

060205
Jason Henderson
Akron Vineyard

Shadow and Substance pt. 2

I want to try to take another crack at the reality of passing from shadow to substance today. As I told the Friday night crew this week, I am very aware that we linger around certain subjects for a while. And that is simply because I want to give the Spirit of God as much of an opportunity as possible to make reality out of the things we are talking about.

We started talking last week about the contrast between shadow and substance. And how, in so many ways, the old man, the old creation, and the old covenant, were simply created shadows of spiritual reality. And that God's intention, in the creating of these things was that they would be for a testimony of that which was spiritual reality. They have no spiritual reality in them, but unfortunately we seek spirit and life in them.

Let me try to say this plainly. Your soul was created to find, abide in, and express Spiritual life in Christ. The world into which you were born has nothing of spiritual life, and was created to testify of spiritual life in Christ. Hence your need to be born again of spirit. But even after new birth, because of the unrenewed mind, you and I, continue to seek spiritual life where it is not, rather than finding it in Christ and manifesting it where it is not.

I said to somebody this week, its like two ticks without a dog. If you'll allow me to speak to you this way, the relationship that a human soul has with things and people of the natural world is similar to two ticks without a dog. I mean no offense by this. But, so long as these ticks are not sucking life from a dog, they are going to try to suck life from each other. And you'll find that you will be closer to the people, and more involved in the circumstances, that give you the better meal. But that is simply not true food.

So it is with us and Christ. We are like ticks that have been given a Great Dane...more than you could ever eat...and yet we seek the substance of food and drink in other ticks.

And the world of shadows is no place to find true food. Jesus knew that. When being tempted in the desert, he turns to the Devil and says "man does not live on bread alone." With the woman at the well, he says "drink from this tick and you will thirst again, but I know a meal that will remove your need to feed anywhere else". The disciples try to get him to eat one day and he says "I have food to eat that you know nothing about". He says to the crowd "do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life".

And then he begins to tell this crowd of ticks, that he is the great meal. He is the great meal of God. I am the bread. I am the water. I am the manna that came down from heaven. Eat my flesh, drink my blood.

I was touched on Friday reading from Isaiah 55

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. 3 Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you

Anyway, the natural world (all of it) and the old covenant relationship with God provide a shadow of this meal, but are never the substance itself. They describe it, but Christ is the spiritual substance.

Can you imagine being invited over to my house for thanksgiving, and I bring you into the dining room for dinner. You can smell the food, you can hear the plates sizzling with hot food. And you walk into the dining room only to see the shadow of a turkey and mashed potatoes projected onto the table. And I say "dig in!"

You look at me and say "I can't eat that!". And I say "why not?...look at it, it's a turkey!". And you say "well, I can tell it's a turkey, but that's not really a turkey, its just a shadow". And I say "man, we've been eating turkeys like this for generations, what's your problem?"

Well, God created shadows in an old creation, an old man, and an old covenant that testify to, speak of, point to, the actual turkey.

And, as we talked about last week when we looked at Galatians 4 and Col 2, was that Paul was often confronting believers because they had come to the glorious substance itself in Christ, and were turning back again to worthless shadows. And that doesn't just mean going back to living under the Mosaic law. That means every way that they and we fail to live in the reality of being in Christ and rather live in shadows.

The extent to which we live in and by the flesh, even though we are born in the spirit. That's living in a shadow. The extent to which we live under the Law, rather than live by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. That's living in a shadow. The extent to which we have our hearts fixed, and our treasure found, in an old creation – the creation of shadow. The extent to which we try to please God through works of the flesh and not the fruit of the spirit. Friends, that is going back to the shadows. We're not just talking about going back to ceremonial Judaism here.

We're talking about living according to another imagined relationship with God other than the one you have in Christ.

Perhaps you haven't faced this yet, but **only as the reality of being in Christ is unveiled to your heart do you really understand the nature of your relationship with God.** Until then, even as a Christian, there is a great deal of imagination involved in our relating to God.

What do I mean by "imagination". Well, just about anything we think we understand about Him from our carnal mind, like: "He thinks this way about that. He wants this from me. He likes it when I do that. Here's how he sees me. Here's what I think He's like. Here's what he wants from me" A whole lot of those sorts of things turned out to be constructs of my carnal imagination, rather than the reality of the New Covenant relationship with God in Christ. But I didn't know that until I saw Christ as

my relationship to the Father. And in seeing Christ more and more, I came to see more of what it means to relate to God in Christ.

So, what we need is for the Lord to take us out of the glory of the shadow (a shadow that we still live in to a great degree), and shine in our heart the glory of the substance. And that is what 2nd Corinthians chapters 3 and 4 are about. And we're going to look at that today.

But before we do, let's look at this word "glory" for a minute. Glory is not a shiny white light, or a sparkling golden robe, or whatever. Glory is just the seen expression or manifestation of God. Glory is seeing something of God. If you look at a sunset and say "I've seen some of the glory of God". That just means that, through something he created as a shadow of Himself, you have seen something of Him. Glory is the manifestation of God in some way that can be known.

So, if I were to take a strapping young man like Chad, we could all just look at him and say "behold the glory of Chad". Now, let's say that Chad didn't come to church today, but in his seat he left a bunch of art projects and inventions that he had created. We could still say, to some degree, "look...all of these creations are speaking of the glory of Chad. All that he is able to do, and create, and think...all expressed here in some way or another".

And let's just say that Angie fell in love with Chad, and all she ever really wanted to do was to get to know the glory of Chad. It's all she could think about. He's just so glorious. Well, let's say that for some reason, she couldn't actually see Chad, but a big light was behind him and was casting his shadow up onto a sheet. In the absence of His body, she would probably (because she REALLY loves Him and wants to be with Him) spend some time coming to know his shadow. Because there was something of him that could be seen there. There was some **glory** there – some manifestation of him. She could see how big and manly he is. Something of his chiseled physique. She could see his movements and actions. She could see something of the glory of Chad in his shadow.

But then let's say that those days came to an end, and then suddenly Chad walks out from behind the sheet there he was. Here was the actual substance of glory. Here was the actual body. Not the shadow. And you begin to spend time with the actual person of Chad.

It would be unthinkable, I suppose, for Angie...having come to know the person, having come to actually talk to him, hug him, hang out with him, It would be unthinkable for her to then go back to spending time with his shadow. Why would she do it? The substance has come! The glory of this latter Chad far exceeds the glory of the former.

Jason, what in the world are you talking about? Friends, I am talking about the reality of being in Christ. I am talking about the reality of what is true about you now in Christ. I am talking about the fact that you have come from the glory of shadows, a manifestation of glory in shadows, to the glory of God in the face of Christ. The actual body, the actual substance. And yet, AND YET, we, like those in Colossi, like those in Galatia, remain in the shadow. **And to the extent that we remain in the shadow of Chad, we miss the real relationship with Chad. To the extent that we remain in a shadowy understanding of Christ, we miss the reality of Christ.**

And when we read the words of the Bible, there is a veil that still lies over our hearts. We still see the sheet. A sheet that keeps us from leaving the shadows. It's a sheet of our own choosing. Or a sheet of our own ignorance. Certainly it is a veil of the flesh, of the carnal mind. But the veil isn't over the Son. The veil is over our blind hearts.

And we need to behold, to see the glory of God in the face of Christ in order to leave the glory of the shadows behind. Brothers and sisters this is exactly what Paul is describing in 2 Corinthians 3 and 4. I probably won't read the whole thing to you, I'll just outline it for you. But go home and read 2nd Corinthians 3:6 – 4:6, and you will find Paul laboring to describe this very thing to the church of Corinth.

First, in 3:6, Paul tells them that they have been brought into a new covenant, and are ministers of that new covenant. That is, they proclaim and manifest a new relationship with God in Christ, and they teach the understanding of that relationship. They are ministers of a relationship outside of the sheet. And that relationship that they have is not just a written description of life, which condemns all flesh, but the very impartation of Life itself.

ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit;^[a] for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

But then he begins to tell them that the ministry of death, the old covenant written on stones, had glory to it. It was a description of the glorious one. It was like a self-portrait of Chad...that when one looked at it, he knew that he could never measure up to that perfection, goodness, righteousness. See that's what the Old Covenant was. It was a description of Him written in letters. It was a written self-portrait of God. And, to look upon it, or to try to live up to it, was condemnation.

So Paul calls it a ministry of condemnation...and a ministry of death.

But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

I won't get much into the story of Moses and the veil. You can read about it in Exodus 34. But the basic idea is that, in the face of Moses (which is deliberately contrasted with the face of Jesus Christ in 4:6) there was seen some of the glory of the shadow. Moses, the one to whom the Old Covenant was given...his face would glow, demonstrating the reality that this old covenant, like the shadow of Chad, had a measure of glory to it. In so much as it portrayed the actual glorious Person who was coming.

But then in verses 8 through 11, Paul says "my goodness, if the shadow had glory...something of the manifestation of God...HOW MUCH MORE the actual person Himself!". In fact, he says that compared to the actual glory of the new, the old has no glory at all.

9 For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no

glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

In verses 12 and 13, Paul says that we are not proclaiming to you something that is veiled or hidden in shadows. We are not proclaiming to you a glory that you cannot see. Unlike Moses, who represents an entire veiled understanding of God. An entire veiled covenant of types and shadows and figures. We're not like that, Paul says. We have the actual hope that Moses pointed to. We have Christ in us, the hope of glory.

12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech

And then he says that those who learned the covenant of Moses in his day, and in Paul's day, and in our day...fail to understand that all of that was simply a finger pointing to Christ.

And he says that, to this very day, even after the coming of the substance, even after the appearing of Christ out from behind the wall...there is a veil over their eyes and they still can only see the shadow.

*13 unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away **in Christ**. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.*

Now, listen, we can't go into all that is said here. It is so rich. But you can at home. The Spirit of God will make you to know the substance versus the shadow. I don't just mean that the Spirit of God will describe to you a good understanding of what this is talking about. I mean the Spirit of God will take that very same veil off of your heart.

I mean that the Spirit of the living God will take that veil off of your heart by showing you the body that you are in. The body that you are. I mean that the veil will come down in the understanding that I am in Christ, and He is my life.

But what I'm suggesting to you is that, just as Paul said of His day, THE VEIL STILL EXISTS AT THE READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. In other words, we read the book, and so often are familiar with words, but there is the veil of our own understanding, our own relationship to God in Adam, that keeps us from seeing Him.

But, Paul goes on to say that "when a heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." Now your Bible may say "now when a person turns to the Lord..." But the literal translation there, I think, is important. It really says "but when it turns to the Lord", referring back up to the heart in vs. 15. When a heart turns. And we've talked about what that means.

Then Paul goes on to say that this spiritual reality that we've come into, this spiritual substance, this "covenant in the spirit" of verse 6, this "ministry of the spirit" vs. 8, this is the Lord. It is Christ. It is the reality of being in Christ. It is a person. Its not just a spiritual thing, its Jesus Christ Himself!

And, to the extent that you have passed from the glory of the shadow to the glory of the substance, to the extent that you have passed from the ministry of death to the ministry of life, to the extent that you have passed from natural shadows to spiritual reality, there is freedom. There is freedom from the old man. Freedom from the Law and the old covenant. Freedom from the bondage to the old creation. Freedom from the ministry of condemnation. Freedom from sin and death.

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty

Now, I know that we have used that verse to talk about dancing in Charismatic churches. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"...in other words, when the Spirit of God seems to be present, I can dance and sing and jump, and its great...and nobody can stop me! Well, that's fine, but that's not really what this is talking about. Go ahead and keep dancing, but just know that that's not really talking about freedom to dance. **This is a freedom from the veil. Freedom from Chad's sheet. This is a freedom from the shadow. This is a freedom from blindness. This is a freedom from the first, and the liberty of the second.**

And elsewhere (like Galatians 5:1), Paul will encourage his readers to stand fast in the liberty of the spirit, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage to the old covenant of shadows. And James will encourage his readers to live by the perfect law of liberty – the law of the spirit of life in Christ.

Ok, lets just finish this up here. What needs to happen in us to bring us out of the glory of the old, into the glory of the new? What needs to happen to take us from the glory shining in the face of Moses, to the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ? I'll read these two verses together because they speak of the same reality in slightly different ways.

3:18 and 4:6

3:18 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.

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Once again, I'm not just talking about living in the shadow of the Jewish ceremonial things. I am talking about the reality of being set free from the shadow of a false, an imagined relationship with God other than the reality that exists in Christ. I'm talking about escaping a false relationship. A relationship of shadows.