



9/25/26

We've been walking through the book of Philippians on the Chosen and Cherished podcast. This week I got stuck on only 1 verse. But it has so much meaning, as I prayed about it, I felt that it was important to camp on it for a while. The episode is called, "He's the Reason Why." If you'd like to listen, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>

*Blessings,
Jonna*

1 Thes 2:13-14, 1 Cor 3:16-18

This week we start a new focus in our series, Kingdom Outpost... Faithful Fire, while also celebrating that we have been a Kingdom Outpost for 20 years!!! We celebrate that this is a place where we can belong, pursue, and experience our living God together. I love how experiencing a relationship with the Lord deepens all other relationships with believers in Christ. So... today I want to see what God's word says about this and how I can apply it to my life... so that I can be a faithful flame on fire for Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-14

"And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers. For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews..."

In vs. 12, Paul said that he was like a father with his children, exhorting, encouraging, and charging the believers to walk in a manner worthy of God who calls them to His glory and His Kingdom. He called them, and they responded. They received the word that was preached to them. They didn't just hear it, they put their faith into action.

This is a really important point... they accepted the word as the word of God (what it really is), and not as the word of men. The word of God has far more meaning than the word of men. 2 Peter 1:21 says, "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from

God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." Paul did not speak on his own authority, but according to what the Holy Spirit revealed to him. The people knew it. If his words were based on human wisdom or authority, they could be dismissed. But they were from divine wisdom and authority, and so they could not be dismissed.

Today, there are no people speaking new words of God that change meaning to what God has had written in the Bible. Anything that anyone says on behalf of Him MUST align with His word, or it is not from God. In the Old Testament, if someone spoke a prophecy that was not from God, and therefore, did not come to fruition, they were considered a false prophet. By law, false prophet would be stoned to death. Yikes!

I made a massive mistake years ago when I believed the words of a man over the word of God. It sent my faith into a tailspin of misery that caused me to walk away from the Lord for 2 years. I'm so thankful that the Lord led me back to Him, but those were the 2 most miserable years of my life. The sad part is, I could have studied God's word to see if what that man (who was in ministry) said was true. But I didn't... and yet God still waited to be gracious to me as soon as I was willing to return to Him and He spent those 2 years gently proving to me that what I was told was not from Him. Praise His name!

It's not just about hearing, receiving, and accepting God's word. It's about belonging to Him and allowing His word to work in me! "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). God's word is alive and active. Psalm 19 tells me that His word revives my soul, makes me wise, brings joy to my heart, and enlightens my eyes. That's what's at work in me!!! That's awesome.

The amazing thing about God's word at work in me is that it accomplishes all His promises in me, helping me to imitate or follow the examples of other faithful believers, even as I face suffering as they did.

This is a huge lesson for me. God's work in my life through His word does not exempt me from suffering. It's important for me to get this because, if I don't understand that, I won't pursue my relationship with the Lord. I'll assume that He's punishing me or absent or powerless or uncaring or that He isn't enough. But truly, when do you learn that someone truly loves you and will stick with you no matter what? You learn it when you're suffering even the little things and they don't go anywhere. They endure it WITH you. It's from God's word that I learn that He never leaves me to fend for myself in my suffering. In fact, He seals me with the Holy Spirit who pours the love of God into my heart and comforts me and encourages me and helps me in the suffering... even suffering that I brought on myself.

So... since I belong to God, since He has pursued me so that now I pursue Him, how do I experience the fullness of relationship with Him? That takes me to 2 Corinthians 3:16-18... and the role of the Holy Spirit who dwells in me.

"But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

There are only 2 things God calls me to do as one who belongs to Him... only 2 things that define my role in pursuing Him and experiencing Him. He calls me to...

- 1. Turn to Him.*
- 2. Behold His glory.*

To turn to Him is to recognize my need for Him and to repent for my selfish heart.

The Greek word for "beholding" His glory can also be translated "reflect." My role is to realize that, like the moon, I have no light of my own. The moon reflects the light of the sun, and I reflect the light of the Son as I fix my eyes on Him and His word. The more I fix my eyes on Him, the fuller my reflection of His light becomes. I become like a full moon rather than a crescent moon.

This is so consistent with His character and His word. Even in the end, when God calls me home, 1 John 3:2 says that I'll be like Him "because I will see Him as He is." The way I change to be like Jesus is to keep my eyes on Him.

So that's my role. What's God's role? This passage gives me 3 roles of God... specifically, the Holy Spirit.

- 1. He removes the veil.*
- 2. He gives me freedom.*
- 3. He transforms me to be like Jesus... one degree of glory to the next... little by little.*

Without turning to the Lord, a veil remains over my heart so that I can't see His glory. But when I turn to Him, the Holy Spirit removes that veil and gives me freedom from all the lies that go with being blind to His glory. What does His freedom mean?

- Romans 6:7, 8:1-2 ~ I'm free from sin and the law of sin and death.*
- Romans 8:15 ~ I've received, not the spirit of slavery, but the Spirit of adoption that allows me to cry, "Abba, Father!"*
- Galatians 5:1 ~ I've been set free FOR freedom. I don't ever have to go back to slavery.*

I'm also not responsible to fix myself. The Lord knows that I can't fix myself. He says that's His job. He transforms me little by little. I think a huge reason for this is that God is not

transforming me just so that I'll be a really good rule follower. He's transforming me so that I can enjoy the freedom of total relationship and unity with Him. For every piece of me that becomes like Jesus, I become more united in relationship with Him.

How do I have a faithful fire? I pour myself into receiving God's word and allowing Him free access to work in my life and make me more like Jesus. I follow the example of other believers, even if that means learning to follow their example of faithfulness through suffering. I turn to the Lord and behold His glory. The Holy Spirit makes that fire burn faithfully as He removes the veil from my heart and gives me the freedom to reflect and behold the glory of God as He transforms me to be like Jesus.