

L6: 2 Corinthians 3:1-11: Able Ministers of the New Testament

Sermon Intro: Review/Summarize

- Sufferings of Christ - Consolation by Christ
- Corinthians partial acknowledgment of Paul
- Particular sufferings and God's comfort in them
 - Paul's godly defense
 - God's charity through Paul

Sermon Preview:

- Continuation of Paul's defense, why they ought to fully acknowledge him, thus receive the necessary consolation by Christ
- Paul's sufficiency of God by virtue of being made an able minister of the new testament
- 2 Corinthians 3:1-6
 - God's commendation of Paul
- 2 Corinthians 3:7-11
 - The glory and ministrations of the new testament compared to that of the old testament to highlight the sufficiency of God they possess and that not of themselves.

Sermon:

(2 Corinthians 3:1) Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

- **"Do we begin again to commend ourselves?"**
 - Paul had just mentioned that they are not of many which corrupt the word of God, but speak in Christ.
 - He says that they "as of God, in the sight of God speak" - he stated the question, "And who is sufficient for these things"
 - One he mentions himself, but themselves in light of what they are "of God" - this is what Paul is going to bring up here; that is, the basis upon which they have authority and should acknowledge him.
- **"begin again"**

- Romans 1 - a separated apostle
- Romans 11 - the apostle of the Gentiles
- 1 Corinthians 3-4 - ministers, their father in the faith
- **"to commend ourselves"**
 - To represent as worthy of notice
- **"or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you"**
 - Does Paul need to get letters of representation that they are worthy teachers from others, indicating the word of others holds more weight to them
- **"or letters of commendation from you?"**
 - They need the approval of the Corinthians

(2 Corinthians 3:2) Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:

- **"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts"**
 - The Corinthians are their approval by what God has done by Paul in them
 - They are their own evidence worthy of notice by what God has minister to them through Paul
- **"known and read of all men:"**
 - Others know of Paul's heart for the Corinthians
 - What God is doing by Paul to the Corinthians is for all men and part of our edification

(2 Corinthians 3:3) Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

- **"forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us"**
 - There is a work that Christ is doing by Paul upon the Corinthians heart that is worthy of notice and the foundation proof for them to acknowledge Paul
 - Epistle - a writing to send
- **"written not with ink"**
 - There is something greater taking place then the writing from the ink, there is a spiritual edification going on.

- The composition of the mind of Christ unraveled to be transcribed on our heart.
- **"but with the Spirit of the living God"**
 - The Spirit take the spirit composed of words in ink
 - The ink is a necessary element to the process, but it is the spirit they contain that is written on our hearts.
 - **"living God"** - His life to live in you
 - Contrast to Romans 8 and the carnal mind is death
- **"not in tables of stone"**
 - The word of God in stone (difference between stone and an epistle)
 - The words placed in tables of stone indicated the incapacity to give life
 - The word of God in an epistle indicates the Spirit of the living God to write them on your heart
- **"but in fleshy tables of the heart."**
 - The words are being written in man's heart, not tables of stone
 - **"tables of the heart"**
 - Directed toward God (Rom. 8)
 - Directed toward man (Rom. 13)

(2 Corinthians 3:4) And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:

- **"And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:"**
 - How do you know this is actually happening?
 - Paul has trust through Christ to God-ward, but on the basis of what

(2 Corinthians 3:5) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

- **"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves"**
 - Paul's trust isn't in himself, but through Christ
- **"but our sufficiency is of God"**
 - Paul's qualification, commendation, and competency doesn't come from him, but "of God".

(2 Corinthians 3:6) Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

- **"Who also hath made us"**
 - God has made Paul and those with him
 - **"able"** - fit, competency, sufficient knowledge or skill, qualification
 - **"ministers of the new testament"**
 - Compare to 1 Corinthians 4:1
 - Ministers of Christ
 - Stewards of the mysteries of God
 - Jer. 31:27, 31-34
 - Ez. 36:25-29 (:26-27) - (Ez. 11:19)
 - Life instead of stone, inanimate to animate
 - **"not of the letter"** - no letter of the new testament
 - Rom. 2:27, 29, 7:6
 - Always refers to the old testament
 - Self-sufficiency to meet the standards and requirements of God
 - **"but of the spirit"** - the new testament is the spirit
 - John 6 - Christ's words are spirit
 - Rom. 7 - serve in newness of spirit
 - Rom. 8 - things of the Spirit
 - 1 Cor. 2 - spirit of God
 - 2 Cor. 4 - spirit of faith
- Rom. 6, 7, 15
- Galatians 4
- Mother above that regenerated you

The Ministrations and Glory of the New Testament

(2 Corinthians 3:7) But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:

Description of the competency, fitness, ability of the old to the new and if the new is greater than it is the source upon which Paul speaks of God and that God has made Paul able.

- **"But if the ministration of death"**

- "written and engraven in stones"
- "was glorious"
 - "so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance"
 - "which glory was to be done away:"

(2 Corinthians 3:8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?

- "How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"
 - "How" - in what manner, to what degree or extent, for what reason
 - "rather" - push or move forward; with better liking, which preference or choice; noting some degree of contrariety in face
 - "glorious" - power is a greater power and part of its' greatness or glory is in its' capacity to change
 - *Note - distinguish the two-fold ministrations of each testament and their differences*

(2 Corinthians 3:9) For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.

- "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory"
- "much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."
 - Pattern of old and new testaments
 - Death and spirit, upon
 - Condemnation and righteousness
 - "exceed" - to pass or go beyond, to proceed beyond any given or supposed limit, measure or quantity; to surpass, to excel
 - Quality and quantity

(2 Corinthians 3:10) For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

- "no glory" - had glory that shone in the face of Moses countenance, but no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth

(2 Corinthians 3:11) For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.

- "remaineth" - to continue, to rest or abide in a place for a time indefinite; to be lefts

after others have withdrawn; to be left after a part or others have past; to continue unchanged

- The Old Testament
 - Moses
 - Letter
 - Kills
 - Written in stone
 - Death
 - Condemnation
 - Done away
 - No glory

- The New Testament
 - Christ
 - Spirit
 - Life
 - Written on hearts
 - Spirit
 - Righteousness
 - Rather glorious
 - Exceed in glory
 - Glory that remains

Sermon Conclusion: Review/Summarize