

1. *Hebrews 6:1* **“let us go on unto perfection” / growing up** 2nd part

Hello everyone, Thanks again for this chance to share.... it means a great deal.

You'll always be family to me and I love you folks very much. I may have said it last time but in my mind's eye everyone will always be about 30 years old.

In fact when I came over last, seeing Darren, Don's son was such a surprise as that little 8 year old was now a full grown man and when he held his arm out sideways at 90 degrees, I could almost pass under without my head touching.

It's been a strange path as you guys know ..... but The Lord knows our hearts and I'm so grateful to Him for His love and faithfulness and for all your prayers and love over the years.

André, whose done a brilliant job in putting all this together, said he'll put the 3 parts on the web site,....., for anyone who's interested or maybe missed a part, or had brain freeze kind of thing, if I went on too long. And sometimes it's easier to take something in when you read it.

Anyway just a very quick recap. Last time if you remember, we looked at John 17 and saw that shortly before His arrest and crucifixion.... The Lord prayed for all those who would afterwards believe on Him..., and we saw there..., that 'oneness' in Him and in the Father was His prayer for us. This is what everything was for.

God's family is expanding..., remember., he is not ashamed to call us brethren . That's in Hebrews 2:10-12 *“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”*

John 17 once more....

*“...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*

*And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in(eis=into/unto).. one.... and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me”. ( John 17:21-23 NKJV )*

So with 'oneness' being the desired result.... scripture tells us that we are being built up together in love..., and that it's through the gifts and the ministries that The Holy Spirit is bringing this about, through the gospel.

And don't forget, nothing's wrong .., we're saved, having believed on The Lord Jesus as our Saviour and have been placed in Christ ... and it's **'in'** Him, that we're growing up....., into a perfect man.

*“being perfected”*, has that ring about it as though something's not right... but that's not the case at all.

In fact, quite the opposite....., everything's going to plan. The word 'perfect/or perfected', is *'telios'* and simply means finished and also means mature....and from scripture, regarding the church, it's used in this context, of coming to maturity.

So as members of the body of Christ, through the gifts and the ministries, we're growing up into Him in all things, into a perfect, or mature man.

And by the way, if anyone's new, not to worry if things seem to go in one ear and out the other..., everyone will agree I'm sure, that we all get what we need... and sometimes it may be just one thing seems to stand out.... to go with that.

2.

When I was preparing this and thinking of this I had a picture in mind that made me smile...I'm not saying this is The Lord... but of a toddler at meal times and how most of the food is smeared over the face.., the table...and the floor... and the dog there is wagging his tail in anticipation. But that's the thing, we get what we need and look, we all made it !

So in Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul explains how we're growing up in Christ...

*“ And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ..., Until we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”* That's the goal.

*“that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head...Christ.*

*From whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

It's very clear isn't it ?.... And we looked at...,"speaking the truth in love"... the truth, being The Word of truth..., the full gospel that Paul preached concerning The Lord Jesus and His finished work ....and how it's through the preaching and teaching....and in our praise and thanksgiving... through 'speaking' the truth..... in love, that we grow....., having believed it of course.

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There's just two things that I want to get across really, concerning this oneness that The Lord desires for us. Two things that will cause us to grow up in all things into Him.

**The first**..., we've already looked at..., about being established in the truth. You know the scripture in Romans 12:2...

*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what [is] that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

The finished work of Christ that we enter by faith. Spoken of in scripture as entering His rest (*Hebrews 4:3*) Not a case of, if we believe it, then it will happen..... It's done ! The Lord represented us all at the cross and through faith we own it. The Holy Spirit now within, enlightening the eyes of our hearts through the gospel, to see and appreciate all that's ours in Christ.

**The second**..., is of 'knowing' our Father through the gospel. That His name or nature, is so closely linked to His glory. So that beholding the glory of The Lord through the gospel is about seeing the love of God in Christ and all He's done for us.

That this is how we are built up in love and what I want to focus on this time.... because everything..., The Lord Jesus being sent to save us.. and all He's done for us..., The gift of The Holy Spirit, The gift of righteousness, our place in Christ....the outpouring of abundant grace..., everything has come from love.

*“For God so loved.....” John 3:16 .*

That the gospel is my 'go to place' in order to know my Father and to believe in the deep love that He has for us....and it's in seeing and acknowledging the love of God in Christ, we're being changed from glory to glory, into the same image.

3.

These two things.... nothing complicated or difficult .....and both centred on the gospel.

Our place in Christ through faith in the finished work of The Lord Jesus....and being rooted and grounded in the love of God which again is revealed in The Lord Jesus and His finished work .

So it was at this point and thinking on these things.... that I happened to look again at what Paul said in his letter to the church in Corinth....

*“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”. ( 2 Corinthians 3:18 )*

It was this part...., *‘beholding the glory of the Lord’ as in a mirror.....* .

Now the mirror he explains, is the gospel that he preached but it begs the question, “What do we ‘see’ when the good news of Jesus is preached?”..... and it struck me...., we see the love of God revealed in The Lord Jesus and all he’s done for us.

*“For God so loved....., that he gave His only begotten Son.....” ( John 3:16 )*

And again.... *“..... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.*

(One can see the The Lord’s heart for us )

*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. ( 2 Corinthians 5:19-21 )*

Now it was at this point, that lots of things opened up and it’s difficult to know where to go first.

For instance the word ‘transformed’ *metamorphoo* , in the verse that we looked at earlier...

*“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”. ( 2 Corinthians 3:18 )*

.... occurs only 4 times .

Two of those are when The Lord was transfigured on the mount. ( *Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2* )

The other two refer to us....,once, where Paul says...

*“ but be transformed(transfigured) by the renewing of our minds.... ( Romans 12:2 )*

the other, *“beholding as in a mirror the glory of The Lord are being transformed (transfigured) into the same image, from glory to glory, just as by The Spirit of The Lord ” (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

The translators for some reason chose to put transfigured for The Lord and transformed for us but don’t be cheated, it’s the same word ! In our inner man we can’t see it but it’s happening .

Just to look again, it’s *“by the renewing of your minds”...and...“Beholding as in a mirror the glory of The Lord”*

So.... *“beholding as in a mirror(the gospel) the glory of The Lord...”* , what does this mean ? What am I seeing in the gospel ? I’m seeing the incredible love of God in Christ.

Now I’m sure there is more to this besides .... but essentially God’s name, ( His very person and character ) and His glory, appear to be almost one and the same. Hopefully this will become clearer as we go on and begin to see a connection between ‘*the glory of The Lord*’ and ‘*His name*’(His nature), which of course is all about love.

*“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.*

*Now I ‘know’ in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. ( 1 Corinthians 13:11-13 )*

4.

If I was to say “*faith that works by love*”, perhaps like me, you’ll begin to see that it’s those two components that will see us grow as individuals and as a body. Seeing everything through the lens of God’s love for us. Realising that everything The Lord has done for us and has promised, is borne out of love. It’s not about my strengths or failings, it’s about His love and grace from start to finish.

You know..., the apostle John had a deep awareness of The Lord’s love for him didn’t he ? And he wrote in one of his letters about this, saying .....

“*And **we have known and believed the love that God has for us.** God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him*”. ( 1 John 4:16 NKJV )

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Suddenly...., a flood of thoughts..., The Lord Jesus for instance, saying to Philip.....

*"Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works". ( John 14:9-10 )*

And do you remember the last two verses of John 17, right there at the end of His prayer ? Key verses regarding our being built up together in love and that oneness that He intends for us....verses 25-26, *"O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but **I have known You;** and these have known that You sent Me. And **I have declared to them Your name,** and will declare it, **that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.**" ( John 17: 25-26 )*

We know that a name scripturally, equates to that person’s nature, their character,... what they’re really like.. ...and note that it says “*I have declared to them your ‘name’ , **THAT** .....*, this is the reason why they need to know who you are Father, what you’re really like....., “*in order that, the love wherewith you loved me be in them and I in them*”.

It was that verse in particular, that stood out. That knowing our Father’s character, His nature..., will have a profound impact on us, changing us into the same image in effect....and God our Father, is love.

**“I have declared to them Your name”.**

So while the love of God is the heart of the gospel..., at first, our idea of Him can be so blinkered....and consequently there are fears and worries that we have in our hearts.

But this is the thing..., the glory of The Lord, what He’s really like..., is so wonderful...far beyond anything we can imagine..... and He encourages us to keep in view, the so great love that initiated this so great salvation.

Albeit dimly at the moment...but to behold His love revealed in the gospel (*the mirror*) .

And as we do a great work takes place.

**“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”.** ( 2 Corinthians 3:18 )

All worries and fears swept away and replaced with the love of God. Peace and confidence instead of concern and uncertainty.

Even Peter if you remember, who had boasted of his love for the Lord, saying that if everyone forsook The Lord Jesus that he would stick with him...but had ended up denying Him with cursing and swearing.

You know the story, there on the seashore after Jesus’ resurrection, where The Lord, 3 times said to him .. “do you love(*agape*) me more than these Peter ? And his reply, “ you know I love( *phileo*) you Lord” (*love you like a brother*).

5.

Here he is, inwardly humbled and shocked, not by The Lord but by the fact that his love for the lord didn't measure up at all to what he expected of himself.... but like all of us, he needed to know that....and that it was the Lord's love for him that mattered and would never fail.

I feel it's such an important thing to grasp... "to know and to believe the love that God has for us"...,that no matter what, His love for us will never fail.

So with The Lord Jesus being described as, "the brightness of The Father's glory and the express image of His person, ( Hebrews 1:3 ).... everything He said and did was of The Father.

"I am come to do your will", he said. ( Hebrews 10:7)

So that healing the sick, raising the dead, loving and forgiving the sinner, doing good, eventually laying down his life for our sins on the cross, reveals the love of our Father.

And in another place, "...this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (peace offering as the lamb of God) for our sins. (1John 4:10 )

So in His prayer in John 17 when He said "I have declared to them your name", it wasn't just in word but by His very person as well.

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Right !..... leap back now to the Old Testament.... Remember how Moses' face shone ? (We're thinking about glory now and remember all these things are recorded for our benefit, as types and examples). Well it certainly didn't happen when he went before God and received the ten commandments on the first occasion...and he spent 40 days there in the presence of God.

You would have thought that this would have been the time when his face would have shone after being in God's presence... but no.

Let's see what happened there...Exodus 24:9-13 where even 70 elders, who were with Moses also saw God .

"Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. .... Exodus 24:9-13,

Exodus 24:16

Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.... So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain.

Then for forty days and nights The Lord gave Moses all the details for the construction of the tabernacle etc and then suddenly...

Exodus 32:7 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.

6.

Being sent down the mountain and finding the children of Israel worshipping a golden calf, in anger he broke the first stone tablets and removed the tabernacle outside the camp. Thereafter he would meet with The Lord there and speak with him.... but still his face didn't shine.

*Exodus 33:9,*

*And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and [the LORD] talked with Moses. (Still no shine)*

Note that each time The Lord speaks to Moses it's from the cloudy pillar.

On this occasion as he spoke with the Lord, Moses is having an honest heart to heart with the Lord in the wake of all those recent disastrous events. I don't believe he was whinging, just being honest.

*Exodus 33:12-19*

*Then Moses said to the LORD, 'See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.'*

*"Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way. 'that I may know You' and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."*

*v14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you and I will give you rest."*

*Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth."*

*v17 So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name. And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."*

*v19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and ' I will proclaim the name of the LORD ' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

Now this was what stood out.... Having asked to see God's glory, isn't it interesting then, that God's reply to this was "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the 'name' of the LORD before you".

Do you see the link, that's such a poor word but you know what I mean, between God's glory and His name, His character ? Moses had asked to see God's glory and it was God's goodness that passed before him and His name and attributes that was proclaimed.

And you're right ! It does sound familiar.... John 17: 26 !

( "And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." )

With Moses and the glory of the law, this of course is miniscule in comparison to the glory revealed in the gospel of God's grace in Christ.

Anyway...., having been called up Mt Sinai this second time, what actually took place? Because it would be after this that his face shone !

*Exodus 34:2-6*

*"So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain.... and no man shall come up with you..., and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain.*

*So he cut two tablets of stone like the first [ones]. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.*

7.

Now the LORD descended in the cloud ( so this is the same ) and stood with him there, and 'proclaimed' the name of the LORD. (this is new !)

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... .

I'd read this before but never seen the significance of this line, "and 'proclaimed' 'the name' of The Lord".

A name being a description of one's nature, who they are and what they're like.... and it was only after this declaration, this revelation of who God is... (and only in part on this occasion), that Moses' face shone. (Remember that Moses had asked "show me your way...that I may know you..v13 ..show me your glory".v18 And what did the Lord do ? He 'proclaimed' His name and then what His name means.

Of course, immediately Jesus' prayer for his church springs to mind that we looked at earlier, "And I have declared to them 'Your name', and will declare it, 'that' the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Do you see the parallel ? And the same principle at work here of " *transformation* " through having the name, the nature of God revealed to us ? How God's glory and His name are closely linked ? There's so much one could say about this.... but this issue of seeing the love of God in Christ and viewing everything through the lens of His great love for us, is so important for us I believe. The gospel being all about the love of God.

"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". ( 2 Corinthians 3:18 )

This just came to mind before sharing this online and I believe it's The Lord, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ( 1John 3:1-2. )

So in beholding the Glory, the great love of The Father in the gospel, I believe He wants us to know, in particular.... that His love for us is that of a Father to his child. That as the apple of His eye, so are we in His sight. Deeply loved.....

And perhaps this is a good place to stop. This passage from Ephesians is good to finish with, as it pretty much sums up everything we've looked at so far.....

" But God..., who is rich in mercy..., because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses...., made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...., and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus, THAT in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.  
For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God".  
( Ephesians 2:4-8 )

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