

2 Corinthians 2 Pt 2

Jesus

Satanic Inroads of Unforgiveness/Accusations led to Misunderstanding/Division
Paul defends his Apostleship/Love for God/Love for God's people

II. Triumph in Christ

12 [Paul continues...] Furthermore, when I came to Troas to **preach Christ's gospel**, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 I had **no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus** my brother; but taking my leave of them, **I departed for Macedonia.**

Chronology of Paul's Journey

- From Ephesus Paul sent a heavy letter to Corinth
- Paul then sent Titus to Corinth to check on them
- Later, Paul left for Troas/Troy [200 mi] to meet Titus/Found an open door...but not Titus

Paul then left for Macedonia/Philippi [140 mi]
Finally met up w/Titus there/There wrote 2 Corinthians

2 Corinthians 7:5 ... when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, **comforted us by the coming of Titus**, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

- Total of 4 Letters to Corinth
 1. Lost letter
 2. 1 Corinthians
 3. 3rd Heavy Letter
 4. 2 Corinthians

Titus' report to Paul re. Corinth: Reaction was Mixed/Complicated
Earnest Desire/Zeal for Paul vs Offended/Accusatory toward Paul

Conclusion: To the Teachable...Paul was a Blessing
To the Proud...Paul was a Burden

2 Corinthians: Fourth/Last letter we know of from Paul to Corinth
Paul continues to confirm his Apostleship/Sincerity/Service to the Lord...

14 Now thanks be to God who **always leads us in triumph in Christ**, and through us **diffuses the fragrance** of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are **to God the fragrance of Christ** among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the **aroma of**

death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life.
And who is sufficient for these things?

In the midst of Accusations/Slander
Paul reminds himself/them *who he is in Christ...*

- **I am sent by Jesus** to make Him known
- **I am led by Jesus** in Triumph/Victory
- **I am an Ambassador of Jesus...**In His stead defusing His fragrance...

I'm the Aroma of Death to those who Reject Jesus
I'm the Aroma of Life to those who Accept Jesus

Roman Triumphal Entry/Army returns w/POW
Incense sweet to those being set free as citizens/Aroma of death to those to be executed

I will give the Word and let the chips fall...Take it or leave it
I will not compromise/water down the Word for personal gain...

17 For we are not, as so many [lit. the rest] , peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

I fear God. All I do for an Audience of One...
The One who saved me

1 Corinthians 4:3 ...it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you...

1 Thessalonians 2:4 ...we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

Fear of God leads to Obedience to God proving our Love for God

Proverbs 14:27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.

Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.

Counterintuitive: Any attempt at Self-preservation will backfire

Try to save your old life/Miss Eternal Life
Lose your old life for Jesus/Have new life forever

IOWs Paul did not attempt to tell people they wanted to hear
Paul received words from God/Reiterated God's Word to the people

Hard Truths: No one is good. No religion can save a soul
There is One Gospel. One Way. One Truth. One Life

Mark 10:18b ...No one is good but One, that is, God.

John 14:6 I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Galatians 1:9b ...if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Satan is the Accuser of God's Servants
He's using Corinth to accuse Paul/Intimidate him to tone down the message

The accusations of Corinth hurt Paul more than the rocks of Lystra
Paul reminds them/himself: I speak in the sight of God...

2 Corinthians 3

Jesus

I. Christ's Epistle

1 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? **2 You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men...**

We won't send you our resume or ask you for a reference
Your changed lives are validation/vindication God is working through us

3 ...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.

Paraphrase: Clearly, you are a letter from Christ showing the result of our ministry among you. This "letter" is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts.

Our lives may be the only Bible people read
Paul's desire is to help people to grow in the Lord...

Nothing so commends a minister as the proficiency of his people. [Poole]

The fruitfulness of the people is the preacher's testimonial. [Trapp]

Sea change/Fundamental Shift:
Paul turns to those who are teachable...

II. Spirit Not Letter

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God.

Such Trust Toward God in what way?
God is always working even when we don't see it

John 13:7 Jesus answered [Peter] and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, **but you will know after this.**"

God is at work behind the scenes
Jesus: My Father has been working until now and I have been working John 5:17

- **Abraham/Sarah:** God working behind the scenes through **waiting**
- **Moses:** God working behind the scenes through **rejection**
- **Joseph:** God working behind the scenes through **silence**
- **Job:** God working behind the scenes through **suffering**
- **Ruth:** God working behind the scenes through the **ordinary**
- **Esther:** God working behind the scenes through **providence**
- **Daniel:** God working behind the scenes through **prayer** [Crosswalk]

God is working behind the scenes through each of our ministries...

5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but **our sufficiency is from God...**

Our Sufficiency to do God's Work is from God Himself

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for **without Me you can do nothing.**

God has equipped every believer to share the Gospel/Personal Testimony

6 who also made us **sufficient as ministers of the new covenant**, not of the letter but **of the Spirit**; for **the letter kills**, but the Spirit **gives life.**

Cults/Legalists/Isms are Ministers of Death preaching Dead. Period.

Galatians 3:10 ...as many as are of the works of the law are **under the curse**; for it is written, "**Cursed** is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he **is guilty of all ...13** For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Live by the Law and be Judged by the Law
Live by Grace and be Judged by Grace

The purpose of the Law: Reveal our need for a Savior

Romans 3:20 ...by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for **by the law is the knowledge of sin.**

Romans 7:10 ...the commandment, which was to bring life, **I found to bring death.**

1 Timothy 1:8 But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that **the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless** and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the **glorious gospel** of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

Trying to keep the Letter of the Law leads to death...But the Spirit gives Life

If it's not about trying harder...How do I stop doing bad stuff?
Stop trying/Start yielding to the Spirit of Jesus in you...who gives Life

Galatians 5:16 ... Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life...

Romans 8:11 [Since] the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also **give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.**

God has Commanded/Equipped every believer to share the Gospel

- Use the Law to convict/reveal need/desperation
- Offer the free gift of Grace through faith in Jesus

1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you **...3 that Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, 4 and that **He was buried,** and that **He rose again the third day** according to the Scriptures

The Letter Kills. The Spirit gives Life. We get to preach life!
Paul is equipping the teachable to refute the false doctrine of the Religious Jews

1 Peter 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you

Jesus set us free by the New Covenant to rest in His finished work
Are we excited the Old Covenant has been replaced?

Hebrews 8:7 For **if that first covenant had been faultless,** then no place would have been sought for a second... I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 11 None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for **all shall know Me,** from the least of them to the greatest of them. 12 For **I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."** 13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

III. Glory of the New Covenant Ministry of Death/Ministry of Life

7 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...**

As the glory of God faded from Moses face
So the glory of the Old Covenant fades in the Glorious Light of the New

Here Paul explains the real purpose of the veil: not to hide the shining face of Moses, but to hide the diminishing glory of his face because the glory was fading. The passing glory of the old covenant contrasts with the enduring glory of the new covenant. [Guzik]

If the Old Covenant was Glorious in its Purpose to Reveal sin...

8 ...how will the **ministry of the Spirit** not be **more glorious**? 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**.

Galatians 3:23 ...before faith came, we were **kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed**.

If the Old Covenant was Glorious in its Purpose to Reveal sin...
How much more the New Covenant which Takes Away our Sin?

Matthew 26:27 Then [Jesus] took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For **this is My blood** of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the **remission of sins**. [It is finished]

Ministry that brings Condemnation vs Ministry that makes us Righteous

Romans 3:21 But now the righteousness of God **apart from the law** is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets...

What remains after the passing away of the Law is more Glorious
New Covenant: Free Gift of Salvation/Spirit Filled Life

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

We are bold because our faith is *not in our goodness...* But in the *finished work of Jesus*

We no longer have a need to cover our faces...

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.

Acts 15:1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved**." 2 Therefore, when

Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them...[Peter joins Paul against hypocritical legalists] 10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved

Legalists are blind: Deceived themselves and Deceiving others
"We keep the Law and you must also"

...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.

Jews/Religions/Cults/Isms: Law keepers/Legalists
Reading the Old Testament as a means to Salvation. It's not.

James 2:10 ...whoever shall keep the whole law yet **stumbles in one point** is guilty of all.

Only grace makes us perfect
Righteousness apart from the Law. Apart from us. Outside of us. Alien
Righteousness

A Veil Remains on Israel/Law Keepers/So-called Good people?
How can that self-righteous blindness be removed? Gaze on Jesus

16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

The Blind see as they Turn in Humility from self to Jesus

Matthew 21:44 And whoever **falls on this stone** will be broken; but on whomever **it falls, it will grind him to powder.**"

- Fall on Him in Humility or...
- Be crushed by Him in Pride

Saved by Grace Alone though Faith Alone in Christ Alone
Saving Faith is the unveiled gaze of a sinful soul upon a saving God

When the Veil of Self-Righteousness/Self Effort is cast away there is Freedom

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

The Lord is the Spirit...The Spirit is Freedom

- Freedom from bondage of sin
- Freedom from the penalty of sin
- Freedom from the snare of the devil
- Freedom from the grip of the world
- Freedom from the Adamic Nature
- Freedom from the Fear of Death/Judgment

Freedom to be who God created us to be...
Freedom to Glorify/Worship/Enjoy Him Forever

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.

- Transformed by time spent w/the Lord
- Changed by Gazing/Beholding Him by His Spirit through His Word

Being Transformed into the Same Image/Image of Christ
IOWs God's mirror does not show us what we are...but what we will become

- **We are *being* transformed:** In Process
- **From glory to glory:** Conformed into the image of Jesus
- **By the Spirit of God:** Access to transformation by the Spirit

The rate of transformation is not related to self-effort
But in direct proportion to our yielding to the Spirit of Life... [NJC]

Galatians 5:22 ...the fruit [transformation] of/by the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

Good Fruit is not produced by the *effort of the tree*
Good fruit is produced by the *life within the tree*