

LESSON 2 DATE: June 9, 2024

DEVOTIONAL READING: Desteronomy 31:1-8 PACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 3:1-18
PRINT PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 3:5-18

# **Home Daily Bible Reading**

Roldly Proclaiming the Vincelon

ounc 5	171	ACI3 20.23-31	boldly Proclaiming the Kingdom
June 4	T	Exodus 19:9-11, 16-25	The Awesome Presence of God
June 5	W	Hebrews 12:18-29	The Consuming Fire
		Acts 4:23-31	The Church Prays for Boldness
June 7	F	Exodus 34:28-35	Transfigured by the Power of God
June 8	Sa	Deuteronomy 31:1-8	Be Strong and Bold
June 9	Su	2 Corinthians 3:5-18	Ministers of a New Covenant

#### **EXALT!**

lung 3

Invocation - Teacher or Learner

Acts 28.22.21

**Celebration –** "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" - #492 *AME Zion Bicentennial Hymnal* 

**Declaration –** 2 Corinthians 3:5-18 (*Read together by the class, by a volunteer or responsively.*)

<sup>5</sup> Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, <sup>6</sup> who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

<sup>7</sup> Now if the ministry of death, chiselled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, <sup>8</sup> how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? <sup>9</sup> For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! <sup>10</sup> Indeed, what once had glory has

lost its glory because of the greater glory; <sup>11</sup> for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

<sup>12</sup> Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, <sup>13</sup> not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. <sup>15</sup> Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; <sup>16</sup> but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

**Affirmation** – We will model the freedom of a life transformed by Christ. (*Spoken together by class and teacher*).

# **ENGAGE:** (5-10 min.)

People become defensive and retreat when their credentials are challenged. How do we proclaim truth boldly in the face of such challenges? Paul declares that he is able to speak with greater boldness because of the evidence of believers' transformed lives.

Discuss with the group the ease or difficulty one may have in telling others about her or his qualifications. For instance, one who is shy and reticent may be reluctant to talk about himself or herself, while another person who is brave and self-assertive may boldly state the things about herself or himself that make them qualified and acceptable for certain reasons. Where do you fit in here? Another issue is that one may have a past history of which he or she is not proud and, therefore, would not want to share any aspect of it. Another may be so proud of his or her achievements that he or she is eager to make details about them known to everyone. Where do you fit in here?

### **EDUCATE:** (10-15 min.)

**2 Corinthians 3:5-11**: Among the Corinthian Christians Paul finds himself in an uneasy situation in terms of ministry. There were those who compared him to Greek philosophical thinkers and found him lacking their eloquence in their thinking. Then, there were those who did not believe in the genuineness of his

role as an apostle. In the midst of this doubt and skepticism, it was difficult for Paul to minister. He was often on the defensive, having both to prove himself and to defend and spread the gospel at the same time. Paul's authority had been challenged, presumably because he was not a follower of Jesus during Jesus' earthly ministry. Thus, Paul seeks to defend his authority not on a human basis but as coming from divine authority (see also Galatians 1:1, 11-12). He asserts his genuineness by contrasting himself with those who would commend themselves and rather insists that he does not require a letter of recommendation because the Corinthians themselves are symbolically a "letter," one that is "written on our hearts" (3:2) and on "tablets of human hearts" (3:3). Paul not only states that the church itself is the letter, but further tells them, "You are a letter of Christ." Despite their failures, the Corinthians are thus identified as having their origin in Christ himself and are therefore of profound value, and Christ is thus the authority that authenticates Paul's ministry. He speaks of confidence and competence in 3:4-6. Notably, he insists that the Corinthians can be confident not because their competence comes from themselves but because it comes from God. In honesty and sincerity, Paul does not commend himself; nor should we. As does his, our commendation and our confidence come from God. From this perspective the differences between the "old" and the 'new" covenant can be seen. "A primary feature of the old covenant -the Law of Moses-was that it brought death in condemning people as lawbreakers (Romans 2:27; 7:5; 1 Corinthians 15:56). This was through no fault of the law; the benefit of following the letter of the law was learning God's ways, not earning salvation. The new covenant, by contrast, gives life. Therefore, life under the new covenant is connected with the Spirit, a concept introduced by Jesus (see John 6:63) and stressed by Paul (see Romans 2:29; 7:6)" (Ibid., p 355).



**2 Corinthians 3:12-18**: Paul draws a further contrast between the letters written on the heart with letters written on stone, thereby, contrasting the new covenant with the law that was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai (see Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:26-27). He does not question the "glory" of the old covenant but insists that it is surpassed by the glory of the new covenant (v. 9). Further, believers may act with great boldness because, whereas, the temporary glory of the old covenant

passed away, the glory of the new covenant is permanent (v. 11). The new brings hope and freedom in the Spirit. "The phrase the Lord is the Spirit reflects Isaiah 61:1, quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18-19. Both passages stress the freedom or liberty that Christ has brought. In contrast to the Israelites, who

most often had a human leader mediating between them and God (compare Hebrews 8), Paul's audience had access to God through the indwelling Spirit. Paul stresses that it is through the Spirit that they have freedom. Through the covenant of the Spirit, they were liberated from the veil. Unlike Moses, they did not have to place a veil over their face. The same face that Paul turned to the Lord was the same face that the people were able to see. Because now the glory never wears off. Unlike the glory of the old covenant that was only given to Moses, the benefits of the new are available to everyone in Christ. In this sense, we can see at least a glimpse of the Lord's glory. Even so, our current view of him is not crystal clear—given that we yet view him as a reflection in a mirror (compare 1 Corinthians 13:12) .... Even so, our reflected view is sufficient in this life for conforming us ever more closely to the *image* of the Son of God (Romans 8:29)" (*Ibid.*, pp. 358 and 359).

### ELEVATE: (5-10 min.)

Break into small groups and discuss/elaborate on the following points: 1) We experience freedom when we find our identity in Christ and grow in boldness in our faith by sharing our stories with one another. Give examples. 2) We are growing in willingness to share our identity in Christ and are learning new ways of sharing Christ's love with the world. Give examples of this. 3) In comprehending connections between the Old Testament and the New Testament, are we gaining a fuller sense of our story of faith? Explain your answer.

# **iTHINK:** (5-7 min.)

- 1. Review the story of Moses and the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. How does the letter of this law compare to the spirit of the law?
- 2. Using magazines, make two collages that compare and contrast life without Christ and the freedom of life with Christ.
- 3. Using bold or neon markers, make a list of synonyms for *boldness*. Discuss how we can be bold in our faith in everyday life.
- 4. Brainstorm ways to share one's faith without using words.
- 5. Jesus said he came to fulfill the law, not abolish it (Matthew 5:17-20). Discuss how this relates to the 2 Corinthians 3:5-18 text today.
- 6. Draw a picture of what you imagine your spirit looks like. What metaphors did you use to describe your spirit?

KEY VERSE: All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18