

Timidity/Audacity

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Date: 09 September 2018

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[0:00] Please take your Bibles and go to 2 Corinthians or 2 Corinthians. If you're visiting with us or you left your cell phone at home, perish the thought.

You can pull that black Bible out in the chair in front of you and go towards the back of that black Bible and find page 141.

2 Corinthians chapter 3. 2 Corinthians 3. We're going to start in verse 12, 12 through 18.

2 Corinthians 3, 12 through 18. 2 Corinthians chapter 3, the big number, and then verse 12, the little number, through 18.

End of that chapter. Paul says this, Therefore, having such hope, we act in great boldness, audacity.

[1:07] And not as Moses. He placed a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the goal of what was being abrogated.

But their minds were hardened. For up to this very day, at the reading of the Old Covenant, that same veil remains.

Not having been revealed that in Christ the Old Covenant is being abrogated. Verse 15. But to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart.

But when he turned to the Lord, he removed the veil. Now the Lord is the Spirit. And where there is the Spirit of the Lord? Freedom. Verse 18.

But we all, with uncovered face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory unto glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit.

[2:07] It's so fun to look up things on Google. I looked up just the word daring or audacious, and I found a website that says, The 10 most daring and audacious heists in history.

I read through some of them. I was like, wow, this is pretty amazing that some of these people got away with this stuff. I'll give you two. May 9th, 1671.

Anglo-Irish Thomas Blood, dressed up as a parson, he had the audacity to try to steal the English crown jewels right from the Tower of London.

And he actually almost got away with it. He actually did. But then they caught him. And then he had the audacity to convince King Charles II to grant him a pardon. And he did.

Isn't that amazing? Wow, this guy. This guy really was audacious. Anyways, another one to give you. Lufthansa's heist of 1978, the largest theft of cash in the United States at the time.

[3:32] The take net of the thieves, five million dollars in cash, five million dollars in cash, and eight hundred and seventy five thousand dollars in gems, a total well over twenty million dollars in today's, by today's standards.

Talk about being audacious. Audacity. Audacious. It means showing a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks.

The opposite, of course, would be timid. Timidity. You have no willingness to take some surprisingly bold risk.

Matter of fact, you don't even want to take a risk. Risk is not in your vocabulary. But once again, from our passage, these are paradoxical terms.

What seems to bring about timidity actually is audacious. What you would think would be audacious is actually timid compared to what should be gloriously audacious.

[4:41] Paradoxical terms. There you go. Timidity. Audacity. 2 Corinthians 3, 12 through 18. Timidity.

Audacity. Let me put it to you in a statement. What seems to be timid truly brings audacity. What seems to be bold actually brings timidity. But this timidity is really a response to hard hearts to whom truth has been revealed.

Excuse me. Veiled. But Christ brings true freedom and transformation so that one can be bold or audacious for the gospel and see God's glory audaciously at work.

This follows suit with this concept that Paul is trying to describe in 2 Corinthians. Boasting in our weakness boasting in the Lord.

Contradictory terms, right? Not really. They go together. What you would think you're boasting in weakness you're actually boasting in Christ. As I said earlier in previous messages this paradox is perfectly portrayed in the gospel in the crucified and risen Christ.

[6:00] The work of the timid Christ on the audacious cross brings true freedom and transformation. The timid Christ. Right? He became a man.

Veiled was His glory. He wasn't out in the open. He was a man of sorrows. Timid.

And yet He was put up on the shameful despicable horrible audacious cross. So what you would think you should have shame and be timid and go like this.

No. It's actually something you should proclaim audaciously. You can have salvation by this shameful cross in that timid Christ. There's more glory in that than the glory of Moses who saw the very face of God.

There's more timid excuse me there's more glory in that than in Moses. In the gospel we audaciously come into the Lord's glorious presence to be transformed by that same glory reflecting Christ's very image in our lives through our obedience to Him.

[7:26] He changes us. He transforms us. That's what He does. Through the audacious cross in the timid Christ.

And to share in His glory is really sharing in the resurrection of the dead. Which is also displayed in our obedience to Christ as His followers. Paul does a little transition here.

In the first 11 verses of chapter 3 he was talking about his mission and the mission of Moses and the comparison. Now he's talking about himself as the messenger and really his audaciousness as an apostle in all his weakness in all his suffering in all his feebleness.

And this remember this was a concept. This was repulsive to the Corinthians. This was excuse me this was despicable to them. Ugh! I mean to think about Paul being weak and that he's audacious it's like you should have a veil over your face.

But that's because they don't understand the cross. They don't understand the gospel. Because in the timid Christ and the audacious gospel we proclaim in all our weakness the very glory of God.

[8:49] And it's found in the gospel. I want to give you some principles listing them out for you and I'll have them up there on the screen that you're going to see arise from the text.

I was just as I was doing my study I went you know maybe if I put some bullet points for you and you can kind of see those maybe that would help you. Because this I think my thoughts my wife kind of confirmed that she's like wow that's just a hard passage the first 11 verses of chapter 3 and even these verses.

So I want to put some principles up here for you just kind of so you can grasp a hold of these. Number one God in Christ does a work from the inside out. What are you going to see from this passage?

God does a work from the inside out. He started that in the first 11 verses written on our hearts.

Right? God changes us from the inside out.

It's not about appearance it's about what's on the inside. He changes us from the inside out. A second principle it's not about appearance but about a heart change.

[9:57] It's not about how you look it's about God doing a work in your heart. A third principle a changed heart will show itself in a changed life.

A changed heart will show itself in a changed life. A fourth one we have changed lives with glaring weaknesses and failures.

Oh friends those things don't go away. The older you get the more weaknesses you begin to find out you have. Right? More weaknesses more failures and yet that's the beauty of it.

Here was this guy Paul what a the guy looked like a loser and yet he was so bold and confident in the gospel but that was a concept that was so repulsive to the Corinthians because they thought it was all about appearance.

Doesn't sound like anything like our culture. Not at all. I'm being facetious here you understand that. Sarcasm runs very thick in my family.

[11:10] Another visible what's that one two three four five five I didn't number these I'm sorry but God loves to show his glory in the face of weakness.

He loves to show glory in weakness with like a little dinky church in Cottonwood Arizona.

What do we have to show for? Nothing. And yet that's where he can show his glory. And then last one more principle you'll see there's actually another one but I'll stop here.

Only in Christ can one understand the scripture rightly. In other words you gotta get your New Testament glasses on or your New Covenant glasses on. Did you all bring them?

They were at the door when you came in right? Your little 3D glasses? Your little NC glasses? New Covenant glasses. You need those glasses to understand scripture rightly. I was talking with a member and a member said well do we need the Old Testament?

[12:20] I said absolutely. We need the Old Testament. We just have to look at it through our New Covenant eyes. The New Covenant glasses. Once you put those on then the Old Testament comes alive.

You go oh now that makes sense. And you actually see the glory of the Old Testament the glory of the Old Covenant is nothing compared to the glory of Christ.

Which is odd because you would think and if we have time we'll look at this 2 Chronicles when the glory of the Lord came upon the temple right? It was like and everyone's like whoa and blah wow everything like that.

That's more glorious right? Than a cross? No. What's more glorious is the death of the Messiah the timid weak human Messiah upon this shameful cross.

That has more power than the power and the glory that was seen there in the temple when Solomon dedicated his temple after he built it. That's the point.

[13:32] And that's another part to this. That same glory is transforming you Christian. That same glory is in you by the Spirit transforming you.

Well I don't see it all I see is my wrinkles doggone it when I look in the mirror. Oh yeah I know. It's like wow why do I have hair growing there but it doesn't grow up here.

Why does it do that? All those things are going wrong. No but God's transforming. Why? Because it's not about appearance but about a change of heart because God in Christ does it work from where?

Tell me the inside out. That's what he does. So there's some principles for you. Now let's work our way through the text which we like to do because it's fun. Point number one.

The gospel or the new covenant the new brings audacity. Verse 12. Therefore having hope having such hope because of the greater enduring glory of the new covenant he's looking back at the first 11 verses because of this Paul had hope.

[14:40] No other covenant would supersede this eternal one. It's the same glory she spoke about in verse 11 verse 10 verse 9 that brought Paul boldness.

Audacity. That's why he says we act in actually literally it's we act in great audacity or great boldness or great confidence. He had confidence that God worked in the hearts of people and he had great hope of the power surety and eternity of this new covenant.

He was boom he was there confident strong bold audacious this little guy just kind of nobody looked weird you know that was Paul his powers in the gospel and where does a new covenant find its culmination?

The resurrection of the dead resurrection life and the spirit is the down payment of that. The spirit is the promise that God's going to totally renew you and what assured him of this hope?

The resurrection of Jesus of course. I mean that's the thing that seals the deal. you have the powerful cross the timid Christ on that audacious in your face cross and yet what shows that God was so pleased with that is his resurrection.

[16:20] That resurrection gives us hope and I mean like a wish like I really hope it doesn't rain today because I just washed my car yesterday not that type of hope I'm confident I'm assured I'm audacious this is the truth this is the hope we are very bold and you notice from the New American Standard it says we use great boldness in speech because speech is denoted because the argument has to do with his claim to his apostolic authority so in other he's saying I audacious the or he audacious the proclaim this gospel with confidence notice the flip side the old covenant brings timidity verse 13 verse 13 not as Moses there's the comparison see he says we act in boldness not like Moses what's he saying he's saying

Moses didn't act with boldness he's timid how so I don't know maybe it was did he have a hoodie maybe that was the first sale of a hoodie it was you know when they put I'm just kidding that's called sarcasm maybe he veiled his face somehow we don't know we don't know what that veil was but he says here not as Moses in contrast to Moses mission who acted just like the law he put a veil over his face he cut off access to God's glory from the sons of Israel so he entered the tent the tent of meeting for some of you who were here when we went through Exodus remember this remember when we went through this he entered the tent of meeting with no veil right we just read this part Yahweh would speak to him and then he would go speak to the people and they went ah his face is shining ah what do we do warning warning calm down so he spoke to the people then he put the veil on right and every time he would go in to speak with the

Lord he would take the veil off speak with the Lord then he would go to the people the leaders tell them and then he would put it back on so he intentionally put on the veil so that they would not be able to gaze notice what he says at the end of what was fading away poor translation be like this at the goal of that which was being abrogated or rendered powerless or rendered idle that's what abrogated means it wasn't fading away like ah no that's not the nuance of the verb the nuance of the verb is it's being done away with it's done away with in Christ which we'll find that out and the veil was not only his response to their fear remember we read that right fear they had fears they were like ah so he puts on the veil but it was an act of judgment Paul tells us here it's an act of judgment because notice what it says in verse 14 the first three one two three four words but their minds were hardened this was an act of judgment upon them why is it an act of judgment because their hearts were rebellious which came from their fear of

Yahweh although a somewhat timid response yes the veil though was an aspect an act of judgment upon them the old covenant was being abrogated in Christ Christ was more glorious so the old brings timidity he had to put the veil on but the veil was actually an act of judgment because which leads to our next point point number three hard hearts veiled truth their hearts were hard in contrast their hearts which means or their minds their affections their purposes their judgments it was hardened it was turned to stone look we need to understand something they were unable to look at Moses face like they were unable to endure God's voice both of which revealed their wayward rebellious hearts so in other words friends don't feel sorry for the sons of Israel oh they're victims those poor sons of

Israel those poor Israelites no no friends they were being rebellious no no no we can't listen to God's voice you speak to Moses wait a minute God was just speaking to them they were stiff necked nothing like us of course notice what he says here their minds were hardened for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains what's he doing now see he's saying this veil from Moses was a sign it was a sign of God's judgment upon Israel a timid response yes but their hearts were hard the same veil that same veil that Moses put on that's the same veil that remains upon the public reading of the old covenant the public reading of the old testament even until today unless you picked up your 3D glasses that you came in with did you pick them up you have to look at the old covenant you have to read the old testament with your new covenant glasses on else it's just timidity else it just displays to you the hardness of your hearts because as we well know the law kills doesn't it it judges us it tells you where you failed it tells you that you do not match up to

[23:11] God's standards and you never will so you should be in fear because our hearts are very rebellious against God even today in Israel and in synagogues around the world a veil remains upon the sons of Israel oh and what's more a veil lies upon all who do not read the old covenant with new covenant eyes which comes only in Christ you must embrace Christ to understand this you must embrace Christ and that audacious cross upon which the timid Christ died you must because once you get that once belief comes in transformation takes place in your life it changes your whole outlook on life some of you have been a believer or not very long you know what this means right you came to understand

Christ you went oh it's like the blinders come off you're like oh this makes sense now notice what he says that last part on verse 14 I translated this for you from the Greek in the numeric standards it says this unveiled because it is removed in Christ probably a better way to put it is like this not having been revealed to them that in Christ the old covenant is being abrogated or rendered idle or being done away with so what's he saying he's saying God abrogates the law the old covenant the letter and he does it in Christ God has not revealed to the sons of Israel that the old covenant is

abrogated in Christ because you need the eyes of faith to do that you must trust the risen Jesus it's what it comes down to so not just the sons of Israel but that same veil remains lies upon the whole world why because the whole world is in rebellion against God that's why when you speak the gospel with boldness and audacity people go you're a moron you believe that stuff that some guy who supposedly is the son of God died for sinners as a substitute that's absolutely ridiculous that's crazy who would believe that foolish stuff exactly to you it's foolishness but to the called it's the wisdom of

God man you see what Paul's doing here it's only God that can open eyes in order to hear the gospel he's going to talk about that next week in chapter 4 verses 1 through 6 how do you get to the place where these people will hear and really see the glory of Christ how does that happen when God says let light shine when God says to a person's soul awaken the lights come on the gospel that they've been hearing for a year 2 years 5 years 20 years 30 years the lights come on they go oh now I understand we're not going to talk about that today next week so if you really want to see the glory of God you will hear it in Christ and in the horrible despicable audacious cross and believe the timid

Messiah died upon the audacious cross that's another principle the timid Messiah died upon the audacious cross that's the only way you're going to be saved that's the only way you're going to understand salvation that's the only way you're going to understand the old covenant that's the only way you're going to understand the Bible the focal point is Christ and him crucified remember Paul's trying to establish an argument that he's a legitimate apostle of this gospel this was the thing that was repulsive to the Corinthians because they were all about appearance and as we're going to see in a couple weeks the super apostles remember them they were all about appearance they had all the right stuff they weren't like that loser Paul Paul's trying to make a point about the gospel and it's shame and it's timidity and yet it's glory and it's power notice verse 15 but to this day whenever Moses is read when they read it up to the present day as often as Moses is read a veil lies over their heart Moses represents the old covenant Christ the new covenant and then notice how it's translated here in verse 16 but whenever a man turns to the Lord the veil is taken away I actually translate it differently since Paul was recounting the event with Moses in Exodus it's actually better to see this as referring to Moses not to some individual there's also other grammatical reasons so that's why I translated it for you like this and as often as he turned to the Lord he meaning Moses removed the veil see this is what would happen when Moses turned or entered in to speak to Yahweh what would he do he removed the veil Paul's recounting this and then he gives clarity where there is the spirit of the

[29:22] Lord he says that in the next verse because Paul's referring to the tent of meeting the place that Moses encountered the Lord Yahweh God was there in the tent of meeting when he spoke to him ah so as Moses encountered the Lord in the tent of meeting so now any rebellious human savingly encounters God where his spirit God's spirit is present that is in Christ and in the new covenant you now can enter in you now can see the glory of God and yet it's not some glory that you see from the temple or I should say the tabernacle it's not some glory that you see in the temple which why not go there this is for free I just thought of that this morning so you don't have to pay for this one that sarcasm again second chronicles chapter seven says now when

Solomon had finished praying power right fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering the sacrifices and the glory of Yahweh filled the house and the priest could not enter into the house of the Lord excuse me because the glory of Yahweh filled Yahweh's house and all the sons of Israel seeing the fire come down the glory of the Lord upon the house bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground and they worshipped and gave praise to Yahweh saying truly he is good truly his steadfast love loving kindness is everlasting oh wouldn't you want to be there to see that that's glory right this is glory when the church gathers together the spirit of God is in each one of us friends this is more glorious than what we just read right there that's way more glorious you don't believe me that's what there's your 20 bucks sorry mom that's what that's what Paul said he said that in chapter 3 this was the mission of Moses this is the mission of the old covenant but see we think of glory it's like the performance right he's got all the right things got all the right stuff that's how the world thinks of it right I mean just watch a movie that's all about Hollywood the actors having all the right stuff having all the money your best life now the thousands lined up to listen to him and he tells you all the things that you want to hear that's not glory it's when you have a bunch of people come from different walks of life when you have Israelis and

Palestinians and Arabs that get together and they sing praise the name of Jesus that's something the world does not understand my friends that's true glory which leads us to the next point Christ brings freedom so you can be freed from this verse 17 now the Lord is a spirit and where there is a spirit of the Lord he just says freedom there's no verb he just gives freedom to decisively and correctly interpret God's word or the old covenant one must be in Christ by the spirit you have to be in Christ the Lord was the one who spoke with Moses when he entered the tent of meeting it's this same spirit the new covenant of the spirit who writes Christ on rebellious hearts so what does this all mean one writer says this those who belong to Christ have entered into the same relationship that Moses had with the Lord we as God's people are in a communicative relationship with God whereby we hear

God's voice through the apostolic word the scriptures open to us and now we're free and God speaks not in some esoteric way not in some mystical chanting way no we read and understand scripture rightly because we have our new covenant glasses on because only in Christ is the veil taken away or removed instead of slavery there's freedom excuse me freedom as opposed to slavery from condemnation freedom as opposed to slavery from death remember when we talked about that last week the mission of Moses the mission of old covenant was death it kills I mean they bowed down low when that glory came upon them and they were bound down low because they knew that if they did not bow low the glory would come out and destroy them but God grants freedom to us by means of his spirit so we rightly see ourselves fallen condemned rebellious and God gracious and kind our redeemer and our savior because it's all rooted in Jesus he's the focal point as we will see in just a moment he's the mirror we look to

[35 : 24] Christ the mirror and that's what we end up becoming he's the focal point he's the point man he's the crux it's about Christ we now have the freedom to hear and respond to God freedom not to be autonomous but to communicate with God freely all this by means of the spirit in Christ Christ who became weak and timid so we can audaciously come before God with full confidence full confidence in God full confidence we come to him because the work of the timid Christ on the audacious cross that brings freedom so he brings us all the way up to this point he said but the gospel brings audacity right and the old covenant he says that our hearts build truth but Christ brings freedom and then he culminates everything in verse 18 Christ brings transformation 18 and we're going to

I'm going to kind of take each phrase I'll read it then I'll take each phrase kind of put it together for us notice he says but we all now is different remember how we read this in previous verses when he would say we he's talking about himself and the apostles now he's including the Corinthians in this we all it's all you guys y'all you know as they say in text y'all but y'all it's talking about us now the common salvation he and the Corinthians shared we all unlike Moses who was Moses glory which is only for him the glory of the new covenant is communicated to all those who are in Christ it's all of us only in Christ is his veil lifted I'm kind of crescendoing everything okay comfort life and righteousness which comes from God is hidden in the suffering weak audacious cross of Christ a work of God perceived only by faith which comes from hearing the apostolic gospel word we all with uncovered face reminds us of Moses turning to the Lord unveiling himself so to be unveiled means to be set free from a hardened mind which comes only in

Christ Jesus because remember the veil was put on because of their hard hearts so now all of us uncovered face with unveiled face he says beholding as in a mirror it's interesting our seeing is actually our hearing to see means you truly hear the gospel word because once you truly hear the gospel word you see the glory of God which is found in Christ the gospel word which you hear it you hear the gospel you don't see it you don't see Jesus you don't see him dying on the cross you hear about it right and notice he says the mirror what's the mirror the crucified Christ so to hear and believe the gospel is proof that the heart or mind has been open to see the light of the gospel of the glory of God glory of Christ excuse me who is the image of God it's wrapped up in Christ and who he is now we see with our ears one day we'll see with our eyes beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord that's God's goodness we all see this glory which is located in Christ this scene or vision of God's glory is granted to those who believe the gospel word one writer puts it like this the glory of God and the person of Jesus

Christ has been revealed to all who hear the gospel and believe so it's this vision of the Lord's glory that transforms in that glory is imparted to non-glorious weak humans a human who's subject to sin death suffering weakness it's that glory that transforms us the glory of the crucified and risen Christ

is the glory of the consummation which is present now but not fully we're waiting for the resurrection from the dead but it's not yet here but it's here but not totally would you see glimpses of it where in here because it starts in the heart remember God changes us from the inside out it's God's grace and favor given to us who are in need and who are in distress notice he says the last part transformed are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory he's transforming us he's changing us we have the privilege of sharing in God's image as we share in Christ and only in Christ because he is God's image into his image we're transformed so look at it this way Christ is the mirror we're looking at Christ and we're being transformed into the image of Christ it's him transforming him and notice it's we all so sometimes it's not just something individually is happening but all of us together corporately this is happening to all of us because we are the very glory of God in the church because we are the body of Christ and it's this image it's righteousness life comfort it's spiritual of the spirit amid condemnation death distress weakness timidity this kind of transformation it's not just a moral character thing it's true it's that but we're weak sinful rebels to be transformed from the inside out so to be transformed by God's glory and to share in his glory is really sharing the resurrection of the dead we're sharing in that which is displayed in our obedience to Christ as Christians because we're whole new people what is the great depiction that shows that this is really happening in us this is taking place in us baptism it shows tangibly with the eyes what has happened in the heart water's bad you go under the water you come up out of the water you're a whole new person you're changed you're transformed he's transforming us and the mirror that we're looking into to make us do that transformation is Christ it's Jesus with hearts no longer hardened able to hear see the truth of Jesus in the gospel word we now can reflect the very image of Christ in our lives in the midst of our weaknesses in the midst of our timidity in the midst of all our failures and it's this transformation that is hidden behind our weaknesses and failures that which shines in the heart the treasure of the knowledge of his glory is in weak vessels there's nothing great about us there's nothing spectacular about us there is certainly nothing spectacular about Paul because Christ is not yet openly seen in all his fullness because we have not yet been raised and then notice he says the very last part just as from the Lord the Spirit the very fabric of our salvation is not some magical power salvation is relational in that we speak with the Lord face to face

[44:06] I mean isn't that the point an audacious relationship of communication with the creator the giver of life our savior isn't that the point of salvation it's not that you get heaven it's not that you get power it's that you get God you speak with him face to face isn't that the point Christ brings true freedom and transformation so that one can be bold for the gospel and see God's glory boldly at work in us you see it at work and yet you don't see the glitz and glamour you see little nuances like yesterday seeing a listening to an interview of somebody who became a Christian that's glory listen to someone how they're God's showing them things we've had people bring testimonies here right we're here and there we do testimonies that's glory that's what you see it's not something spectacular or glamorous or glitz and glamour you don't see it on CNN this is warfare you don't see that they're not going to put that on there that's not glory yes it is in the gospel we audaciously come into the

Lord's glorious presence to be transformed by that same glory reflecting Christ's very image in our lives through our obedience to him because the work of the timid Christ on the audacious cross brings freedom and transformation audacity timidity is it audacious oh yes from the timid Christ on the audacious cross and that's why we can be audacious with the gospel and call people to transformation right let's pray rekindle our love for you remind us of our hope and truth bring to our remembrance the power of the spirit you oh God in Christ changing us from the inside out do that in us we aren't anything special we know we're weak we know we failed and we'll be weak and we will fail but your grace is present your glorious grace is seen so we can be not timid confident in the gospel confident that you're transforming us confident that you're changing us would you take some time and ponder what we've seen from

God's word and after a few moments we'll have an opportunity to worship with our giving to worship by singing a couple songs we'll pray together we'll pray for Tyler and Emma but this time just the next few moments spend some time between you and the Lord and proclaim this audacious glorious gospel to yourself Hilary tip three good things