

As technology changes, something that once used to be pretty good, becomes almost worthless (video cassette / floppy disk)...

When I bought my first car, it was a 2nd hand WB Holden ute...

- *Bull bar*
- *CB & UHF*
- *Set of driving lights*

And the best ones I could fit in, were Hella 180's, and compared to the standard headlights, these things were amazing... Anybody who came for a drive with me at night time, was like "Wow!!!" ...

*But these days, those lights just wouldn't cut it... In fact, that ute **with** the driving lights on, I don't think would illuminate things any better than our current car does, with the driving lights turned off...*

- *The next car, I put on a set of Rallye 2000's, and they were so much better...*
- *My current car has Rallye 4000's with HID bulbs in them, and boy, do they light things up well...*
- *These days, most people are going for LED driving lights, but for lighting up the road a long way away, they still don't beat the XGD lights that are available today...*

And you know what??? "I used to be content with the Hella 180's" – I thought they were the bees Knees. With their quartz halogen bulbs and a quality reflector, they were the best option (for my car) at the time.... But these days, lights are just so much better...

And I reckon that's the best way for me to illustrate for you, the difference between the glory of the Old Covenant and the glory of the New Covenant... *Those lights **used** to be amazingly bright, but compared to what's available today, they just don't-cut-it anymore...* And with the Old Covenant – it was **glorious** and it was the **best thing**, to enable fellowship between humanity and God,,,,, But now it's become redundant... It's lost its glory. It **was** glorious,,,, but not anymore...

It's now been superseded (you see) by the **ultimate** experience of glory – salvation in Jesus Christ...

Today, the Bush Kids Sunday School have been sharing with us some of the lessons from the Old Testament, that they've been learning during the year... And it's really important for us to have a bit of a grasp of the Old Testament – It's not only the story of God relentlessly pursuing His people, and bringing them to Himself – it's also the early stages of God's plan, to save us through Christ...

Now, to the Jews, the receiving of the Law, was as good as it got... Alright, that's what set them apart, from all of the nations of the world.

The age-old, world-wide spiritual problem, has always been: How can a sinful human fellowship with a Holy God? And the Law, answered that dilemma, or at least it was the first step to answering it... *You know how, when you go to the doctor, the first stage of being cured, is to be diagnosed...*

Well the Law, diagnosed the problem... It revealed to us, God's standard... The Law defined, what God requires for us to be in relationship with Him.

- It was about how to **get** holy;
- how to **stay** holy; and
- how to **be** holy...

, so that we could come into the presence of our Holy God, and survive...

Even Moses, wanted to see God in person, but he couldn't... God said "If you see my face, you'd die... I'll let you catch a little glimpse of my backⁱ" ...

And when Moses came down from the Mountain, with those 2 tablets of stone (with the 10 Commandments written on them), it was glorious... The Law was glorious, and the evidence of the Glory of God, you could see it all over Moses' face... Because Moses had personally spent time with God, his face had absorbed the glory of God,, and it shone... And it was so amazing – it was so glorious, the Israelites couldn't bear to look at him... And so, Moses put a veil over his face....

Now, I always thought the veil was just so he wouldn't freak the Israelites out,, But Paul tells us here, another reason for the veil... It was so that they wouldn't see the glory fading... You see, Moses' face was sort of like a luminous watch ...

When I was a kid, for Christmas one year, I got some glow-putty... Silly putty was the latest craze at the time... It was like plasticine, but it bounced... You could mould it in your hand, whatever shape you wanted, but it would bounce...

*And Glow-Putty, was silly-putty that glowed in the dark...
And I remember, in my bedroom at night, I'd turn the light off,
and I'd put this ball of glow-putty over the lens of my torch,
and I'd shine the light on it for a minute, (using up my c-cell
batteries, in a way that would make my Dad cranky for
wasting batteries)....*

*And then for a couple of minutes, my brother and I would
bounce this glowing ball around in the dark, until the glow
had faded... And it only lasted a few minutes...*

And that's what it was like for Moses – he was reflecting the
glory of God... After he had gone in to visit God, his face
was bright, but then it would begin to fade... And Paul is
telling us, that Moses' face was covered, so the Israelites
wouldn't see the fading glory of God...

And Paul draws this out – it's largely symbolic. – it didn't
matter so much that Moses' face was fading in glory – what
was hidden, was that the **Law** would fade in glory, and in fact,
The Law would fade into redundancy.

The Old Covenant would fade, because the purpose of the Old
Covenant, was always, to make way for the New Covenant in
Jesus Christ... Until the coming of Jesus, Israel had to
live by the Old Covenant. But when Jesus came, and died and
rose again, He **fulfilled** the Old Covenant – He fulfilled the
requirements of the Law....

And in today's reading, Paul is highlighting, how the **New Covenant** is so much superior to the old....

The Old Covenant, was originally words chiselled into stone tablets, and then later on, written with ink, onto paper...

- It was God's written Law – it was a rule book
- Outlined God's Holy Standard
- What's right, and what's wrong;
- What is true and just; and
- It revealed the injustices that God hates

Why did we need a rule-book??? Well, up until the giving of the Law, all they had to go on, was their own conscience – and you know as well as I do, one man's conscience, is different to another...

Jeremiah 17:⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Most people in the world feel that they know in their hearts what's right and what's wrong, but the heart is deceitful. And if we lived in a society where every person just did what they thought was right, what would that be like??? It'd be awful, wouldn't it...

And so, God's Law, set the benchmark – it set the standard... But unfortunately, the Law condemns me... The Law reveals to me, that I haven't met God's standard... In all of my striving to live righteously, the life of Michael Brumpton, scores an epic "fail"... The Law, reveals how utterly sinful I am, and as Paul says in Romans, the wages of sin is death...

By the Law – by the rule-book, because of my wrong-doing – because of my evil behaviour, I deserve to die...

And Paul brings that out here, where he refers to the Law as “**the letter that kills**”... And he refers to it as “**the ministry of condemnation**” That’s what he’s meaning – The written Law reveals the dire human predicament... We all deserve to die...

But the New covenant, **isn’t** words written with ink. The New Covenant **isn’t** a rule book... The New Covenant, is that in Christ, God actually writes His law onto our hearts – Our hearts that were so deceitful and were so desperately sick,,,,, God transforms those hearts...

Paul calls this “the ministry of righteousness”. ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.

We know, that at the cross, a great exchange took place. Jesus died, to pay the penalty of death that we deserve – He took our sins upon Himself – (That’s what the cross was about)... Through Christ, we are made righteous before God... But it didn’t end there... To be **free** from sin, isn’t just to have the consequences of sin cancelled – to be free from sin, takes a transformation....

In Christ, when we give our hearts to Jesus, God doesn’t leave us the way that we are,,, He begins His glorious work of changing us – He begins His glorious work of transforming

our lives, and transforming our character... -
μεταμορφούμεθα (metamorphoumetha) It's like
metamorphosis from a grub into a butterfly. It is **that** sort of
transformation that God does in us... But only if we are
willing...

Many people claim that they've given their heart to Jesus, but
they've done no such thing... The evidence of a heart
submitted to Jesus, is the inner transformation that God is
doing, such that our character is changing, to become more
Christ-like...

Alright, so the written Law brings death, but in Christ, we
have life... And this life is made possible, because of the
transformation that God is doing in us, by His Holy Spirit...

And this was the whole point of the Law... It helps us to
realise, that we cannot meet God's standards – We need a
saviour... Help me!!! I need a Saviour!!!

And this is the message of the Gospel: “**Jesus is that
Saviour**”... But a hard heart, won't get it. And that's why
God's chosen people (Israel), largely rejected Jesus.... Right
throughout the Old Testament, it's pointing toward Christ,,,
but for many, as they read the Old Testament, it remains
veiled (remains hidden)...

Paul said: V ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to
this day, when they read the old covenant, that same
veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is
it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is

read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

Even people of the world, if they want to criticise the Christian faith, they go to the Old Testament and pull out a few rules and regulations, and they take them out of context.... The glory of the Gospel of Christ, is hidden from them – they don't get it – it's veiled...

The Old Covenant was always meant to be temporary, and its purpose was always to lead us to Christ... The Old Covenant was glorious (That glory was demonstrated with the shining face of Moses)... But compared to life in Christ, that little bit of glory is **nothing**... And Paul says: “If what was temporary, was glorious, how much **more** glorious is that which is permanent. If the written Law was glorious, how much more, the Spiritual Law, written on our hearts...”

And the contrast here, is simply amazing: V¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Not freedom to sin; Not freedom to amend the written Law... Spiritual freedom, is when God transforms us, so that keeping God's Law isn't a burden at all – it's what we **want** to do...

And the glory here, is the opposite to how it was in Moses... When Moses met with God, he would get charged up, and come out of that meeting with God, and he would be reflecting

the glory of God, but (like my glow-putty) it was forever fading...

Whereas “in Christ”, because the Holy Spirit is living inside of us, the glory of God isn’t fading – it’s growing; It’s building up; and growing; and becoming more and more glorious, inside of us...

V18 says: ¹⁸ 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.....

What does that mean? I look at you lot, and I don’t need my sun-glasses on... It doesn’t look at all like you’re luminescent... You see, God’s concern isn’t for us to be glistening, shiny white things (like reflective signs on the side of the road)... If that was God’s concern, He’d be very pleased with my feet when I go to the beach...

What does it mean for us to be transformed from one degree of glory to another – what’s it mean to be ever-increasing in glory???

Well, our glorious transformation in this life, isn’t about an increase in luminescence... A glorious transformation, is a transformed life and a transformed character... It’s to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God; and to ooze; and to radiate the righteousness of God...

To be transformed into the glory of God, is about the undoing of sin, and the freedom from sin... The Power of Sin was broken, by Jesus on the cross... When we repent of our sin and wrong-doing, and yield ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are forgiven... That is the **first** stage of being glorified...

But Paul says, “But we’re going from one degree of glory to another.

Too many people are content to merely reach the **first** stage... You know, an easy-believism gospel says that when you say the sinners prayer, she’s all good – job’s done... But Paul understood it far better than that... We are being transformed into the very image of Christ... And this is the work of the Holy Spirit...

Every day, as we walk as disciples of Jesus, keeping our eyes fixed on God and His glory, God is continuing to glorify us.... He transforms us – metamorphosis – a complete transformation...

My prayer, is that God would continue to increase His glory in your life, and in my life, such that when the world sees us, and the way that we live, that they would see the righteousness of Christ....

ⁱ Exodus 33:18–23 (ESV)

¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." ²¹ And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."