
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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MAY 31, 2026

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
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1. SERMON RECAP

Pastor Gary reminded us that God is still in the “letter-writing” business. From 2 Corinthians 3, he showed that believers are not only people who *read* Scripture we *are* Scripture-like letters, “known and read by all men.” Our lives are meant to be clearly legible testimonies to Christ’s transforming work. Instead of chasing human commendation, applause, or impressive résumés, we are called to let God write on the tablets of our hearts by His Spirit, so that anyone who “reads” us encounters the affection, truth, holiness, and grace of Jesus.

The pastoral heart of the message pressed us to ask: *Am I readable? Am I knowable?* Or am I masked, defensive, and hidden? Pastor Gary urged men to become letter-writers and spiritual leaders, and all believers to come “out of the spiritual closet,” unashamed of the gospel and willing to be vulnerably honest about both strengths and sins. He connected this to true revival: not just an exciting spiritual atmosphere, but a deep, often messy, work of conviction, holiness, and freedom from bondage. As we come to the Lord’s Table and walk through daily life, the Lord invites us to let Him clean the smudges on our “letters,” so that our lives communicate a clear, compelling message of Christ to a confused world.

2. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

- **You are a living letter.**
God is actively “writing” on your heart by His Spirit. Your life is meant to be a readable, understandable letter from Christ, known and read by all people (2 Corinthians 3:2–3).
 - **Identity over image.**
We do not need to commend ourselves or live for human affirmation. Our true credibility comes from the fruit of Christ’s work in us, not from self-promotion or man-made letters of recommendation.
 - **Readable and knowable.**
A Christ-shaped life is legible: understandable, consistent, and honest. Our spouses, families, and communities should be able to “read” what we’re about: love, integrity, humility, and a growing Christlikeness.
 - **God’s affection and tenderness.**
Jesus is affectionate, gentle, and personal. The letter He writes on our hearts carries His tenderness. In His epistles, we are called to live with that same affection, patience, and mercy toward others.
 - **Revival and holiness.**
True revival is not just an emotional experience; it is the Spirit’s consuming work that convicts of sin, rescues people from bondage, and reforms daily life. We must be careful what we pray for and be willing to let God actually change us.
 - **Coming out of hiding.**
Many believers remain spiritual “mysteries” to those around them. Christ calls us to step into the light, openly owning Him as Lord and openly acknowledging our need for His grace.
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Key Scripture (full texts)

2 Corinthians 3:1–3, NKJV

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?
You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men.
Clearly, you are an epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh that is of the heart

Psalms 119:18, NIV

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law

Proverbs 3:3–4, NIV

Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.
Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.

Psalms 119:11, NIV

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you

Psalms 119:105, NIV

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path

Romans 8:1, NIV

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Philippians 1:8, NIV

God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus

Philippians 2:8, NIV

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross

Other Relevant Verses

- **Ezekiel 36:26–27, ESV** – Explains God’s promise to replace hearts of stone with hearts of flesh and put His Spirit within us; this deepens Paul’s contrast between stone tablets and hearts written on by the Spirit.
 - **Matthew 5:14–16, ESV** – Jesus calls us the light of the world; thematically tied to being publicly “readable” lives that display God’s work.
 - **Ephesians 2:1–5, ESV** – Describes being dead in trespasses and made alive with Christ; linked to Pastor’s reflection on true revival among those dead in sin.
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3. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL (DAYS 1-5)

Day 1 – “Known and Read by All”

Reflection Question

If someone who doesn't know Christ spent a week closely “reading” your life, what clear message would they receive about God?

Reading

- 2 Corinthians 3:1–3

Devotional Content

Paul writes to the Corinthian church, a messy, gifted, immature community surrounded by paganism. Traveling teachers in the first century often carried formal “letters of commendation” to prove their legitimacy. False teachers were manufacturing such letters for credibility and profit. Paul pushes back: he does not need paper credentials. His “letter” is the transformed lives of the Corinthian believers themselves.

In the Greco-Roman world, literacy rates were relatively low, and writing materials were costly. A letter was precious, often read aloud to a gathered group, treasured, and carefully preserved. Paul takes this familiar image and lifts it: *you* are Christ's letters. Not ink on papyrus, but the Spirit's handwriting on human hearts. Not hidden in a scroll case, but “known and read by all men,” out in the open marketplace of daily life.

The contrast with “tablets of stone” evokes the Ten Commandments given at Sinai: God's law outside the people, engraved on rock. Now, through the new covenant, God internalizes His will. He writes not *to us* only, but *in us*. The Corinthians, with all their issues, are living proof that the gospel penetrates deep places, changing affections, loyalties, and habits over time.

Application & Closing

Start by accepting this identity: you are already an “epistle of Christ” if you belong to Him. The question is not *whether* people are reading you, but *what they are*

reading. Do they see only busyness, anxiety, self-protection? Or do they catch glimpses of patience, repentance, and hope that make them curious about your Author?

Today:

- Identify one relationship where you've been "unreadable" (closed off, guarded, or inconsistent).
- Ask the Lord to make you safely *knowable* there: willing to admit weakness, share how Christ is working, and live consistently with what you profess.

Day 2 - "Open My Eyes to Wonderful Things"

Reflection Question

When you open your Bible, do you expect to encounter obligation, information, or *wonder*? How might your expectations be shaping your experience?

Reading

- Psalm 119:18
- Psalm 119:11
- Psalm 119:105

Devotional Content

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible, an acrostic poem where each stanza begins with a successive Hebrew letter. It is a love song about God's law. His instruction, testimonies, precepts, and promises. The psalmist is not trudging through a checklist; he is captivated. "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law." He assumes there are wonders in Scripture, but that his eyes are naturally dull and need divine help to see.

In ancient Israel, Torah was life-forming. It shaped community rhythms, ethics, and worship. Parents were to talk about God's words at home, on the road, morning and night. Most people did not own scrolls; they heard Scripture publicly read and memorized it. To say, "I have hidden your word in my heart" was to say: I have internalized Your voice so deeply that it governs my reactions, desires, and choices.

“A lamp for my feet” suggests a small oil lamp in a dark landscape, giving enough light for the next few steps, not the whole journey at once.

Modern Christians can treat Bible reading as either an academic exercise or a guilty duty. The psalmist presents another way: a heart crying for God to uncover beauty, relevance, and conviction in the text. He expects Scripture to address present struggles, to restrain sin, to guide daily paths.

Application & Closing

Your capacity to live as a clear, Christlike “letter” depends on the content hidden in your heart. If you rarely engage Scripture with expectation, your “letter” will be thin and vague.

Today:

- Before you read, echo Psalm 119:18 in your own words. Ask God specifically to surprise you.
- Choose one short verse from today’s reading and repeat it several times throughout the day.
- Notice any moments when that verse becomes a “lamp” for a decision, a temptation, or a discouragement.

Specific challenge: Set aside 10 uninterrupted minutes today to read Psalm 119:9–16. Ask God to change your *attitude* toward His Word, not just your reading habits, and write down one “wonderful thing” you noticed.

Day 3 – “Written on Tablets of the Heart”

Reflection Question

What “stone tablets” are you still trying to live by? Is this contrary to letting God write His life on your heart?

Reading

- 2 Corinthians 3:3
- Proverbs 3:3–4
- Ezekiel 36:26–27

Devotional Content

Paul's language about "tablets of stone" and "tablets of flesh" reaches back to Israel's history. At Sinai, God wrote His commandments on stone and gave them to Moses. They were holy and good, but the people's hearts were unchanged, prone to idolatry. Centuries later, through Ezekiel, God promised a deeper work: "I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh... I will put my Spirit within you." This was the promise of the new covenant.

Proverbs 3 picks up the same metaphor: "write them on the tablet of your heart." Love and faithfulness are not meant to be occasional acts but an inscribed character. In the ancient world, engraving on stone implied permanence and seriousness. God now seeks that same permanence in our inner life, not through our gritted-teeth discipline alone, but by His Spirit reshaping our desires.

Many Christians drift back into "stone" spirituality. Living by external pressure for fear of disappointing people or maintaining a religious image. That kind of life may look impressive from a distance, but it is brittle. When pressure comes, the façade cracks. Spirit-written hearts, however, may still struggle, but there is soft responsiveness to God, a willingness to be corrected, comforted, and redirected.

Application & Closing

Ask the Spirit where your heart has hardened, where obedience feels like duty with no affection, or where you're maintaining a Christian image without genuine surrender.

Today:

- Confess one area where you're more concerned with looking godly than actually letting God change you.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to "put His hand over yours," as Pastor Gary pictured it, guiding your next steps and decisions.
- Concretely practice "love and faithfulness" in one small way: keep a promise, speak truth gently, or serve someone thanklessly.

Specific challenge: Do one unseen act of faithfulness today that only God will notice. Let it be a quiet "yes" of a soft heart to Him, not a performance for others.

Day 4 – “Living Letters in a Broken Culture”

Reflection Question

When you think about our culture’s brokenness, are you more prone to combativeness, withdrawal, or compassionate engagement as a “living letter” of Christ?

Reading

- Philippians 1:8
- Philippians 2:8
- Ephesians 2:1–5

Devotional Content

Paul tells the Philippians, “I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.” This affection is not sentimental; it flows from the One who “humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.” In the Roman world, crucifixion was shameful and reserved for the worst criminals. Yet Jesus willingly took that path to rescue people who, as Ephesians 2 puts it, were “dead in trespasses and sins... by nature children of wrath.”

Pastor Gary reminded us that those trapped in our culture’s darkest expressions are “just like us but for the grace of God.” The spiritual battle is real, but our primary enemy is not flesh and blood. Early Christians lived under imperial pressure and pervasive immorality, yet their church grew through sacrificial love, patient witness, and a willingness to suffer rather than retaliate.

Being an “epistle of Christ” today means our tone and posture must reflect our Author. If we defend truth with a spirit that contradicts Christ’s affection and humility, our “letter” sends a mixed message. Revival history shows that when God moves deeply, He convicts both open sinners *and* religious people who have lost tenderness toward the lost.

Application & Closing

Examine how you “read” those far from God. Do you primarily experience annoyance, or grief and longing like Christ’s?

Today:

- Ask God to give you His affection for one group of people you currently view as “the problem.”
- Limit your exposure to voices that stir contempt and increase exposure to Scripture and stories that fuel compassion.
- Consider a practical way to move toward broken people: prayer-walking, serving a ministry, or initiating a gentle conversation.

Specific challenge: Choose one person or group you typically criticize in your heart. For the next week, every time you think of them, turn that thought into a specific request for their rescue and revival instead of a complaint.

Day 5 – “Cleaning the Smudges”

Reflection Question

If your life is a letter from Christ, where are the “smudges” that blur His message, and are you willing to let Him deal with them?

Reading

- Romans 8:1
- 1 John 1:8–9
- Psalm 51:7,10

Devotional Content

Coming to the Lord’s Table forces us to confront sin. As Pastor Gary noted, you almost have to *work* to avoid acknowledging it there. Yet the gospel’s paradox is that confession is not a place of condemnation but of cleansing. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” John adds that denying sin is self-deception, but confessing it brings God’s faithful forgiveness and cleansing.

David, after grievous sin, prayed, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Create in me a clean heart, O God.” In the ancient Near East, washing white garments was

laborious; whitening a stained cloth was nearly impossible without destroying it. David asks for what only God can do: not a patch job, but heart renovation. Pastor Gary used the image of “smudges” on our letters, places where compromise, secret sin, bitterness, or pride have made Christ’s handwriting difficult to read.

The early church practiced frequent self-examination, not to wallow in shame but to keep short accounts with God and one another. Revival seasons were marked by people bringing idols to be burned. That is what “cleaning the letter” looks like in practice.

Application & Closing

Face this honestly: there are parts of your life that do not match the letter Christ wants to write. Avoiding them keeps the letter blurred. Bringing them into the light allows the Author to restore clarity.

Today:

- Ask the Spirit to show you one specific “smudge” an ongoing sin, a resentment, a double life, or a place you’re consistently hiding.
- Confess it plainly to God, holding tightly to Romans 8:1.
- Where appropriate, confess to a trusted believer or seek help if it involves a pattern (addiction, relational sin, dishonesty).

Specific challenge: Take one concrete step of repentance today: delete a secret app, make a restitution call, cancel a compromised relationship, or schedule a counseling/accountability appointment. Let the Lord begin to rewrite that line of your “letter.”

4. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Opening

Welcome everyone and briefly remind them: this week we're exploring what it means to be "living letters" of Christ, known and read by all people.

Call to prayer (prompt, not a script):

- Invite one member to thank God that He still speaks and writes on hearts today.
- Ask another to pray that the Spirit would make your group a safe place for honesty.
- Encourage short, simple prayers for open hearts and clear listening.

Thematic Recap

Pastor Gary taught that believers are "epistles of Christ," not written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, on the tablets of our hearts. We do not live for human commendation or religious performance. Instead, God intends our lives to be readable letters that communicate His love, holiness, and reality to a watching world, especially as He cleans the "smudges" and uses us in true revival.

Core highlights:

- We are all "known and read by all men"; the question is what people read when they watch our lives.
- God writes on hearts, not stone. He wants inner transformation, not just external compliance.
- True revival is not just spiritual excitement but deep repentance, freedom from bondage, and changed behavior.
- We must step out of hiding, owning Christ openly and letting others see both our need and His work.

Icebreaker (5–15 minutes)

Question:

If your life right now were the *title* of a letter from Christ to your family or community, what might that title be? (Examples: “Learning to Trust,” “Restless but Pursued,” “Slowly Becoming Brave”). Why?

Scripture Exploration

Passage 1 – 2 Corinthians 3:1–3

Read together out loud.

Discussion Prompts:

1. In your own words, what does it mean to be “an epistle of Christ”?
 2. Why do you think Paul contrasts human “letters of commendation” with the Corinthians themselves?
 3. What are some modern forms of “commendation” we chase (social media, titles, resumes)? How can these become spiritual distractions?
 4. “Known and read by all men” may feel uncomfortable. In what ways does that reality challenge the way you live at home, work, or online?
 5. Where do you sense the Spirit actively “writing” something new in your heart in this season?
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Passage 2 – Psalm 119:18,11,

Read these three verses together.

Discussion Prompts:

1. What stands out to you from the psalmist's attitude toward God's Word?
2. How does "open my eyes" challenge the way you currently approach Bible reading?
3. Share a time when a verse you had stored in your heart helped you resist sin or guided a decision.
4. In what ways does God's Word function as a "lamp" to your feet in your daily routines?
5. How might a deeper love for Scripture make your "letter" more readable to others?

Passage 3 – Ezekiel 36:26–27 & Proverbs 3:3–4

Read both passages.

Discussion Prompts:

1. What is the difference between a "heart of stone" and a "heart of flesh" in practical terms?
2. How have you experienced God softening a hard area of your heart?
3. Proverbs 3 links love and faithfulness with "favor and a good name." How does living this way affect your witness as a living letter?
4. What specific habits or choices either harden or soften your heart over time?
5. How can your group support one another in allowing God to keep your hearts soft and responsive?

Grand Synthesis Prompt (connecting all passages)

Looking at all these texts together, how would you describe God's "letter-writing process" in a believer's life? From His Word to your heart, to your public witness? What is one concrete way you sense Him inviting you to cooperate with that process this week?

Application: Steps Toward Clearer “Letters”

As a group, brainstorm practical steps to live as clearer epistles of Christ. Consider both personal and communal actions, such as:

- **Personal:**
 - Setting a simple, sustainable rhythm of Scripture intake (e.g., one Psalm and one Gospel paragraph daily).
 - Choosing one area of secrecy to bring into the light with a trusted friend or mentor.
 - Intentionally mentioning your faith journey in a natural way in one conversation this week.

- **Communal:**
 - Planning a group service opportunity that expresses Christ’s love to those “far from church.”
 - Pairing up as accountability partners for a season, focused on Scripture memory and honest check-ins.
 - Committing as a group to pray regularly for revival defined as deep repentance and transformed lives, not just “good feelings.”

Invite each member to identify **one** personal step and **one** group step they are willing to commit to and share briefly.

Closing

Prayer Needs Space

- Invite group members to share specific prayer requests related to:
 - Areas where their “letter” feels smudged or unclear.
 - Unsaved friends/family who are “reading” their lives.
 - Desire for a soft, Spirit-written heart.

Closing Prayer

Leader Notes

- **Create safety.**
Model vulnerability first. Briefly share an area where your own “letter” has been smudged and how God is working. This sets a tone of grace and honesty.
- **Guard against shame.**
Keep Romans 8:1 in view. When people share struggles, respond with gratitude and hope, not shock. Remind the group that conviction is a sign of God’s active love.
- **Balance voices.**
Gently draw out quieter members with open questions. If some dominate, kindly summarize their points and redirect: “Thank you, that’s helpful. I’d love to hear from someone who hasn’t shared yet.”
- **Stay Scripture-centered.**
When discussions drift into opinion or cultural ranting, guide the group back: “What do these verses call us to in this situation?”
- **Respect limits.**
Deep confessions can arise. Affirm them, but if something sounds like it needs more than group time (e.g., abuse, serious addiction), privately encourage professional or pastoral follow-up. Do not force details.
- **End with hope.**
Always close on God’s faithfulness: He is the Author and Finisher. The goal is not to produce perfect letters overnight, but to keep yielding the pages of our hearts to His pen.