

### **Transforming Prayer: How everything changes when you seek God's face.**

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart” (2 Cor. 3:18-4:1).

Ultimate worship leads to obedience. Do you ever get tired of the devil kicking dirt in your face when you pray? The devil hates it when you pray. We have been called to be praying menaces to the devil. We are called to be on the front end of battle.

Sometimes we just don't feel like praying. Prayerlessness is independence from God. Our prayerlessness is not for lack of time. Hindrances to praying: prayer meetings are not exciting; we are too depressed to pray.

**God wants us to experience transforming prayer.** We can change our prayer life. Better yet, let our prayer life changes us. What is the purpose of prayer? The glory of God.

God is most glorified when we treasure Him most beautifully. Moses went to the tent of meeting and spoke to God face to face. At Sinai God's glory filled the mountain, and Moses' face shone. Because of the finished work of Christ, we can experience even more of God's glory than Moses did because God's glory is IN us. Everything changes from the inside out through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**Six truths** about the transforming power of prayer:

- 1. Transforming prayer is inclusive, both individually and communally.** "We all," Paul says, have full and free access. Together we receive the glory communally. We need both private and corporate prayer.
- 2. Transforming prayer is intimate, vertically and horizontally.** With unveiled faces we contemplate the Lord's glory. Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees he comes face to face with God. God has designed prayer so we get over ourselves and engage with others. Your definition of prayer will set your destination in prayer. Prayer is intimacy with God that leads to the fulfillment of His purposes. Seek God for who He is, not just for what He can give us. As the song says, "It's all about you, Jesus."
- 3. Transforming prayer is life-altering,** not just transactional or therapeutic. God is doing something in us that only He can do. The Lord is transforming us from the inside out. God is working according to the power that works in us.
- 4. Transforming prayer is Christ-glorifying,** making us like our Master, Jesus. God wants to make us like His Son (2 Cor 4:6-7).

Lord, make me more like Jesus in my marriage, in my reaction to stress, in emotional ups and downs, in generosity, in my heart to serve and my heart for the lost. Do it in me by Your power with ever increasing glory. Christ, be magnified in me.

**5. Transforming prayer is supernatural, empowered by the Spirit.** A powerboat brings glory to itself; a sailboat brings glory to an unseen force – the wind of heaven. When the Holy Spirit propels our lives, others see Jesus in us.

**6. Transforming prayer is sustaining,** leading to humble, grateful fortitude. "Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart." Ministry is the overflow of intimacy. Discouragement is a temporary loss of perspective.

When we are being transformed, God is magnified, I am sanctified, we are edified, the world is mystified, and the enemy is notified that we are living for the glory of Christ by the power of the Spirit.

# sermon study guide

## IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What answered prayer will you never forget?
2. Do you know someone who is a prayer warrior? What have you learned from them?

## UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Read 2 Corinthians 3:7-18. Compare how God's glory is experienced in the OT and NT. Why is the new covenant more glorious than the old? How are we experiencing God's glory when we pray?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 3:18-4:7, 16. In verse 3:18, what does Paul mean by 'We all'? How may this encourage us to pray both individually and collectively? Taking verses 3:18-4:7, what are the conditions for experiencing transforming prayer?

## OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. "When I pray it changes me." How have you been changed by prayer? Share thoughts on how one can develop their transformational prayer life and experience God's glory.
6. Verses 4:1 and 16 both say, "Therefore we do not give up." Break into groups of 2-3. Discuss times when you are tempted to give up in prayer. What does seeking God's face look like? Encourage and pray for each other.

### For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

*Prayer with God infers intimacy. Intimacy can be expressed as 'Into-me-see'. Where are you afraid of God seeing into you? Why? Meditate on 2 Cor. 3:18-4:1. Trust in His grace and open yourself up to Him for more effective transforming prayer.*

## THE WORD (NIV)

### 2 Corinthians 3:7-4:7, 16

<sup>7</sup> Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, <sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? <sup>9</sup> If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! <sup>10</sup> For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. <sup>11</sup> And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. <sup>13</sup> We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup> Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> 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.

**4** Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

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