

How We Are Made Holy

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Date: 30 April 2017

Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Second Corinthians chapter three, we're going to read the entire chapter. Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?! Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?

! You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everybody. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God, not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. Now, if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory fading, though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men as glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness? For what was glorious has no glory now, and in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts? Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 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 an ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Well, if you're a Christian this morning, you have been called to holiness. In fact, that's the reason God saved you, for this very purpose, to be holy. Peter said it, didn't he, in 1 Peter 1, 15 and 16.

Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do. For it is written, and he quotes from Leviticus, be holy because I am holy. A personal relationship with the holy one requires that we be holy. Indeed, we are called saints. Holy ones is the meaning of that word. And we are to be holy, as Peter says, not just one day of the week, but every day. And not just in one part of your day, not just when you draw aside to meet with God in prayer and the reading of his word, but we're to be holy in all that we do. In your work, your play, your studies, in your relationships, your marriage, with your parents, with your children, with your neighbors, with saved and lost people.

[3:56] Be holy in all that you do, the way you spend your time and your money, what you do with your body, down to eating and drinking and sleeping. It's a 24-7 duty to be holy.

Be holy in all you do. So every day, all day, we are to be pursuing holiness. Indeed, Hebrews 12, 14 says that we are to make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy, holy, because without holiness, no man will see the Lord. Make every effort to be holy. That means every day that I wake up, right on the top of my to-do lists, there it is. Be holy in all you do today.

Now, if you're a Christian, that's not news to you. You not only understand that, you believers instinctively know that they're called to be holy, like their God that they worship is holy.

And not only do we know it, but as newborn children of God, we instinctively desire to be holy. That's part of the new creation, the new man that he has made us. He's made us for himself. We fell away from him and went our own way, but in saving us, he turns our hearts back to him. And we now not only know that we should be holy, we have a heart that wants to be holy, that desires holiness. So Christian, we're called to be holy and we want to be holy, but how? How do we pursue it? How do we grow in holiness? How are we made holy? That's the important question we're asking today. And we're turning to one verse that gives us the answer in a nutshell, that in just a few words will encapsulate how it is that we are made holy. We, the people of God, how we're made holy. And it's 2 Corinthians chapter 3 in verse 18, the last verse of the chapter that was read. And we, who with unveiled faces, all behold the

Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Now to begin with, we need to be crystal clear on what holiness is. What's the target that's to be my daily aim in life? Well, in short, the Bible's answer is this. Biblical holiness is being like Jesus. It's just that simple. Biblical holiness is being like Jesus. In the incarnation, the holy, eternal God, the Son, became a man. He came down where we live. He took on our human nature so that in Christ, we are looking at holiness. Holiness in a man, not merely holiness in God.

[7:12] Holiness in a spirit being without a body. Holiness in one who is separate from sinners, exalted in the heavens. No, in looking at Christ, we're looking at holiness in a man, a real man, a man just like us, who is made like us in every way. A man who lived among sinners, among annoying, aggravating, provoking sinners. A man who lived under the limits of 24-hour days and seven day-a-week weeks. Who lived under the pressures of deadlines. You talk about pressures and deadlines. He had 33 years to do everything that the Father had given him to do.

He had three years to whip these men into shape and to make them the foundation of a worldwide church that he was going to build. Yes, he's a real man. He lived in a real body that needed rest and sleep, food and drink and clothing and shelter, a body that could die. He lived under the constant temptations of the devil and in a world that was constantly trying to squeeze him into its mold. You see, the incarnate Son of God has brought holiness right down where we live.

Where we could see it, hear it, watch it, and learn from him what holiness is. Biblical holiness for us is to be like Jesus of Nazareth. Now, we could define it in other ways. Indeed, the Bible defines holiness as being like God. Be holy as I am holy. We could define it as keeping God's law because the standard of holiness is God's law. And he has summarized his moral law in 10 words, the 10 commandments. And he's even summarized it further in two words, to love God with all of our hearts and to love our fellow man, our neighbor, as ourselves. And so holiness is keeping God's law.

But we have something even better than an impersonal transcript of words on a page. We have, in Jesus Christ, the living embodiment of the law. We have holiness on two feet. So to ask the question, how are we made holy, is to ask, how are we made like Jesus? And 2 Corinthians 3.18 gives us a concise answer. Now, this verse doesn't even mention holiness, does it? Why would I choose this passage to answer the question, how are we made holy? Because it talks a lot about being like Jesus.

And that, for us, is holiness. So I want you to consider four points this morning from this verse about holiness. And the first is that holiness is a transforming work. Verse 18 says, we are being transformed into his likeness, the likeness of the Lord Jesus. Now, the Greek word here for transformed is metamorpho. And you can hear, even in that Greek word, the English word that is derived from that, metamorphosis. And that's the word that speaks of transformation, a change of the form, a change of the being. And very soon, you children will be seeing, and perhaps even chasing, and perhaps even catching butterflies and moths, beautiful creatures that God has made. But before they were beautiful butterflies, they were beautiful. They were beautiful. They were beautiful. They were beautiful. They were rather ugly-looking, worm-like creatures called caterpillars. Glorified worms with fuzz and bumps and spikes all over their bodies. Skin bags of ugly pus. That's the caterpillar. But by a process of metamorphosis, they changed forms and became beautiful butterflies. They changed forms and become beautiful butterflies, beautiful moths, able to soar into the air, able to do things they otherwise could never do as a worm.

- [11:52] Such a change comes over them that it's really hard to believe that this is the same creature as that. Just a change in this creature that takes place by metamorphosis. Well, now that's the word that the Holy Spirit caused Paul to choose as he describes how we're made holy. We're being metamorphosed. We are being transformed, changed from one form into another, from ugly to beautiful. We were not always holy.

The Bible says we started out sinners. And there's nothing uglier than sin. And we were full of it. And we were in love with it. And we were running after it.

Nothing uglier than pride. What human being has a right to be proud? It's an ugly thing, isn't it? Nothing uglier than selfishness. Somebody that's full of themselves. What right does anyone have to be full of themselves?

How unfitting. How ugly. Hatred. You've seen hatred? You've seen what it does to men's faces. You've seen what it does to the world. It's an ugly thing. Lies.

Ingratitude. What an ugly thing is ingratitude. For someone who's receiving, receiving, receiving, and they don't return thanks. It's ugly ingratitude.

- [13:29] Rebellion. On and on we can go. That's how we start out in life as sinners. But we who are in Christ are being transformed into what? The likeness of the Lord Jesus.

We're being made like Him to bear His likeness. And that's holiness, you see. We're being changed from sinful to holy.

And there's nothing more beautiful than the beauty of holiness. Nothing more beautiful than our Savior and being like Him.

So this change is not just a little window dressing, is it? It's not just acting differently, though it includes that. It's being different. It's being changed from the inside out.

It's a change of the heart as well as our actions. It's not just something we do. It's something we are. We are to be holy.

- [14:33] Your being is to be holy. That's what He's making us like. To be made like Jesus is to be made holy. And to be holy in all that we do.

Like Jesus in all that we do. Well, that's the first one. Holiness is a transforming thing. Secondly, holiness is a progressive thing. It's a progressive work.

Kids, that's a big word that means that it takes time. Holiness is progressive. Holiness takes time. It's not the work of a moment, but of a lifetime of many moments.

Now, there is a momentary work of the new birth when we pass from death into life. We were made alive to God in a moment.

That was a change so drastic that the Bible likens it to a heart transplant. Taking out the old bad heart and putting in a new heart. The old heart of stone.

[15:35] When God gave commands, our heart of stone treated His commands like a stone treats rain. It just bounces off. And God in the new birth takes out that heart of stone and puts in a fleshy heart.

It's soft and pliable so that when He says, love me with all your heart, our hearts respond, yes, I want to love you with all my heart. That's the work of a moment.

Our hearts are changed in the new birth. But transformation begins with a momentary, powerful work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration.

And so we began to hate what we once loved and we began to love what we once hated. We now begin to love Christ and His Word and His day and His people and His worship and His likeness became desirable to us.

And though that initial work is a momentary work and it radically changed us, it did not perfectly change us, did it? If you think it did, ask your wife, your husband, your father, your children.

[16:49] Did that change of the new birth perfectly change you? No, it radically changed you. It changed the direction of your mind and will and affections and now it's toward God.

But it didn't perfectly change you, did it? We find that there's still something remaining in us that's still attracted to sin and still attracted to the world and to what Satan holds out before us.

And that means we've got more changing to undergo before we bear the perfect likeness of Christ. So the new birth radically begins the work of holiness in our heart and life.

But the process of metamorphosis continues all our lives and will only be completed when we see Jesus. For we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

1 John 3, 2. Now, this progressive nature of holiness is seen in several ways in our text. And the first way it's seen is in the present tense.

[17:53] The text says not, it does not say, we were transformed. It says we are being transformed.

That reflects the tense, the perfect, the present tense of this verb in the Greek. And the present tense denotes continuous action. And so this is not the transforming work of a moment.

It's an ongoing transformation. It's a process. So progressive not only speaks of time, a process of time, but it also speaks of progress.

It's a progressive work, which means it's advancing. We're going forward. It's to be further ahead than we were before, closer to the goal of being like Jesus.

Holiness is a progressive work. And that's seen further in that our text says, we are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, or literally, from glory to glory.

[19:04] From glory to glory. With ever-increasing glory. So this is mentioned by way of contrast with the glory of the Lord that shone from the face of Moses.

Remember when Moses met with the Lord in the Old Testament, the Old Covenant, went into the tent of meeting and met face to face with the Lord. He came from the tent of meeting with His face visibly shining out with the reflective glory of the Lord.

So Moses would put a veil over his face when he came out to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away.

You see, that's what marks the Old Covenant. The glory of the Old Covenant was fading away. We are reflecting the radiance of Christ's likeness not in a way that fades away, goes from greater to lesser, but rather with ever-increasing glory.

So we now bear the glory of the Lord, His likeness from glory to glory, ever-increasingly. It's the difference between sunset and sunrise.

[20 : 25] The Old Covenant was sunset and the glory of the sun was fading. The glory of the New Covenant is sunrise and we bear that glory with ever-increasing glory from one degree of glory to another.

That's the higher blessing of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. And so if holiness is a progressive work, it's taking us forward.

We're advancing. That advance may not be a straight line. It might be three steps forward and two steps backward.

Four steps forward and one step backward. But the overall arc is advancement. Ever-increasing glory. We are bearing His likeness with ever-increasing glory.

The change may be so slight that we ourselves cannot see or feel that change. But an honest look back reveals that we're closer to Jesus than we were a year ago or five years ago or ten years ago.

[21 : 42] We're bearing His likeness in ever-increasing glory. And others may see our progress in likeness to Christ better than us. For the more holy we are, the more we progress, the more sinful we see that we are.

Our eyes are more sensitive to our sins. And so though we are made more like Christ, yet when we look within, we say, oh, but look at that motive. And look at that thought.

And look, look what I did here. And we become more conscious of our sin. So others might see it even before we do. The more like Jesus we are, the more we grieve our unlikeness to Him.

Nevertheless, the work progresses with ever-increasing glory. I'm pressing on the upward way. New heights I'm gaining every day. Still praying as I'm onward bound.

Lord, plant my feet on higher ground. Ever advancing. A higher plane than I have found. Lord, plant my feet on higher ground. That's the heartbeat of holiness, you see.

[22 : 48] There's no room for complacency in the Christian life. No room for self-satisfaction with a status quo. Well, I'm about as holy as everybody else around. No, we're looking at Jesus and we're pressing on to the higher ground from glory to glory to glory glory and nothing less than likeness to Jesus will ultimately satisfy us.

There's a holy dissatisfaction until we see Him and are made like Him. We want a greater Christ-like response to our trials.

We want a greater Christ-like response to difficult people in our lives. We want more of His love, more of His joy, more of His peace, more of His patience, more of His kindness, more of His goodness, more of His faithfulness and gentleness and self-control.

We want to be more forgetful of ourselves in the service of others. Taking up our cross and following closer to Jesus, pressing closer in, more courageous in our witness for Him, more enjoyment of Him.

That's the true standard by which we measure our progress in holiness. It's when we look less and less like the old us and more and more like Jesus.

[24 : 08] That's progress in holiness. Holiness, it's a transforming work, it's a progressive work, and thirdly, holiness is a supernatural work.

If being holy was just an external thing and you just had to rearrange the outward furniture of your life and just do a few external things and try harder, well, we might be able to handle this thing called holiness.

But if holiness is being like Jesus, and it is, then we can no more be holy than we can create a son.

We cannot create one holy desire in our hearts. Christ-like love in our hearts.

No. The kind of love we can create has us all over its end and its means. we have no power for this likeness to Jesus.

[25:21] So, what we need to see is that holiness is not only difficult, it's downright impossible. Downright, it's one of those things of which we must say that with man this is impossible.

And the sooner we see that, the quicker we'll give up on self-help theologies and self-help gospels of trying to lift ourselves by our own bootstraps and we'll turn away from all self-generating transforming processes to coming to God and crying out for supernatural power to change us.

Because what is impossible with man is possible with God. Even our holiness it is possible. it's a supernatural work. Now notice how our text speaks of holiness as a supernatural work.

First in the way it speaks of this transformation, it's in the passive voice. That means it's not something we do, but rather something that's done to us. The text doesn't say we transform ourselves into His likeness.

That's the active voice. We do it. It's rather in the passive voice which says we are being transformed. Someone else is acting upon us and we're not kept in tension long to know who is that someone else who's acting upon us and is doing the transforming work.

[26:58] The verse ends, which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Ah, He is the transforming agent, the Spirit of the Lord. It takes the Spirit of Christ to be like Christ.

should we be surprised at that? Holiness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. None other. He's the one transforming and changing us into the likeness of Christ.

It takes the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead to bring forth one thing clean from our unclean hearts. Same Holy Spirit, same power.

And that's the one who is doing this work. And that's reflected throughout this third chapter. Throughout the third chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul is arguing for the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant.

The old covenant with Moses. The new covenant with Christ. And one huge reason why the new covenant is superior and better is because the new covenant guarantees the work of the Spirit upon every member of the new covenant.

[28:07] Everyone in the new covenant has the Holy Spirit living in them and working upon them. That wasn't the case in the old covenant. And that's what makes the new covenant better.

So the new covenant promise to write God's law on our hearts and in our minds. So in verse 3 here of our text we're told that this is the work of the Spirit of the living God writing not on tablets of stone like the covenant with Moses but rather writing his law on tablets of human fleshy hearts.

That's what the Holy Spirit had done there in Corinth. The Spirit of God had not just written in stone thou shalt not commit adultery. He had come to these Corinthian sexually immoral people and he had written his law in their hearts so they repented of their adultery and their sexual immorality because the Spirit of the living God wrote upon their hearts.

That's why it's so much superior than the old covenant. In fact, the Holy Spirit's work is so dominant in the new covenant that in verse 8 Paul can refer to the ministry of the new covenant as the ministry of the Spirit.

In verse 6 Paul says we are ministers of a new covenant not of the letter but of the Spirit for the letter kills but the Spirit gives life. You see all those in the old covenant had the letter of the law.

[29:45] They had it written on stone put into the ark of the! There they could see it written by the very finger of God written on stone but not everyone that had the letter of the law had the Holy Spirit and by itself the letter of the law has no life giving power it has no life changing power the law just on stone just says do this and don't do that and if you do you'll live and if you don't you'll be condemned!

and die So it only had the letter of the law alone only had the power to command and to condemn the power to kill the power to bring death and that's all stated here in chapter 3 but the new covenant ensures the work of the Holy Spirit in each member in the heart of each member of the new covenant God's promise of a new covenant in Ezekiel 36 27 says I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and to be careful to keep my laws I'll put my spirit in you that's the new covenant everyone here who belongs to has the Holy Spirit in them moving them motivating them stirring them to keep God's decrees to be careful to follow his laws that's why the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the new covenant is so much better than the old covenant for in the new covenant the spirit gives life instead of the death of the law in the old covenant it brings righteousness instead of condemnation and gives a surpassing last and increases rather than a glory that fades so there is a supernatural power at work in every new covenant believer he is the

Holy Spirit who is making his people holy that is like Jesus if holiness is its supernatural work then we ought to be asking for this work we ought to be working with the spirit in this work and bringing ourselves to and presenting ourselves to him he might be progressively transforming us supernaturally into the image of Christ it's a transforming work it's a progressive work it's a supernatural work and lastly it's a Christ focused work it's a Christ focused work it's as we behold Christ's glory that we are being transformed into his likeness don't miss the way this metamorphosis takes place in the Christian's life what's the method the method is this that what we focus on we become like so choose your focus in life carefully choose your heroes carefully

I wonder if you've ever seen pictures of husbands and wives that have lived with each other for 50 or more years and you notice how they start to look like each other saw an article this past week that said the same is true of pets and I don't know which takes on which likeness but but the principle is here in verse 18 in the spiritual realm whatever it is in the physical that what we look at and behold with wonder and adoration what we fix our eyes on and focus on is what we become like and that goes for idols you can read that in the Old Testament that those who look toward their worthless idols become worthless like their idols but it's also true of those who look to Jesus they become like the one they look to that's the principle I want you to take away today from this message how are we made holy we are made holy progressively by the power of the spirit by looking unto

Jesus and as we look we're being transformed by the spirit we who with unveiled faces all behold the Lord's glory are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the spirit now in the old covenant only Moses could go in to the tent of meeting without a veil covering him and see the glory of the Lord and talk with him face to face everybody outside they could not see the glory face to face and so when Moses came out the veil went on hiding the reflective glory from the people but in the new covenant you notice the difference and we all Paul says me an apostle it's not just something for me we you

[35 : 02] Corinthians that once were so immoral and are now in Christ we all now what a big change from old covenant to new covenant all believers now behold the glory of Christ with unveiled face and the more we look at him the more we become like him now when we look at the glory of Christ what are we seeing we are seeing the glory of God the very next chapter Paul will speak about the glory of God in the face of Jesus he is the radiance of God's glory so in seeing Jesus we are seeing God's glory we are seeing holiness in a man but we are also seeing the holiness and the glory of God and so speaking of Moses veil Paul picks up on this image and he speaks of another veil not just a veil that covered Moses face as he came out and spoke to the people but now he talks about a veil that covers people's hearts verses 14 through 16 it covers the hearts of the unregenerate and what is it hiding it's hiding them from the glory of

Christ it's a dull and dark mind this veil is a dull and dark mind that blinds people from seeing the glory of Christ when the scriptures are read and in the next chapter Paul will attribute this veil in part to the work of the devil the God of this age he says in chapter 4 and verses 3 and 4 and even if our gospel the gospel of the glory of Christ if that gospel is veiled it's veiled to those who are perishing the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God would you agree with me that Christ divine where do we see glory as we find it in Christ becoming a man for us becoming sin for us becoming damned and cursed for us on the cross and rising again for us and ascending for us and reigning in heaven for us and coming again in glory for us we see in the gospel the glory of

Christ but the world doesn't see it Paul says because they've got a veil over the mind the affections the will it's all darkened and they don't see the glory of Christ it's clearly revealed in the gospel but as it's read they see nothing in him that they should desire him no majesty or glory that they should want him that they should follow him that they should turn from going their way and come and bow down and worship and trust in him for salvation because of the veil that hides that beauty we recently came from the grand canyon a man who is physically blind can be standing on the rim of the grand canyon and see no glory and a man a woman a boy or a girl who is still spiritually blind as we all are from birth without the

Holy Spirit can stand before the Lord of glory himself and see no glory nothing that they should desire nothing that they should turn from their sin and come and trust him to save them and to follow him and to worship and love him no glory what was written over the temple Ichabod the glory is departed that's what the world says of Jesus no glory no glory in him so Paul says we've got this veil it needs to be taken away and it is taken away in Christ it is taken away in Christ so that now we read the scriptures and we see glory in Jesus Christ don't we and we do we want to follow him and we want to be like him and as!

as we see him in scriptures we are being transformed into his likeness the Holy Spirit knows that the only way that we will be transformed into Jesus image is as we behold his glory you will never become more like Jesus unless you see him and behold him in his glory and that's why the Holy Spirit takes up this very work it's his joyous task for which Jesus sent him notice what Jesus says of the Holy Spirit in John 16 14 he will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you he will take those words of mine he will take that glory of mine and make it known to you Christ's glory is revealed in the scriptures and the Holy Spirit's work is to show it to us J.

[40 : 35] I. Packer in his book in Step with the Spirit calls this the Holy Spirit's floodlight ministry he was preaching on that text and he was needing an illustration and as sometimes we preachers are we don't have it all before we step into the pulpit and he's walking to church one by Christ by taking his glory and words about him in scriptures and revealing it to his people and he said how can I illustrate this and he turned the corner and there was the church building he was heading into and it was lit up with floodlights there's my illustration he said just in time as he entered church building flood lighting on a building at night if well done the flood lights will not be seen themselves they're hidden what is seen is the building the object upon which they are shining they're so placed that they cast all their light upon the building and their purpose is to make visible what otherwise would not be seen in the darkness now that's the

Holy Spirit's new covenant ministry to the people sealed in Jesus new covenant blood it is to shine his light upon Christ in the scriptures we're going to sing in a moment he himself the living author wakes to life the sacred page reads with us its holy pages and reveals our hidden Lord our risen Lord he's revealing our Lord to us in the scripture so as you're reading the Bible it's as if the Holy Spirit stands right behind you and he's shining his light over your shoulder onto the scriptures and showing you Jesus and his glory!

the spirit the spirit's message is never look at me it is always look at him look at him behold his glory listen to him here go to him live upon him so the spirit's work is to enlighten us to see Jesus for all that he is and all that he is for us as his people he is showing!

his glory and as we see him in the scriptures something supernatural is taking place we are being transformed into that same image seeing him is to be made like him it's to be transformed with ever increasing glory into his likeness which comes from the Lord who is the spirit this past week I read an advertisement for a new book written by John Piper his new book is reading the Bible super naturally I thought yes I'd like to hear more about that it's just what we're talking about this morning and in this blurb it asked the question does it take a miracle to read the Bible God wrote a book and its pages are full of his glory but we cannot see his beauty on our own with mere human eyes Piper here shows us that in the seemingly ordinary act of reading the

Bible something miraculous happens we're given eyes to behold the glory of the living God and I would add from our text this morning that as the spirit shines and enlightens our minds and eyes to see his glory a second miraculous thing happens we not only see his glory now with no veil between in that sense of hiding it from us we now see it but secondly we are now being made like him whose glory we see in the scriptures we're being changed what a privilege to have the Holy Spirit to read the Bible with us to worship with us here this morning as we sing songs!

[44 : 48] about Jesus and pray! prayers about Jesus and in it all the Holy Spirit is with us to reveal his glory to our hearts and to change us more into his likeness and so holiness is a Christ focused work don't make holiness all about yourself don't get stuck looking inward look away to Jesus as he's revealed in the scripture Robert Murray McShane says for every look that you take itself take ten of Christ why because being changed into his likeness that's how the Christian is made holy isn't it something that the Christian life begins with a look at Jesus look and live is the gospel response to Christ remember the Israelites bitten with snakes

Moses was to raise up the serpent bronze serpent and those who looked lived and Jesus tells Nicodemus even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and whoever looked lived even so the son of man must be lifted up and whoever believes that is a look of faith that's it whoever looks in faith whoever believes will not perish but have everlasting life look to me and be saved all you ends of the earth the gospel is look and live and the Christian life begins with a look we saw all of our sins didn't we in the scriptures we saw our condemnation but then we saw him and we saw him bruised for our transgressions and punished for our iniquities and we saw him and the glory of Christ at Calvary and in the empty tomb and in the ascension and in his present reign and we saw him and we looked by faith and said there is my savior there is my hope of heaven we looked and we lived the Christian life of holiness begins with a look at Jesus and secondly isn't it something that the Christian life continues with a look at

Jesus we're told in Hebrews 12 too that we're to run the whole of this race of life with perseverance looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith the whole lifelong process of being made holy is a process that's carried on by beholding the glory of Jesus and being changed into his likeness and then the Christian life of progressive holiness ends with a look at Jesus John takes us there to that beatific vision when we will see him no longer in the scriptures but we will see him face to face face to face with Christ my savior face to face what will it be John tells us what it will be we will be made like him when he appears we will be made like him for we will see him as he is this progressive work of sanctification it all started with a look to

Jesus it's carried forward looking to Jesus his glory being changed into his likeness how will that be ended when these eyes look upon my savior and in a moment in a twinkling of an eye my sin will be gone what's remaining what's left will be gone and I will love him with unsinning heart and live with him in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness dwells the method is the same seeing him were made like him and that is our hope that is our confident expectation and he who has this hope in him of seeing him one day and being made perfectly like him one day will now be purifying himself and how are you purifying yourself you're coming to this word and you're looking for Jesus in its pages and you're coming to church as you're hearing the word preached and read and sung and prayed and the spirit of

God is supernaturally showing you Jesus and transforming you into his likeness so let's feast our eyes upon his glory every day in the Bible let's feast our eyes every Lord's day here as together we look upon him and in fellowship around him and do you need to grow in some Christ like virtue do you need more love do you need more joy more peace more patience more self control more gentleness more faithfulness well see it first in Christ see it first in Christ you don't just go out and say I'm going to work on patience this week you come and you look for Jesus patience you see how patient this Jesus is and as the spirit of God is shining the light upon the patience of Jesus something happens Jesus becomes as a magnet that's drawing your heart out to him

[50 : 26] I want to be like that you see his love and you say oh I want to love people the way Jesus loved people what's happening you're being made like him as you're seeing his glory in the scripture so whatever it is that is your need of growth and holiness and virtues see those virtues first in Jesus and then be transformed by the spirit into his likeness this is God restoring his image in man he sang about it earlier man was made in the image of God sin marred that image what is becoming more like Jesus it's restoring the image that we were meant to bear remember what Jesus is he's the holiness of God in a man and that's what we were meant to look like that's what you were created to look like that's what man originally was meant to look like like

Jesus and so as we fix our eyes on him we're coming to see again oh that's what I was created to be and isn't it true dear Christian you know it's true that the more like Jesus you are the more you feel I was made for this I was made for God is restoring his creation design in us we weren't made to have our backs toward God and looking at other glories and making other idols we were made to glorify him and to wonder and look at his glory and to worship him alone and as we look and live and made more like him we say this is what we were made for and it's what Christ is doing in his people the spirit of God is making us again to bear the image of our creator it's a glorious thing Calvin says it's the whole design of the gospel that the image of God which had been defaced by sin may be repaired within us if you're outside of

Christ this is what you were made for come to this Jesus trust in his blood trust in his righteousness that work of transformation will begin in you let's pray thank you Lord that when we had fallen and sinned and ruined ourselves you did not leave us to ourselves but you sent your son to be our savior and after he came and lived the perfect life that we couldn't and died the atoning death that we deserved we were then brought to faith in him and the veil was taken away and the spirit of God was put within us so that now we see glory in Jesus where we saw none before we thank you that even now and even today though it seems rather ordinary as we sit here and with bibles in our laps open them and read them and hear them read and preached that something supernatural is taking place that you are showing us what true glory is and it's in Christ and you are changing us like him continue that good work we pray do it in more and more people and may it be that we would be your ambassadors bearing more and more of your glory in this needy world we ask it for Jesus praise and for the good of sinners amen