

The Mirrors of the Lord

Third Series – Sermon Twenty-Seven

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In “The Mirrors of the Lord,” MacDonald uses the apostle Paul’s summary of his conversion in Acts chapter nine to reveal the gospel narrative of simple obedience. The Truth of our *Being* always precedes our *doing* in order to become what we already are - becoming our true Self through BEING and then DOING reflecting our true self as we have been created to be! Jesus is not a philosopher, and Christianity is not a philosophy. It is a way of living.

The Heavenly Father has made it all about the Son. The Son has made it all about returning us to His Father. And by the power of the Spirit, it can be so for you and me!

Outline

Becoming Like Jesus - Our Heavenly Father has made it all about the Son, Jesus!

Changed! - What you look at, fix your gaze upon, continue to keep before you in vision and focus, you will become!

One with God - Christianity was never about going to a place when you die, heaven, but about becoming our true Selves in union with Them.

2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Becoming Like Jesus

We see from this passage how the apostle Paul was transformed by the Lord. The way he came to understand Jesus' Life to be the Light of men, both for him and us. Of everyone I know, Paul seems to write the most practically and plainly.

What Paul cared about is clear to the true of heart. However, it is not quite so clear to the one whose understanding gets ahead of his obedience or to the one who starts from the perspective that Paul intended to teach a system of thought. A system that is appealing to the intellect rather than the childlike relationship with God as his Father.

Paul, like his Master, wanted to awaken us to seek the kingdom and His righteousness. Awaken us to reject the lusts of possessions and passing pleasures and to instead look upon the glory of our Father and turn from all unrighteousness. He wanted us to recognize the brotherhood of all men and the ugliness of what is unfair, unloving, and prideful. So, Paul was determined to teach only obedience to the Lord of Life as the plan of salvation. He had no interest in the so-called systems that change the glory of the perfect God into the likeness of men's low thoughts and dull consciences. Jesus Christ is the only likeness of the living God. So let us look at what Paul teaches in this passage about the Life that is the Light of men. This passage is his metaphor for expressing to us the Truth announced by John.

When Moses left the presence of God, his face was radiant. The glow was a wonder and power to the people. However, the radiance began to diminish as would be expected since it was not natural to him. Therefore, Moses put a veil over his face so the people would not see it fade. Whether this was right or wrong is unimportant. But when Moses returned to the tabernacle, he took it off to talk face-to-face with God and again replaced it when he came out.

Paul says that the veil that hid the face of Moses now lies on the heart of the Jews so that they cannot see God. But, when they return to the Lord and go into His presence, the veil will be taken away, and they will see Him. Here, I cannot help but ask, would it not have been better for Moses to have let the people see his dependence on the glory within the holy of holies' veil? Did the veil hide more than Moses' face? Did he unintentionally lay the veil on the hearts of the people? Did it not hide God's face from them so that they could not see that one greater than Moses was there? Perhaps if he had not veiled his face, the people would have seen the glory fade, and it would not have blinded their hearts. And they would have looked forward to a glory that would never fade.

Paul says that in seeing Jesus, the veil will be taken away from the hearts of the Jewish people and us. His light and glory will remove it. Jesus' presence gives freedom from Mount Sinai and the wilderness and all of its heaviness and bondage. The Son offers freedom to everyone in His Sonship.

Changed!

"But we all," having His presence and liberty, *'with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image,'* that of the Lord Jesus Christ, *'from glory to glory, even as of the Lord, the spirit.'"* **We need no Moses, no more earthly mediators, to come between us and the light and bring out to us a little of the glory. We go into the presence of the Son, the Light of men, who reveals the Father. Our mediator is the Lord himself. A mediator not sent by us to God to bring back His will, but who comes from God to give us Himself. We stand like Moses in the presence of God, face-to-face, receiving His glory. We see the glory directly in the face of Jesus Christ.**

I believe that both the authorized and the revised versions misinterpreted this phrase *"beholding as in a glass"* or *"reflecting as a mirror."* Paul never thought of the mirror as reflecting, as throwing back the image in front of it, but of receiving the image of Christ, taking it into itself, the image presented to you, and being filled with the glory you are looking upon.

It seems to me that the most literal translation is not using the noun, but the verb, *mirror*, and so read, ***"But we all, with unveiled face, mirroring the glory of the Lord."*** So Paul to me is saying, *"We all, with a clear vision of the Lord, mirroring, in our hearts his glory, even as a mirror would take into itself his face, are thereby changed into his likeness, his glory working our glory, by the present power, in our inmost being, of the Lord, the spirit."* **Our mirroring of Christ, then, is being one with the presence of His Spirit in us. The idea is not the reflecting of Christ to others, which is good, but the taking of Him into ourselves and having Him change us into Himself.**

Paul's idea is when we take into our understanding, hearts, consciousness, and being the glory of God, namely Jesus Christ, then He reveals Himself to our eyes, hearts, and consciousness. Jesus works in us and keeps on working until He dwells in us and we change into the very likeness of Himself. He works until we bear His image, the image of the humanity of God, the image we were created to be from the first. The image that could not be perfected until Christ was in us. Therefore, by the power of Christ in us, we are changed, the glory in Him becoming the glory in us, His glory changing us to glory.

One with God

This metaphor deals with things far beyond what it can express. The Life of Christ in the soul of man, who can declare! But let us remember that Christ in us is the power of the spirit to us! When we call upon His name, He comes. When we receive His image through the mirror, He enters with it. Our thoughts are not cut off from His; they are the door through which He comes.

When we turn our hearts to Him, it is the opening of the door. The holding up of our mirror to Him is for Him to come in. This opening is not just in our thoughts or concepts of Him, but Himself by His own will. Jesus comes in not through our taking of Him, but by His coming to us that we receive Him. By this mirroring, we receive the one welcome guest of the universe. So, Jesus becomes the Soul of our souls, become spiritually what He always was creatively. As our spirit informs and transforms our bodies, so likewise His Soul informs and transforms our souls.

In this transformation, there is nothing unnatural, nothing in conflict with our being. It is but the Soul of souls that willed and wills our souls, rising as infinite Life, into the Self we call I and me. This Self that is alive through Him and has His very nature working on and with His creation. He is making the I and me more and more His and Himself more and more ours. Until we are aware of the glory that is

ours, our existence reveals itself to us. Then we, with our full-face, turned to the sun, to the light that enlightens what was created, will know ourselves alive with infinite Life, even the Life of the Divine. Then we will know that our existence is not the moonlight of mere consciousness of being, but the sunlight of a life made right by union with its source. A life that is thinking and feeling from the primal Sun of Life, from whom we fell away into the darkness that we might know and come to recognize ourselves, our Self, and return to the circle of life that is always in a divine harmony. **Then we have become what we are! Then we have Life, the Life of Jesus through the Light of the glory of God in His face. His Life mirrored in our hearts so that we are one with God forever and ever!**

What less than this radiant hope would be worthy of the revelation of Jesus? Rather than men having cast God out and being filled with themselves, they are filled with the glory of their Father! Jesus' devotion is what saves our lives, putting us face-to-face, soul-to-soul. No other salvation will do but the receiving of the Father through the Son.

What it cost the Son to get so near us that we could say, "Come In," is the gift and story of His Life. Jesus stands at the door and knocks, and when we open it, He comes in, dwells with us, and we are transformed into the same image of truth, purity, and heavenly childlikeness! Where power lives, there is no force. Where the spirit is Lord, there is liberty.

Jesus Christ, by the free-flowing communion He shares with us, transforms us in every thought and desire until we are good like Him. Sons and daughters that are unselfish and neighborly like Him, loving, caring, and ready to die for the truth and the will of His Father, which is in love, harmony, liberty, beauty, and joy.

I do not know if we can say this is having life in ourselves. But it is the waking up and perfecting of us in the Divine Life we inherited from our Father. Our Father created us in His image and gave us His nature so that we are without excuse if we neither hear His voice nor see His image. We must live through the Life received into our heart of hearts by the mirrored glory of Jesus Christ, the Truth.

CLIFFNOTES WITH ORIGINAL MACDONALD QUOTES

Becoming Like Jesus

The energy of the apostle, like that of his master, went forth to rouse men to seek the kingdom of God over them, his righteousness in them; to dismiss the lust of possession and passing pleasure; to look upon the glory of the God and Father, and turn to him from all that he hates; to recognize the brotherhood of men, and the hideousness of what is unfair, unloving, and self-exalting. His design was not to teach any plan of salvation other than obedience to the Lord of Life. He knew nothing of the so-called Christian systems that change the glory of the perfect God into the likeness of the low intellects and dull consciences of men—a worse corruption than the representing of him in human shape. . . Jesus Christ is the only likeness of the living Father. Let us see then what Paul teaches us in this passage about the life which is the light of men. It is his form of bringing to bear upon men the truth announced by John.

Changed!

We need no Moses, no earthly mediator, to come between us and the light, and bring out for us a little of the glory. We go into the presence of the Son revealing the Father—into the presence of the Light of men. Our mediator is the Lord himself, the spirit of light, a mediator not sent by us to God to bring back his will, but come from God to bring us himself. We enter, like Moses, into the presence of the visible, radiant God.

Paul never thought of the mirror as reflecting, as throwing back the rays of light from its surface; he thought of it as receiving, taking into itself, the things presented to it—here, as filling its bosom with the glory it looks upon.

It seems, then, to me, that the true simple word to represent the Greek, and the most literal as well by which to translate it, is the verb mirror—when the sentence, so far, would run thus: 'But we all, with unveiled face, mirroring the glory of the Lord.'

Our mirroring of Christ, then, is one with the presence of his spirit in us. The idea, you see, is not the reflection, the radiating of the light of Christ on others, though that were a figure lawful enough; but the taking into, and having in us, him working to the changing of us.

Paul's idea is, that when we take into our understanding, our heart, our conscience, our being, the glory of God, namely Jesus Christ as he shows himself to our eyes, our hearts, our consciences, he works upon us, and will keep working, till we are changed to the very likeness we have thus mirrored in us; for with his likeness he comes himself, and dwells in us. He will work until the same likeness is wrought out and perfected in us, the image, namely, of the humanity of God, in which image we were made at first, but which could never be developed in us except by the indwelling of the perfect likeness. By the power of Christ thus received and at home in us, we are changed—the glory in him becoming glory in us, his glory changing us to glory.

One with God

The symbol deals with things far beyond the deepest region whence symbols can be drawn. The indwelling of Jesus in the soul of man, who shall declare! But let us note this, that the dwelling of Jesus in us is the power of the spirit of God upon us; for 'the Lord is that spirit,' and that Lord dwelling in us, we are changed 'even as from the Lord the spirit.' When we think Christ, Christ comes; when we receive his image into our spiritual mirror, he enters with it. Our thought is not cut off from his. Our open receiving thought is his door to come in.

In this there is nothing unnatural, nothing at conflict with our being. It is but that the deeper soul that willed and wills our souls, rises up, the infinite Life, into the Self we call I and me. . . This deeper creative soul, working on and with his creation upon higher levels, makes the I and me more and more his, and himself more and more ours; until at length the glory of our existence flashes upon us.

Then indeed we are; then indeed we have life; the life of Jesus has, through light, become life in us; the glory of God in the face of Jesus, mirrored in our hearts, has made us alive; we are one with God for ever and ever.