

Articles and Sermons :: You Can Overcome Discouragement by Zac Poonen**You Can Overcome Discouragement by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2019/4/26 13:23**

2 Corinthians 3:18 is the one verse that best describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the entire New Testament. When the Holy Spirit becomes Lord in our lives, He brings liberty. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (verse 17). He frees us primarily from the power of sin, but also from the love of money, from the traditions of our fathers and elders that are contrary to the Word, from the opinions of people, etc. This is a great freedom indeed. Then we become free to serve God and not man.

"None of us need EVER get discouraged, if we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord."

In 2 Cor. 3:18, we are told that the Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus in the Scriptures (The mirror is the Word of God "James 1:23-25"). Some people read the Bible only to get sermons and check doctrines. But the Holy Spirit primarily wants to show us the glory of Jesus in the Bible. As we see that glory, the Holy Spirit also changes us into that likeness. That likeness includes likeness to Christ in the way He ministered as well. We will begin to minister like Him. The Spirit will show us how Jesus made sacrifices in order to serve His Father "and He will make us make sacrifices also to serve the Lord. Our life and our ministry will change radically if we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us.

Now when we see the glory of Jesus in God's Word, the Holy Spirit changes us from one degree of glory to another so that His glory in us increases day by day (2 Cor. 3: 18). In other words, if we are submitted totally to the Spirit, the anointing upon our life will be more today than it was a few years ago, and much more than it was 30 years ago. But if you are not faithful, then the glory will decrease in your life as you grow older. Many, many zealous young people backslide as soon as they get married. Why does that happen? If you marry in the will of God, your zeal and glory will be far more than when you were single. But the glory will decrease, if your wife, or your home, become more important to you than the Lord. Such a man stops seeing the glory of the Lord and begins to backslide.

In 2 Cor. 4:1, Paul continues to describe his ministry. "Because we have received this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart." To lose heart means to get discouraged. Even the apostle Paul was tempted to be discouraged. So if you are tempted to be discouraged, that should not be considered strange. I have been tempted many times to get discouraged. But I have said like Paul, "We don't get discouraged because we keep our eyes on Jesus and we think of the wonderful ministry that God has given us." So, although we will all be tempted to be discouraged, none of us need EVER get discouraged, if we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord.

Many Christian workers are discouraged, gloomy and depressed after a few years of serving God; and some even get a nervous breakdown. This is because they tried to serve God with their own sufficiency. We must depend on God to equip us for His service. We need to trust God even for physical health if we are to serve Him. God's promise is, "Those who wait upon the Lord shall exchange their strength. Even young men will faint, but you will mount up with wings like an eagle" (Isaiah 40:31). Our sufficiency comes from God. Even if you are in financial difficulty, trust this promise: "Our sufficiency is from God." (2 Cor. 3:5) Whatever we need, God is well able to supply.

2 Cor. 4:10, 11 are verses that are misunderstood by most Christians. Many believers are eager to hear of a gospel that will do physical miracles in their lives. But if you want the life of Jesus to be manifested in you, the answer lies in these verses. We have to carry the dying of Jesus in our body. What is this "dying of Jesus"? It is to die to our own will and our self-life the way Jesus did during His entire 33½ years on earth (John 6:38). That means reacting to life's situations the way Jesus reacted when He was on earth. How did He react when people called Him the devil, when Judas Iscariot stole His money, when people spat on Him, when people called Him an illegitimate son (the son of Mary), when people insulted Him, robbed Him, abused Him, told Him to stop preaching and threw Him out of the synagogue? He died to human honour, prestige, reputation and dignity, and to His own will. That is the "dying of Jesus." You and I have no part in the dying of Jesus on Calvary. We cannot die for the sins of the world. But there was a dying in His life that we went on every day of His earthly life. That is the dying that we have to share in. Why is it called "the dying of Jesus"? Because Jesus was the first Person who walked this way of death to self and to the things of this world. He died to every thing that was human, and thus He manifested the glory of the Father. You and I are called to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

In 2 Cor. 4:17, 18, Paul says, "All this affliction that we go through is very light because the glory that is going to come into us through them is so great." But this glory can come into us only as long as "we keep looking at the thing

s that are unseen and refuse to look at the things that are seen (2 Cor. 4:18). That means that we don't look at any of our sufferings from a human viewpoint, but from a Divine viewpoint. There is a glory that is worked into our lives through these trials and we get into closer fellowship with Jesus' heart. That is why we are encouraged; and that is the way we get a ministry. We don't get a ministry by studying God's Word alone.