



Sermon Title: 2 Corinthians – Our Comfort part 4

Sermon Title: Exhibit A

Date: April 4, 2022

2 Corinthians 2:12-3:3

The gospel of Jesus is on trial daily in today's world. And at the end of the day, YOU are exhibit A.

Big Idea: You are Exhibit A for Jesus Christ.

The issue: What evidence does a watching world need to see?

1st Evidence. A life captivated by Christ

In 2 Corinthians 2:14, Paul describes the traditional parade that took place after a successful Roman military campaign. Behind the victorious leader there would be a line of conquered enemies. Paul identifies himself and fellow-believers as those who have been conquered by the grace of Christ. And our destiny is not death or slavery, but, “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.” 2 Corinthians 4:17

What a paradox! Having been conquered by Christ, we encounter true freedom. Conquered, but freer than you've ever been.

2nd Evidence. A walk distinct from the crowd

The people being led in procession held burning incense. Paul compares this fragrance to the gospel influence we spread. The “aroma” of believers will be like baked bread to some; like garbage to others. 2 Corinthians 2:14–16

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) — But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

3rd Evidence. A reputation for authenticity

2 Corinthians 2:17

It's easy to find people, sometimes in ministry, who sound like slick salesmen. But Paul describes himself as "sincere." The word¹ in the language of the New Testament means, "judged by sunlight." It describes the way you'd inspect an item in the light of the noonday sun.

What do you look like when the light shines on you? Step 4 in many recovery programs is to "Make a searching, fearless, moral inventory." How do we do that? We look in the mirror and ask ourselves the question,

- (1) "What is there in my life that displeases the Lord?"
- (2) Write it down.
- (3) How, with God's help will I begin to address it... today?
- (4) Surrender it to Christ. Romans 6:11

4th Evidence. A new heart

2 Corinthians 3:1

It was common among the ancients to display a string of credentials and certificates or letters of commendation. Paul says, "Look. I don't require your approval. You are a church because you responded to the gospel I preached. You are my résumé.

Paul then goes on to describe the supernatural work that God does in the hearts of those who trust Christ (2 Corinthians 3:2-3). God didn't give them a list of rules to keep. He gave them new hearts. Ezekiel 36:26

When a person gets a new spiritual heart the change is evident. What are some of the symptoms?

- Tenderness toward people far from God
- Passion for pleasing God more than yourself
- Willingness to extend forgiveness and mercy to others
- Concern for the poor and marginalized peoples of the world
- Desire to be free of old patterns that have plagued you

A new heart is **life-changing**. A new heart is **life-giving**. Say, "So long" to the hardened heart of stone. "Hello" to the tender heart energized by the Spirit of God. It will be evident to others in every beat of your Spirit-energized life.

- A life captivated by Christ
- A walk distinct from the crowd
- A reputation of authenticity
- A new heart

If you display these evidences, people will notice.

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **You are exhibit A for Jesus. What ways do you display Him in your daily life?**
- **How would you explain to a non-believer that you are conquered by Christ yet experience true freedom?**
- **What is your response when you know something is against God's will yet the majority of those around you support it. Are you vocal against it or do you remain mostly silent? Explain**
- **How often do you take a moral inventory of yourself? What correction steps do you take if you identify hatred, resentment, a habit, an attitude, an unhealthy relationship, or a behavior that dishonors God?**