

Gospel Power

2Corinthians 3

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 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.

Back then as today people look to **authenticate** a person thru credentials, degrees, certificates, etc. Paper w/ names proves qualifications/calling-**sad**.

False apostles criticize Paul-denigrate his character & calling, saying he not true apostles, he has no letters of commendation. Belittle Paul's authority

While these guys forged or enemies issued bogus letters to get rid of Paul

Power of gospel to change lives seen in **testimonies** of Corinthian converts – Paul asks do we need to give official letters about ourselves? You are our letter not written w/ pen & ink but by the Holy Spirit in our hearts for all to see & read.

True believers prove the **authenticity** of the ministry & gospel's power by a changed life.

Transformed lives in Corinth testified of the **validity** of Paul's ministry. Law stamped in stone has no power to transform. Law condemns, Spirit gives life.

Some will brag about numbers & promote their ministry. Spirit patiently waits full harvest leaving results to Lord **% not #**.

Unbeliever may never read the bible but God has you around them & they are reading your life, looking at you seeing what a Christian really is, what the bible is all about, written in your life, testifying of the gospels power.

4 And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

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Roman Greek culture saw humility as weakness-but strength in God's hands Paul's adequacy for ministry-he was a scholar, brilliant mind, bold, persuasive but inadequate to do ministry w/o Christ's power & anointing and he knew it.

The subject of pride came up among two women and they began to wonder if Hudson Taylor was ever tempted to be prideful because of his many accomplishments. One of the women knew Taylor's wife, Maria, & asked about it. Maria promised the woman that she would find out. When Mrs. Taylor asked her husband if he was ever tempted to be proud, he was surprised. "Proud about what?" he asked. "About all of the things you have done," his wife explained. Taylor responded, "I never knew I had done anything."

New Covenant-grace & truth by Spirit. Letter of law-kills & condemns.

7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, 8 how shall the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

What gospel power looks like--contrasting Old & New covenants. Law of Moses—letter kills-reveals and condemns sin. Spirit--Christ revealed who gives life & forgives.

Collie-owner calls, it looks, cowers, tail between legs, head down, ears droop, eyes sad & slinks sheepishly to master. Collie that cowers @ masters voice. Labrador-owner calls-inquisitively looks up, head side to side, looks again, rear end moves side to side in excitement, wrinkles brow, tail wags, silly dog grin, ears perk, front feet & head go to ground, rear end and tail in air, leaps and bounds toward master. Lab leaping for joy @ masters voice.

Which approach to God typifies you? Cowering Collie or Leaping Lab? It is the difference between the new covenant of grace and old covenant of Law.

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Moses veiled his face. Why? Coming down mount aware that his face was shining, but also fading--not wanting people to see it passing/ending.

Contrast: Christ needs no veil, His glory is forever--never fades or passes away.

We demonstrate the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ by our lives, which is the outcome of Christian ministry.

*9 For if the ministry of **condemnation** has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. 10 For indeed what had glory, in this case has **no glory** on account of the glory that **surpasses** it. 11 For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. 12 Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, 13 and are not as **Moses**, who used to put a **veil** over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was **fading** away.*

Ministry of condemnation Judaizers/Legalist always guilty-w/o power-no joy

Ex 34:29-35 Giving Law was w/ glory-spoke of attributes of God yet minister condemnation & death because no one could keep it-live up to standards.

How much more glory ministry of life/Christ. Law reveals sin—mirror--x-ray.

Surpasses-flashlight in tunnel--when out in bright sun it fades not needed

Legalist wanted mix Law & grace go back to old & keep new--but it faded, passed away no light when living in full strength of sun & Son. Law lost glory to greater glory.

Hidden and hardened--blinded by zeal & same today. Legalist bound.

Mirror=word; no veil=no cover up of sins, faults, no faking it, no masks

Transform-*metamorphosis* – Lord mt transfiguration Mt 17 face shone like sun & garments white as light. Change on outside that came from inside.

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Being in Christ we are dead to Law *Rom 7:4 Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God.*

We live our life in a new covenant & are dead to the old life

Sardinia, Italy, Mario Mamelli went to the city hall for a new identity card. He was told that he had been officially dead for 19 years and that by remaining alive he was breaking the law'

*14 But their minds were **hardened**; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same **veil** remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. 15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a **veil** lies over their heart; 16but whenever a man turns to the Lord, the **veil** is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 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 from the Lord, the Spirit.*

We unveiled beholding – *reflecting*? Reflecting is result of beholding. We are transformed as we behold Christ—it is the means of being transformed in order to reflect glory. Law does not reflect glory on the face of a Christian

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