Here is what David once committed himself to do: first of all, to behold or to gaze on the beauty of God. Secondly, David wants to inquire in God's temple. So, David wanted to behold, to gaze, and to inquire. Those are the two things that David set his heart on doing.

THEOLOGIAN OF THE BEAUTY OF GOD

I call David the theologian of the beauty of God. Second to none in the Old Testament, David unpacked this doctrine and this reality. Isaiah would have come alongside him, maybe 300 or so years later, and emphasized the same thing. The book of Isaiah is a book about the glory of the Lord, or the beauty of God. That term is in many places in Isaiah, not all of them, but in many places, and it is interchangeable. Glory and beauty is an interchangeable word found often in the book of Isaiah. Why do we need to understand the beauty of God?

Paragraph A. The Holy Spirit is orchestrating a worldwide worship movement. That is essential in releasing God's power in the nations. The power of God is not just going to break out, and then, suddenly the great harvest will happen. Before the second coming, God's power is going to break out, in relation to a global prayer and worship movement. It is happening right now; it is all over the world. Here is the key point: this movement is fueled by the revelation of the beauty of God. David's prayer ministry was fueled by the revelation of the beauty of God. David had 4,000 musicians who were full-time singers.

1 CHRONICLES 23: 4,000 FULL-TIME MUSICIANS MINISTERING TO THE LORD

In 1 Chronicles 23, David had 4,000 full-time musicians. Can you imagine the government funding 4,000 musicians who worshiped God as their number one occupation in life? He had 288 prophetic singers who were trained. Undoubtedly, hundreds of prophetic singers were coming up through the ranks and were being trained. There were 288 trained prophetic singers in choirs, and they ministered before the ark of the covenant in the presence of God. David tells us something very important: this ministry to God is not only fueled by the beauty of God. A significant reality that fuels the prayer is the unveiling of God's beauty, touching our heart, fascinating the heart of the people of God, and exhilarating us with God Himself.

ISAIAH 4:2 "THE BRANCH OF THE LORD SHALL BE BEAUTIFUL AND GLORIOUS"

The end of paragraph A. Isaiah prophesied that the revelation of the beauty of God would be prominent in the generation of the Lord's return. Isaiah 4:2: "In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;

And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped.” This is one of my favorite end-times prophecies. He said that “In that day, the Branch of the LORD,” which is an Old Testament designation of the Messiah. It is used six different times in the Old Testament. Jesus is called the “Branch of the LORD” in Isaiah 4:2. The people of God will see the Messiah as beautiful. He will be understood as beautiful. He does not suddenly become beautiful, but He is seen as beautiful. That is what Isaiah prophesied.

Paragraph B. David both gazed on God, and He inquired of God, which speaks of the prophetic anointing. We gaze on God. We inquire of God. We do this best when we have a paradigm of a God who is a beautiful God.

Paragraph C. The revelation of God's beauty is essential in our quest to live holy before God. We resist sin far better when God fascinates our hearts. There is no greater pleasure than when God reveals God to the human spirit. When the Holy Spirit reveals the Father and the Son to our hearts, our hearts become fascinated and exhilarated with God. There is no greater pleasure in the human experience than when God reveals God to the human spirit. One of God's main weapons against the increasing, escalating sin that Satan has scheduled for this hour of history is an army of lovesick worshippers. He is going to raise up a billion people fascinated with God all over the earth.

THE GLORY OF GOD INVOLVES HIS EMOTIONS

Paragraph D. Understanding God's beauty or His glory: again, you can use these two terms interchangeably in most places—not 100% of the time, but most of the time. We understand God's beauty. This involves looking at His emotions. The beauty of God: His glory involves His emotions. It involves understanding His power. When we understand God's power, then we understand a little bit of His glory. It comes when we understand His wisdom. When we understand redemption and His creation, and when we look at Genesis 1, or just look at the created order, we see God's beauty and His glory. We see it in His leadership throughout history. We see it in His leadership as prophesied throughout the end-time Scriptures. God's glory or beauty is revealed in many of these different ways.

STUDENTS OF GOD'S EMOTIONS LIKE DAVID

We want to become students of God's emotions like David was. David was considered a “man after God's own heart” (Acts 13:22). David was a student of the emotions of God. I like to say David was captured by the *what* of God, not just the *why* of God. David loved what God did. David looked at creation and saw what God did. He pondered redemption, even through the lens of the old covenant. He loved the fact that God was about redeeming His people. He loved what God would do through His power, redemption, and by revealing His leadership. David had something on his heart that was even more powerful than *what* God did—David focused on *why* God did it. Do you know why God created man in Genesis 1? He was burning with desire for human beings. It was awesome what God did in Genesis 1, but why He did it is even more powerful. What God does in redemption is dynamic: Jesus became human, crushed by the wrath of God, and we were exalted into the glory of God. I cannot imagine anything more powerful than what God does in redemption except for one thing: why did He do it? He burns with desire and longing for His people.

Paragraph E. The most effective way to become students of God's emotions is to fill our minds with information about God's emotions. This is a track I have been on for many years. I am a student with a specific, intentional focus on God's emotions because David was a man after God's own heart. We do this by meditating on the Word of God.

THE HIGHEST REVELATION OF GOD'S GLORY IS THE REVELATION OF HIS EMOTIONS

Roman numeral II. The highest manifestation of God's glory is the revelation of His emotions. The highest manifestation of His glory is when He reveals His emotions to His people, and we understand them. We understand the *why* behind the *what*; I do not mean that we understand it fully. We understand a little bit of what moved His heart, what made Him determined to do the things that He has done throughout history, and what He is going to do in the future. One of the great experiences of Moses in Exodus 33:18-19: "And he said, 'Please, show me Your glory.' Then He said, 'I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.'"

It is as if Moses urgently said, "Please, show me Your beauty, show me Your glory God." Moses is there in this very dynamic experience. You can read in Exodus 33 on your own how this thing has captured Moses' spirit. This is not a domesticated prayer request. He is alive with this; Moses is pleading with urgency: "God, one thing, I want to see is Your glory. I want to see Your beauty."

The Lord answers and He says, "OK, Moses. Here is what I am going to do: two things, I am going to make My goodness pass in front of you. You are going to see My goodness. Secondly, I am going to preach God to you. I am going to proclaim My name to you" (Ex. 33:19, paraphrased). Here is God preaching God. You cannot imagine anything more powerful than God preaching God to the human heart. He says, "I am going to tell you My name."

MOSES PRAYED TO SEE GOD'S NAME, WHICH IS HIS PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

Paragraph A. Moses prayed to see God's glory. God answered Moses; God promised to proclaim His name to Moses. When God proclaimed His name, He was proclaiming His character and His personality. Most of you understand that the name of God represents His personality and His character. In other words, God promised to manifest His personality to Moses. The way in which God reveals His glory to Moses is by revealing His heart and His personality to Moses.

IMAGINE GOD PREACHING ABOUT GOD

Imagine the privilege that Moses received, as Moses heard God preaching on God. Beloved, God is going to preach on God—if you allow me to use that kind of a funny little phrase. He is going to preach about Himself forever. He is going to exhilarate us with Himself a billion years from now on the sea of glass like crystal before the throne. All the saints gather in those holy convocations before the throne on the sea of glass like crystal. It is mingled with flaming fire Revelation 15 says. God will preach on God and tell us more about Himself. He will exhilarate and fascinate the saints forever and forever.

Paragraph B. We see Moses' great urgency, as Moses prays, "Please, please do this." Beloved, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to give us the same urgency that Moses had. The church in the West places great urgency and priority on increasing their ministries. They will almost do anything to increase the size of their ministries. Some will seemingly sell their soul just to see their church grow and become bigger. They will do almost any form of compromise, almost anything to get their ministry established and see it grow. There is a great urgency in the land to increase our ministry sphere. I am asking the Lord, and I know it is in His heart to give us the urgency Moses had to see God's glory, or the urgency David had to behold His beauty. Moses beseeched God, and David said in Psalm 27:4: "This one thing"—above all things. Can you imagine that? This one thing above all things: we seek Your beauty. David's hands were occupied in running a kingdom. David was the king, and

David was running an entire kingdom. He was the head of the army. David's hands were occupied, but David's heart was preoccupied with the beauty of God, while David's hands were occupied in the assignment God had given him.

GOD HAS THE BEST PERSONALITY IN THE UNIVERSE

God has the best personality in the universe. We want to see it. He is kind, good, pure, and really smart. He is mysterious; He is extremely passionate, yet He is gentle. God is really bold; God is humorous. There are many dimensions of God's personality. Beloved, we want the urgency of Moses to see the glory of the Lord. Beloved, we want the urgency that David had. We want to make it the preoccupation of our heart while we are on the earth to seek this one thing.

GOD REVEALED HIS GLORY TO MOSES BY PREACHING GOD TO MOSES

Paragraph C. Top of page two. God revealed His glory to Moses by proclaiming His power and His wisdom. He showed Him His goodness. He said, "I am going to let you see My goodness." He saw the goodness of God's power; Moses saw the goodness of God's wisdom and God's emotions. He saw all three dimensions of God's goodness; Moses saw the pinnacle of God's glory. The very pinnacle of God's glory is when God reveals His emotions. During the same experience, the Lord stands before Moses. In Exodus 34:6: "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.'"

Now, God fulfills the promise. God had promised Moses, "I will proclaim My name to you," and now a few verses later in Exodus 34:6, we see the Lord passed before Moses. The Lord passed in front of Moses, and He preached His name. He preached about Himself to Moses. Now, what would God preach about Himself if He was going to reveal His glory and His name. We know Exodus 34:6: "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth.'" If God was going to stand in front of His people and preach the highest things of His glory and goodness, I assure you what He would preach: He would tell you what His heart is like. In Exodus 34:6, when God preached on God, He describes God as, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness," and there is more too it, but I wanted to just lock into those four things for a moment.

Paragraph D. This is not by any means an attempt to give a Bible study on each one of these. There are subjects that would preoccupy us all the days of our life. In study, meditation, and in worship, we can understand and experience these four dimensions of God's glory. The point that I want to make is when God reveals God's goodness or God's glory, He goes right to His emotions to reveal His goodness and His glory to us.

GOD IS MERCIFUL

Paragraph D. The first thing the Lord said is that He is merciful in Exodus 34:6: "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful.'" Beloved, God is tender in how God relates to us in our weakness and in our sin. God is tender. He relates to us in tenderness when He confronts our weakness and our sin. I am talking about the life of a genuinely repentant believer. We come before the Lord, and we know that we have blown it. We do not try to cover it up; we do not try to rationalize it. We confess it with genuineness and whole-heartedness. God is tender to the people who confess their sin before Him. This is the first aspect of the four things that He mentioned here about His emotions. This is the first aspect of His personality revealed because it is the one we need first, and it is the one we need most, but it is not the only one we need.

People often resist, or they repel God's mercy in a false way with a religious spirit. They cannot receive the assurance of forgiveness. In the one sense, they can; but then, they live in condemnation when they blow it in the day-to-day way. They wrongly think that if God just forgives them, it will freely violate their sense of justice. Beloved, let me assure you, justice was fully answered when the wrath of God crushed Jesus. Because the wrath of God crushed Jesus, we can fully receive it because it has been paid in full. The wrath of God has been paid in full. We need to throw away our religious reasoning where we say, "Oh no, God, I am too bad for you." We imagine our sin is greater than what He did in Christ Jesus on the cross. It is not.

GOD IS GRACIOUS: HE DOES NOT GIVE US WHAT WE DESERVE

Paragraph E. The Lord is gracious: He does not give us at all what we deserve—not at all. He rewards us, or God pays us so much better than anything we deserve or imagine. God rewards us; God is gracious. When God looks at our life, He answers back with rewards by giving to us according to how we have lived our lives. He pays us so much better. He treats us so much better than we deserve. In this age and in the age to come, we will be rewarded; but in the age to come, we see it in its fullness. He is gracious. God remembers every act of obedience. Beloved, this dignifies and sanctifies every moment of our life and every movement of our heart when we humble ourselves in secret. God sees everything that man never sees. God sees when we give a cup of cold water and when we do the most hidden acts of service. Often, men will never recognize these works, though God recognizes every one of them. Beloved, this dignifies and sanctifies every moment of our life. Every moment has a potential to be rewarded by God. God notices even the movements of our heart that He will remember, reward, and esteem forever in His graciousness. Our lives are so powerful. My life is not about what I do on a platform. What I do on a platform is about 1000 of 1 percent of my life. What I do in my heart in God is the essence of my life, and that is what He is measuring. God says, "I will be gracious to you. If you will call, if you will give yourself to Me in reality, I will be gracious to you." I love that about God. I love God's mercy.

GOD PAYS SO WELL: HE DOES NOT GIVE US WHAT WE DESERVE

God pays so well. I have done so little, but you pay so well. Of course, that is the basis of gratitude, which is a key to breaking the power of bitterness. When we really understand that we are being treated far better than we deserve, we are grateful. When that revelation touches us of God's graciousness, bitterness begins to fade away. People are bitter because they think they are getting a worse deal than what they deserve. That is why they are bitter. When we see the revelation of God's graciousness, we say, "Wow."

GOD IS LONGSUFFERING

Paragraph F. Exodus 34:6: "And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth." God is longsuffering. You know what longsuffering means: it means that God suffers long—that is really what it means. Both of those words are important: God suffers long. He bears with us. He does not write us off. He suffers long with our sinful responses; God feels them. What we do in our heart affects God's heart. God is not at a safe theological distance from His people. His heart is quenched and grieved; His heart is made glad and joyful. In this dynamic relationship with His covenant people, He does feel related to what we do. It is a very, very powerful reality. However, He does not lose enthusiasm for us when we fail, and we repent. All of this, of course, is based on the genuineness of our repentance.

GOD TREATS US SO DIFFERENTLY FROM HOW PEOPLE TREAT US

I want to look at the emotion of God being longsuffering. God suffering long is a revelation of His glory and beauty. He does not retaliate in the way we do. He does not treat us in the way we treat people when they disappoint us. He treats us so differently than the way we treat people. When I understand this a little, it makes me treat people who disappoint me so differently. God treats me kindly when I disappoint, grieve, and even pain His heart. He treats me in kindness. That is the power of the freedom from bitterness towards people. A man who is cruel with the people who mistreated him, and then he chooses not to forgive will suffer from his bitterness. This man has not grasped that God suffers long with him. You can try to reason a guy out of bitterness. However, the way to get a man out of that mindset is to reveal the longsuffering of God towards him. The revelation of God's longsuffering will tenderize our spirit.

REVELATION 21-22: THE ETERNAL CITY

Paragraph G. In Revelation 21-22, the eternal city goes on and on with what God has planned for us. God reveals His emotions, when He promises to reveal His glory. We often think His glory is when He does this great miracle. Beloved, greater than the miracle, though we want to see the miracle is what God feels when God is doing the miracle.

JOHN 17:26: JESUS REFERENCED THIS EXPERIENCE OF EXODUS 33

Paragraph H. Jesus referenced this experience of Exodus 33. This is the great experience of Moses. It does not get any better than God preaching God right in front of you. In John 17:26, Jesus is praying: "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." It becomes the high priestly prayer, as John 17 is the famous prayer before Jesus goes to the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is crying out to God, "God I declared Your name to them"—this is straight from the Exodus 33 account. It is as if Jesus is saying, "I have told them Your name. I have proclaimed Your name. I have told them what You are like." He sums up His three-and-a-half year ministry by that sentence. He did more than tell them what God's name was like. He raised the dead, healed the sick, and did many things. It is as if Jesus said, "Yeah, but in the essence of what I was doing, I was telling them what My Father's personality was like. I was showing what My Father felt like when I did My deeds and My works. I was revealing My Father when I revealed My heart in My teachings." He goes beyond that. It is not just that Jesus declared what the Father was like. By this prayer, it becomes a promise. He says, "Father, I will continue to declare it."

Now, what does Jesus mean? After the cross, He ascends to the right hand of His Father, and what is Jesus doing at the right hand of the Father? What is Jesus doing through the ministry of His people on the earth? What Jesus is doing is He is revealing God, through His people to the peoples of the earth. Beloved, if Jesus would summarize church history in one phrase, it is this: "through the anointing, I will declare what My Father's heart is like, through My people and through the Word of God."

My question is: is this what we are doing? Is this what we are about? It is not the only thing we do, as we do many things. We do many practical acts of service, kindness, and humility. In many ways, God is revealed in those ways as well, of course. I am not talking about just with our deeds, but with our words also. Our deeds preach louder than our words. As preachers, as teachers, as those who disciple people, many of you, your ministry may not be on a platform, but you have a teaching ministry. We might merely do this in one-on-one meetings, one-on-three discipleship, home groups, or you might simply be in a Sunday school classroom. No matter what the context, we need to ask ourselves, "Are you locked into answering this John 17 prayer of Jesus?"

JESUS IS DECLARING THE FATHER EVEN THROUGH US

It is as if Jesus says, “For 2,000 years, I am going to declare the Father.” That is what He is about. He didn’t just mean the cross and the resurrection. He meant from His ascension to the position where He is exalted to the Father’s right hand, Jesus is going to preach the Father. This verse touched me some years ago. I said to the Lord, “Count me in. I am going to devote my life to being a vehicle. I want to be one You can use to preach what the Father is like.”

Now, here is what Jesus went on to say: He says in John 17:26, “Father, I have declared Your name to them.” He is praying to the Father. It is as if Jesus is saying, “I am going to continue to do that. I just mentioned that. Why? So that the love with which You loved Me would be awakened in them.” When God reveals God to the human spirit, it awakens our heart to the love of God. In John 17:26, Jesus said, “with the love with which you loved Me.”

Beloved, what is the love with which God loves His Son? Jesus said, “the love where you love Me” would be awakened in them. When the knowledge of God touches our spirit, it awakens our hearts to love God back. I wrote a book called “Passion for Jesus” some years ago. People ask me often, “Hey, how do you get passion for Jesus? Are you not the guy who wrote that book on passion for Jesus?”

I say, “Yes. I can tell you for sure how to get passion for Jesus: study Jesus’ passion for you. When you understand God’s emotions, it awakens passion in us back for Him. It is very, very powerful.” Jesus summarized His strategy for church history: “I am going to speak Your heart for them. When I do it, when it connects with them, it will awaken them in extravagant love back to You God. They will love Me like you love Me.” God the Father wants the end-time Church to love Jesus like the Father loves Jesus. I tell you what the answer is: it is the revelation of the knowledge of God touching people’s spirits.

EPHESIANS 3:16-20: PAUL PRAYS THE SAME THING

Paragraph I. Paul prayed the very same thing in Ephesians 3:16-20: “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” Essentially, Paul prays this very same prayer of Moses. Paul taps into.

BE PREOCCUPIED WITH REVEALING GOD’S HEART TO PEOPLE

Let’s go to Roman numeral III, to the top of page three. We want to be people who are preoccupied with revealing God’s heart to people. But, we have got to experience it a little bit ourselves, obviously. We want to awaken love in people by the Holy Spirit. We do that best by the way that Jesus prescribed it. It is not just a ministry focus. I want my love to be awakened. This conference is called “Passion for Jesus.” We want to be awakened in passion for Jesus. I can tell you how to do this. Feed your spirit on the knowledge of God. It will awaken in you the love that the Father has for Jesus. How would you like to tap into more of the love that the Father has for Jesus? How would you like to have more of that flowing through your being? Of course, that is what we are all about: that is why we are here. I am not here to convince you about that. You would not be here if that is now what was on your mind.

BEHOLDING THE GLORY OF THE LORD

Roman numeral III. Beholding the glory of the Lord: again, His glory is His emotions, His power, and His wisdom. His glory is not just His emotions. We typically think of His glory, as mostly His power. Every now and again, someone will come along and emphasize His wisdom as part of His glory. However, to become students of God's emotions, the pinnacle of God's glory is when God was revealing Himself to Moses.

2 Corinthians 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." This passage is also directly related to Exodus 33. Remember the passage that we started with when Moses was saying, "Lord, show me Your glory." Paul is actually going to go back to that passage and develop principles from it. He is going to compare the old and the new covenant together.

The letter of the law kills, but the Holy Spirit is giving us life. The ministry of death in the old covenant was glorious. Paul is calling the old covenant the ministry of death. If the ministry of the old covenant was glorious, how much more glorious will the ministry of the new covenant be? The ministry of the new covenant exceeds much more in glory. 2 Corinthians 3:9-11: "For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious." 2 Corinthians 3:11: It is much more glorious. You can read it more slowly later. It is much more glorious. Paul says it over and over. The new covenant is much more glorious than the old covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT IS MORE GLORIOUS THAN THE OLD COVENANT

Now, Paul is going to get to the essence of why it is more glorious. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 gives us the answer to why the new covenant is exceedingly more glorious. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, it is talking about living inside of the human heart. We use this verse mostly to talk about more freedom in worship in a corporate gathering. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty! The Spirit of the Lord is moving on the corporate gathering. That is a biblical application of this verse: the Holy Spirit is inside of the believer, which is the essential difference of the old and new covenant. In the new covenant, the Holy Spirit is inside of us and is moving. Paul is now going to develop this essential difference of why the New Testament is more glorious in 2 Corinthians 3:18. Paul is now going to break it down. He has about seven or eight really key phrases. We will look at most of them for just a moment. There are seven or eight really key phrases because in verse 18, Paul is going to give the details of how to experience the new covenant. Paul discusses the greater dimension of the new covenant because we experience the Holy Spirit touching our hearts.

THE NEW COVENANT COMPARED TO THE OLD COVENANT

Paragraph A. In 2 Corinthians 3, Paul compares the old covenant with the new covenant. Paul refers to the old covenant as the ministry of death. Why does Paul call the old covenant the ministry of death? The old covenant emphasized the righteous standards of the law without the Holy Spirit's power to enable the human heart to obey; therefore, the law can kill the heart. The old covenant emphasized the righteousness of the law, but there was no power living inside the heart of the believer, so it would only frustrate us and condemn us when we tried to obey it. The law did not give us power to do it. Therefore, the Old Testament is said to kill the heart, as in 2 Corinthians 3:6: "who also made us sufficient of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." The law kills us. It leaves us condemned and frustrated—really frustrated. We are saying, "This is not working."

Of course, God would whisper in response, "It was not supposed to work until Jesus comes!" He gives us the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and the Holy Spirit brings liberty to the heart. Let's look at the last sentence in Paragraph A: the Old Testament had glory. The New Testament, or the new covenant, is much more glorious because it allows us to encounter the heart of God. The new covenant enables us to experience liberty from the spirit of dullness and the spirit of bondage on our inside. Now, the part that burdens me for my own life, your life, and the people of God in general is that the new covenant has been established, but we press into the new covenant so half-heartedly. The essence of the new covenant is liberty. The heart is liberated from the spirit of dullness and the spirit of bondage to sin. Beloved, it is not enough to have this as a legal right to be liberated. We have to engage the Holy Spirit, and we have to encounter God. We have to give ourselves fully to the Holy Spirit instead of living in a way that quenches the Holy Spirit. We need to live in a way where we are inviting the encounter and the participation of the Holy Spirit in our inner man. Our hearts will be increasingly liberated.

Let me just make up this scenario: it is a panel discussion. Paul, the Apostle, is on one side, and the Old Testament guys are on the other side. Paul stands up and says, "The new covenant is far more glorious than the old covenant." David, Elijah, Moses, and these other guys respond, "Oh really? Why is it more glorious?"

Imagine Paul responding, "Well, in the New Testament, we have the power of God."

I picture Moses, lifting his hands to say, "I will take care of this one. I parted the Red Sea under the old covenant—what you consider to be this inglorious covenant."

Paul answers, "I guess we have not parted the Red Sea in the New Testament! But, I know why the new covenant is better—because we move in the spirit of prophecy."

Elijah raises his hands and says, "I will answer that one!"

Paul says, "That is not the essence. The reason the new covenant is better is because we have forgiveness."

David interrupts, "I will take this one. I committed adultery and murdered a man. But the Lord forgave me entirely and restored to me a willing spirit—a free spirit."

Paul again says, "In our worship gatherings, we have prophetic worship and music. The Holy Spirit moves."

David says, "Hey! I will answer that one too: we had the prophetic spirit in our gathering. We had 4,000 musicians and trained prophetic singers."

Paul says, "We really have anointed meetings."

Solomon argues, "I will take care of that one: remember when I dedicated the temple, the glory came in. Nobody could stand up to ministry. The whole lot of them were slain in the Spirit."

WHY IS THE NEW TESTAMENT MORE GLORIOUS THAN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Beloved, the New Testament is not more glorious because of forgiveness, power, prophecy, or anointed meetings. When I look at the Church around the world, I realize that overall we are not living like new covenant believers. We want a few miracles; so we are going for the miracles. That is good. We are going for

forgiveness, for the prophetic anointing, and we are going for power. Beloved, that is old covenant religion. All of that is in the old covenant. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18: "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." The spirit of liberty enters the human heart and gives us the power to encounter God in a whole new way.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18: "WITH UNVEILED FACES, BEHOLDING AS IN A MIRROR THE GLORY"

Paragraph C. Paul now begins to unpack this thing. He says that we behold the glory of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with an unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord." That is a very key verse that is giving us the details of how we experience the liberty of 2 Corinthians 3:17 on the inside.

So, number one, we are going to look at Paul. The essential thing is that we behold the glory of the Lord. Paragraph C. I want to use David's term—the beauty of God. How do we behold the beauty of God? To behold means to look. To behold the Lord means to look at, or to gaze on the Lord. To behold Him is to encounter Him, to look on Him, and to gaze on Him. We do this by looking at God's emotions. We do this by looking at God's power and His wisdom—the whole gamut of what we talked about already. We study what God does, and we study why He does it. We see what God did in His plan of redemption, creation, and His leadership throughout history. Then we go beyond it, and we study why God did it: what was moving in God's heart when God did these great things.

Beloved, when we gaze on, or we behold His beauty and glory, it transforms the human spirit. It activates the spirit of liberty on the inside of us. Now, the most effective way to do this is to fill our minds with information about God's glory and His emotions. We fill our minds with His power and wisdom too. The ultimate sense of how David did it and even Moses is that they filled their minds with information from the Word of God on God's emotions. I just want to challenge you to do this.

STUDYING THE EMOTIONS OF GOD

I love to tell the story of Allen Hood. He is the president of our Bible school and the associate director of our IHOP–KC Missions Base. Allen was twenty-two years old when he first came here; he is thirty-seven years old now. Allen was sitting right over there in those orange chairs when he was a young college student. I preached a message on becoming a student of God's emotions. At that time, I was going through every verse in the Bible that I could find describing God's emotions. Beloved, there are a ton of verses on God's emotions. I studied every verse in the Bible that identified God's emotions. I would highlight each emotion in my Bible with a different color. Allen was twenty-two years old then, and he went home and said, "I am going to do this." He spent the next year or two finding every verse from Genesis to Revelation on the emotions of God.

I gave this instruction, "Now take that list. Go before God. Begin to speak these things back to God. Declare them back to God. Throw in fasting and prayer. Throw in some 'I love you's' throughout the whole thing." Just say, "I love You, God. Show me Your heart." Just do this for the rest of your life. You will be really, really on track with what God is doing in the end times. You will be ready. Your spirit will be ready to receive anything that He wants to tell you. So, that was fifteen years ago and Allen said, "I am going to give my life to this thing." When Allen tells the story, it just blesses me.

BECOMING A STUDENT OF GOD'S EMOTIONS

I challenge you to do the same thing: become like David, Isaiah, or Paul—become students of God's emotions. Paragraph C. We do this best by meditating on the Word of God. It is not just studying His Word, but we must turn the Word of God into an active dialogue with God. We do our part; God will do His.

THE BEHOLDING AND BECOMING PRINCIPLE

Paragraph D. The beholding and becoming principle: Paul, the apostle, says in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "beholding the glory of the Lord." Here is the principle: whatever we behold in God's heart towards us, we become. For example, we behold His love, mercy, graciousness, and abounding goodness. Whatever we behold, whatever we see about God's heart towards us, it awakens our heart back towards God. When we see God's passion and love for us, it awakens passion and love in us back to God. Whatever we behold about Him is what is awakened in us. We become what we behold. If you understand this and you buy into it, it changes what you do in your personal prayer life.

Our prayer life continues to contend for specific promises such as for God to extend His power. I think many people are content with a prayer life that is mostly focused on God doing things for us like breaking in with revival. I love revival. It is one of my most important prayer requests. We should ask, "Break in with revival, Lord. Supply, direct, protect, do things for me and us." That is very biblical to ask God to do things.

When you buy into this principle, it changes your prayer life. We must then ask God to unveil to us what He feels about us. This must be the primary focus of our prayer life. What you behold about Him is what is awakened in you. When that connects with you, you begin to spend your time with God differently. Your conversation is different. It is not only about asking God to do things: protect, direct, divide, and break it. It is as if we ask God, "Show me how You feel right now—not just about things—about me and about people. Show me what You are feeling."

WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT GOD'S HEART IS AWAKENED IN OUR HEART TO GOD

Paragraph E. I am just going to say the same thing again: whatever we understand, whatever we encounter about God's heart for us is awakened in our heart back to God. This encounter results in inward transformation. Therefore, what we understand about the emotions of God's heart is essential in our process of sanctification.

Here at IHOP-KC, we have five different intern programs. We have nearly 300 interns at any given time. They go three months to six months all around the year. We always have new interns coming in. The first thing that I want to teach interns is to identify how essential it is for them to understand God's emotions; we must point them in that direction. We give them a few tools; they begin to go after understanding God's heart.

Most believers and most ministries that I interact with almost never reference God's heart. They only reference mercy here and there. Most ministries are focused on how to build, how to improve people skills, how to help with better ministry skills, better outreach skills, or how to get things bigger. That is biblical, but it needs to come second. The most neglected subject in the kingdom of God is God. It is absolutely true. The work of God is number one. Probably the blessing of God is number one; the work of God is number two, and God the person is not number three. He is just way down on the list. The nature and character of God is the most neglected reality in the kingdom of God.

IT TAKES GOD TO LOVE GOD

Paragraph F. It takes God to love God. When God wants to empower us to love Him, He reveals Himself as a lover first. Look what John said in 1 John 4:19: “We love because He first loved us.” We love God because we first understand He loves us. When God wants to awaken love in me, He reveals Himself to me as a lover. When He wants to awaken love in you, when He wants you to be a stronger lover of God, He tells you how much He loves you, and it awakens love in you. We love God because we understand He first loved us. Put the word pursue. We pursue God because we first understand He pursued us. We are dedicated to God, because we first understand that He was dedicated to us. We are passionate for God because we first understand that He was passionate for us. The way to get people awakened to dedication, passion, and zeal is to show them God’s dedication and passion for them. That is not the whole message of the kingdom, but that is the rock solid center core of the kingdom of God; it is God’s heart.

WE CHANGE OUR MIND, AND GOD CHANGES OUR HEART

Paragraph G. We change our mind, and then God changes our heart. We put different things in our mind, and then God puts different things in our emotions. We change our mind. We feed our mind intentionally on this subject, and then God awakens our heart with His power. That is how this thing works.

We will just mention a couple of these phrases and just bring it to an end. Prayer, fasting, meditation, and obedience position our heart before God to receive. We do not earn anything by prayer and fasting; it merely positions our heart to receive freely. These activities do not earn us God’s favor at all. They position us to receive it. Here is an analogy that I like to use: I think of our heart as by nature cold and stony. I think of it as a pound of frozen hamburger. There it is frozen hamburger. Try to cut that hamburger; it is not going to happen. You put that hamburger in front of a bonfire. A minute later, you still will not be able to cut that hamburger. Over time, it gets softer and softer. In due time, it gets really soft. We put our heart in front of God’s bonfire. By fasting, prayer, the Word of God, and meditation, we put our cold heart in front of His heart: it begins to thaw out—a little by little over time. We do not earn anything by positioning our heart. We are simply putting ourselves in the position to receive the heat of God’s love—the tenderizing of God.

THE GLORY OF THE NEW COVENANT IS LIBERTY

Paragraph I. The superiority of the new covenant is the greater liberty, the freedom from dullness and bondage, and that God writes His Word on our mind and heart. Our inheritance is a fully alive heart. God promises that He will put His Word inside our hearts. He will put His Word in our emotions and minds. He will put the Word in us, and He will write it with His finger on our mind and heart. God has promised us that. This is with a spirit of liberty at it’s best. In the Old Testament, God wrote with His finger the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stones. He wrote with His finger. Here it says that He is going to write with His finger but on their heart. When God writes on the heart, He awakens our emotions to feel the power of His Word and the power of His law. We feel it, we love it, we do not repel it, but we feel it’s power. We say, “I love to love God. I love righteousness; something is changing on the inside. “

That is called writing His law on your emotions and heart. That is the essence of the covenant. This is the essence of the superiority of the new covenant. He does write His Word on the mind too. He promises to release the understanding to illumine the mind with a spirit of revelation.

Paragraph K. Paul talks in 2 Corinthians 3 about how God will write on the tablets of the heart. That is the essence of the new covenant. God writes on the tablets of our hearts with His finger. We feel different on the inside. My premise is that most believers live like old covenant believers. They are focused on miracles, forgiveness, and power, which is good.

There is something more. It is our internal connection, the Holy Spirit, according to the Word of God. I mean, by meditating on the Word of God. Some people get really into the Spirit, but it is a spirit without the Word of God. The Holy Spirit and the Word—they go together. The chariot that the Holy Spirit rides best in is called the Word of God. It is the Word and the Spirit, not one versus the other.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18: AS IN A MIRROR

Paragraph L. 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Paul said that we behold the glory of the Lord as in a mirror. The quality of a mirror in the ancient world was dim. A mirror today is an exact reflection. Today’s mirrors are accurate. However, in the ancient world, they looked at a mirror, and it was polished metal. They could not see clearly. An ancient mirror was a dim beholding. This is a very critical point. We all by nature gaze dimly. In our efforts to meditate on God’s Word, we lack clarity, vitality, and focus. Our gaze is dim. When we gaze on God’s beauty, it is a dim gaze. We say, “I cannot quite connect with it.” Paul, the apostle, would say, that the only beholding that God ever required was a dim one. Is that not good news? We have this kind of idea that only when the Lord is seen clearly that it works. No beloved, this thing is working in our spirit.

It is kind of like a person goes in for x-rays. They cannot feel anything, but the x-ray is still touching them on the inside. When we are meditating, praying and fasting, we do not feel much. Yet, God is touching us on the inside. If you stay under the x-ray long enough, your insides are going to change negatively. If you stay under God’s x-ray, in His presence, something is going to change. You may not feel it because it is a dim beholding. A person might say, “Hey! How was that x-ray treatment? Was it really tough?” A person might say, “I did not feel a thing.” Often in our prayer times, we also do not feel. In time, you will. It is a dim beholding. You do not feel a thing many times. It is still affecting things on the inside. A dim beholding is a sufficient beholding.

Paragraph M. We all come with an unveiled face. We need to come with boldness and without shame. We need to come with an unveiled face—that speaks of boldness and confidence in the grace of God. One of the great problems is that people worship God with a spirit of shame and with a spirit of condemnation. They worship God with a veiled face. The face of their heart is veiled. They worship God without confidence that God has really forgiven them. So, they say, “I love you! I love you,” but their heart is guarded. They are sure God is angry with them. They come, the face of their heart is veiled, and they are drawing back, their eyes are down, and they are saying, “Oh God, please do not be mean. I promise you this is the last time, if You can forgive me, I will never do this again. Please just give me one more chance.” They come to God with a spirit of negotiation—of religion. We are coming with a veiled face at the heart level before God. God says, “No come with an unveiled face. Come boldly, come boldly in the knowledge that I have received you in Christ Jesus.” I am talking to people who are sincere about walking with God in reality. I am not talking to people who are looking for a Bible verse to justify more sin and more compromise.

THE HOLY SPIRIT TRANSFORMS US

Paragraph N. Paul said that the Holy Spirit transforms us. This is key: beloved, it requires a supernatural work to move the heart. The human heart is only moved when it encounters a supernatural presence of the Holy Spirit. The reason I am saying this is to say to you that we have to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. If we live quenching the spirit, not paying attention to the Holy Spirit, and disregarding the promptings in our heart, we will not be transformed. We are only transformed by the lively activity of the Holy Spirit in the present tense. We need the Holy Spirit. We cannot do this thing with bigger meetings and more miracles. We need to have a vital present tense encounter at the heart level with the Holy Spirit. I do not mean that we have to feel the Holy Spirit powerfully because it might be many times like the x-ray: the Holy Spirit is moving us on the inside even though we do not feel it. We need a continual active encounter with the Holy Spirit. We quench the Holy Spirit by what we do and how we talk.

A lot of folks are so used to a dull spirit, they do not even know that they have it. They are so used to being dull, they do not know they are dull. They have so acclimated to a quenched spirit, they have made peace with it. So, they come up to a prayer line and they want somebody to lay hands on them and cast this out of them. Only a lively, continual relationship with the Holy Spirit will cast this out. I believe that we could pray, things could change with them in a prayer line; but, just receiving ministry at a prayer line is not going to solve all of our problems. We need a day-to-day exchange at the heart level with the Holy Spirit, or the heart will not move. We are only transformed if the Holy Spirit moves on the inside. I cannot afford to live with the Holy Spirit grieved, and my spirit grieved—even a little bit, even if I get used to it. It does not work because our hearts quit moving. Our hearts do not move except when the Holy Spirit moves. That is the essence of the new covenant.

BEING TRANSFORMED

Paragraph O. We are transformed into the same image. The character traits that we behold are the character traits that are transformed in us. When we see His mercy, we become more merciful, instead of bitter and angry. When we see His graciousness, we become more grateful to God and to other people. You cannot become more grateful to people by sheer will power. You are more grateful towards people in your gratitude towards God by knowing that God has treated you so much better than you deserve. We could go down many of the fruits of the spirit. When we see this dimension in God's heart, it awakens our heart according to the same image.

Then, when you look at a person, you can see their character. An ungrateful, bitter person is a person who does not have gratitude with God; they do not see what God did for them. We can rebuke them all day long about their lack of gratitude. Let's go the other way. Let's feed our spirit on the gracious God.

FROM GLORY TO GLORY

Paragraph P. Glory to glory: it is step by step, and it is little by little. God normally gives baby steps. Only every once in a while does God give giant steps. When you were a little kid, you might have played the game mother may I? Imagine baby steps versus giant steps. Mostly, God gives us baby steps. Most folks think to themselves, "Well God, if You are really serious about wanting to download something heavy, I will be there ready to walk with You."

God says, "No. I am not changing the way of My kingdom for anybody. The way of My kingdom is incremental. It is step by step. It is glory to glory. It is progressive." We want to be suddenly in full glory in the next minute. No, God's process is glory by glory; it is incremental.

BEHOLDING GOD

Paragraph Q. We are all to behold the glory of the Lord. We are all to do this with an unveiled face. This is not just for the anointed prophets or the famous ministries. Beloved, this is for the newest believer. This works on the darkest heart of the newest believer. This works for everyone. It is your inheritance. Amen.