

Letters From Christ 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

This passage reminds us that our lives serve as a Letter from Christ, both to the Church and to the world around us. God desires that our lives be a compelling witness to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit so that people will be drawn to the salvation and sanctification that He alone provides.

Background

- Paul established the Corinthian Church in 52 AD.
- He stayed with them for a year and a half
- After his departure, the church began to stray doctrinally and in practice.
- Paul wrote several corrective letters to them , including 1 Corinthians.
- Paul visited them again briefly.
- Later, Titus brought the good news that the Church had repented and begun to follow Paul's teachings.
- Paul rejoiced at this news and wrote to them the letter we have as 2 Corinthians.
- 2 Corinthians affirms their faith and leads them even deeper into their relationship with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:1-3

"Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

Letters from Christ

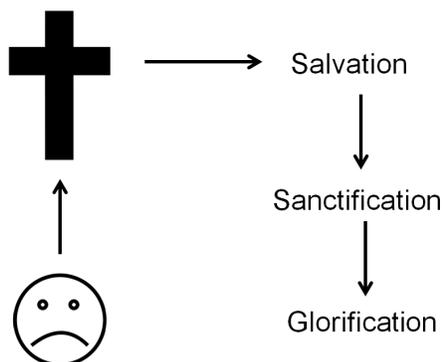
Our lives are a "Bible" to the World – 3:1-3

– The confirmation of the Gospel – 3:1

- The "peddlers of the Word of God" (false teachers, 2:17) intended to discredit Paul in the eyes of the Corinthian church
- Letters of Commendation were widely used in that culture
- Paul had lived with them and they knew him well
- Paul compliments them as being worthy providers of such letters

– The manifestation of the Gospel – 3:2

- Who are these "Letters from Christ"?



Salvation

“For by grace are you saved, through faith....not of works...” – *Ephesians 2:8-9*

- Provides:
 - Justification (freed from God’s required, just punishment)
 - Forgiveness
 - Reconciliation
 - Eternal Life
- Includes: Salvation, Sanctification, Glorification

Sanctification

Positional: Our standing with God by virtue of being in Christ (Eph. 2:4-9). From the moment of salvation, having been placed into Christ by the Spirit, believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing and are complete.

Positional truth reveals at least 50 *completed* things that every church age believer receives at the point of grace salvation - that he or she can never lose in time nor eternity (Rom.5:8-12, 21; 2 Cor.5:17-21).

Practical: Our walk with the Lord and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit

Eph 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we should walk in them.”

Philippians 1:6” . . . being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

“God’s method of commending the gospel to others is through the supernatural change that he writes on the lives of believers by His Holy Spirit.” —*Dr. Tom Constable*

“Professing Christians are the Bible that men read and know.”

—A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:220

Psalms 40:2-3 “He lifted me up out of the miry pit; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

“Behold how they love one another”

– The Source of the Gospel – 3:3

- First, they are a letter *from* Christ
- Second, Paul was involved in their growth
- Third, the Holy Spirit was writing the letter
- Fourth, the letter is written on human hearts

What’s Your Reaction?

- This is overload!
- My life is not a “Bible”
- I hope people are not watching me!
- I’m not ready for this!

Help is on the Way

2 Cor. 3:18 – And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Conclusion

- The world wants proof...and we have it!
- This is good news! God wants to work in you and through you to make the Gospel compelling to the whole world.
- And He is just getting started...we “ain’t seen nothin’ yet!”

You are writing a “gospel”
A chapter each day,
By the deeds that you do
By the words that you say
People read what you write
Whether faithless or true
Say, what *IS* the Gospel
According to you?