

Scripture Texts

2 CORINTHIANS 3:18-4:9

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

ISAIAH 43:2

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

LUKE 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Big Ideas

1

Corinth used sexual depravity to appease their gods; so does our culture. We call it choice, freedom, exploration, meaningless, entertainment, or empowering... but, really, it is worship.

2

The greatest way we are encouraged into righteousness is by being reminded of who God says we are: righteousness is our identity, grace and mercy is our portion, shame and condemnation are not our inheritance, brokenness and pain are not our future.

3

God loves us just as we are, but He loves us too much to leave us the same.

4

We don't guard our hearts to keep them hard; we guard our hearts to keep them soft. I am not guarding my heart from something, as much as I am guarding my heart for something.

5

Our circumstance might be our temporary dwelling, but it does not have permission to be our permanent identity.

6

If my heart stays healthy, and my spirit stays encouraged, it does not matter what season I endure because He is the rod and the staff Who comforts me.

Questions & Takeaways

- How can I best affirm my identity in Christ regardless of the circumstances of my present or past?
- How can I better attend to my heart and spirit, knowing that He is the rod and staff Who comforts me?

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