

MESSAGE NOTES: 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. ³You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

“To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?” (2 Corinthians 2:16)

“Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.” (2 Corinthians 3:1-2)

“You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (2 Corinthians 3:3-6)

“Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.” “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to Israel’s plea and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep...” (Ezekiel 36:36-7)

“‘This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,’ declares the LORD. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.’” (Jeremiah 31:33)

The Old Covenant	The New Covenant	Application
Gifts and sacrifices by those guilty of sin	Self-sacrifice by the guiltless Christ	Christ died for you
Focused on a physical building where one goes to worship	Focuses on the reign of Christ in the heart	God is directly involved in your life
A shadow	A reality	Not temporal but eternal
Limited promises	Limitless promises	We can trust God's promises to us.
Failed agreement by people	Faithful agreement by Christ	Christ has kept the agreement where people couldn't.
External standards and rules	Internal standards - a new heart	God sees both actions and motives--we are accountable to God, not rules.
Limited access to God	Unlimited access to God	God is personally available.
Based on fear	Based on love and forgiveness	Forgiveness keeps our failures from destroying the agreement.

"So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good." (Romans 7:12)

"Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law." (Romans 3:31)

1. Not guilty because of New Covenant

"The Person who has faith is the person who is no longer lacking of themselves and no longer looking to themselves. They no longer look at anything they once were, they don't look at what they are now, they don't even look at what they hope to be as a result of their own efforts. They look entirely to Jesus and his finished work & they rest on that alone. They stop saying things like 'Oh yes, i used to commit terrible sins, but I am much better because I have done this & that.' If they go on saying that, they don't have faith. Faith speaks in an entirely different manner & makes a person say yes I have sinned grievously. I have lived a life of sin. I have failed. Yet i know I am a child of God because I'm not resting on any righteousness of my own. My righteousness is in Jesus and God has put that to my account." - Morton Lloyd James

2. Not defeated because of New Heart

"Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?" (Galatians 3:3)

STUDY GUIDE:

STEP ONE: Icebreaker (Optional):

- Will you eat or drink anything pumpkin-flavored this fall? Why or why not?

STEP TWO: Prayer & Scripture Reading: Ask someone in your group to pray to open your time together and ask another person to read **2 Corinthians 3:1-6**.

STEP THREE: Discuss Questions:

1. What was challenging, encouraging, confusing, or stood out most to you from this past weekend's teaching?
2. What is your highest source of authority and why?
3. In verses 1-3, Paul shares that the Corinthians Christians themselves are Paul's "letters of recommendation." How so?
4. Who in your life has shown the most compelling transformation as a Christ follower? What makes that person so compelling?
5. In verses 3 and 6 Paul contrasts the old covenant written on tablets of stone with the Spirit of the living God. What is the difference and why is this important? See also Romans 2:29 and Romans 7:6. How does the Spirit enable people to live out all that God requires?
6. In verse 5, Paul notes that his competence comes from God. How does someone gain their competence ultimately from God? What would you say to someone who was struggling with their own self-worth and competency?
7. What would you say to someone who is looking for or needing "certainty" before he/she takes a step of faith toward Jesus?
8. What is your greatest takeaway from this passage and how might God be calling you to put this into practice or share this with someone else?

STEP FOUR: Prayer : Ask someone in your group to close in Prayer.