

College Heights Christian Church
Adult Bible Study Helps
Prepared by Bud Clapp and Neil Francis

2 Corinthians 3

Introduction:

Commendation of our Ministry

The proof of the effectiveness of any ministry is whether or not it has a recommendation from God. He is not giving out letters of recommendation; the proof lies in the epistles that are written in the fleshly tables of the heart. As our ministry proclaims the true gospel and people respond to Biblical truths, they become our letters of commendation, known and read by all men (2 Corinthians 2:1-3)

Contrast of the Old and New Covenant

Wherever we find a genuine gospel, we can find a counterfeit, Even art critics have been fooled by fake “masterpieces.” Well meaning publishers have been known to print forgeries. No sooner did the gospel of grace begin to spread among the Gentiles than a counterfeit gospel appeared, a mixture of law and grace. This development came from false teachers: peddlers (2 Corinthians 2:17). Note the contrast in 2 Corinthians 3:

- Tablets of stone--Human Hearts (3:1-3)
- Death--Life (3:4-6)
- Fading Glory--Increasing Glory (3:7-11)
- Concealment--Openness (3:12-18)

Paul has now explained two aspects of his ministry: it is triumphant (2 Corinthians 1-2 and it is glorious (2 Corinthians 3). The two go together: “Therefore seeing we have [this kind] of ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not (2 Corinthians 4:1).

Questions For Personal Reflection

1. The Judaizers said the Corinthians needed Christ plus a set of cultural rules to be fully acceptable to God. Where do we see this counterfeit gospel today?
2. Why is the gospel of Christ plus something else so popular?
3. How is the new covenant better than the old one (3:6-18)?
4. Why can't Old Testament law change people's lives?
5. What changes us from “old glory” to “new glory”?
6. Who are your letters of commendation?

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2 Corinthians 5

Introduction

The key theme of this section is found in 2 Corinthians 4:1 and 16: "We faint not." Stated plainly, We do not lose heart and give up. There were many reasons for Paul to say, "I quit!" But he did not and neither should we. Why not? We, like Paul, know what we have in Jesus Christ. Instead of bemoaning the things we do not have, we need to rejoice in what we do have in Christ. Remember the words of the song, "He is all I need." He is the courage for any conflict we face.

Chapter 5 reminds us to keep our eyes on what we have in Christ: we have a future hope (5:1-8) and we have strong motives for ministry (5:9-21). Think about this and do not become discouraged:

1. WE HAVE A FUTURE HOPE 5:1-8

Note Paul's testimony:

- We know (v1)
- We groan [we long for] (2-5)
- We are always confident (vv. 6-8)

As you look through this section of 2 Corinthians, take note about how Paul had courage for the conflict and would not lose heart. He had a glorious ministry that transformed lives. He had a valuable treasure in the earthen vessel of his body, and he wanted to share that treasure with a broken world. He had a courageous faith that conquered fear. Do we

2. WE HAVE A MOTIVATION FOR VICTORIOUS MINISTRY 5:9-21

Note the three motives for ministry:

- The fear of the Lord (5:9-13)
- The love of Christ (5:14-17)
- The commission of Christ (5:18-21)

Ministry is not easy. But, it can be victorious, if our motivations are right.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

1. What are your reasons for giving up?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 4 and make a list of the things you do have that can keep you from losing heart.
3. In Christ we are a new creation. How do we reflect this new creation?
4. Check your motives. What motives are good? What motives are bad?
5. What are your reasons for not losing heart: fainting?