

Chapter 3

We find God's Comfort in the Ministry

1. Paul's **Accreditations** 3:1-5

- A. *Verse 1* Paul is saying do I need a letter of recommendation from my employer or one from God? Paul answers his own question by saying; *verse 2* “*Ye are our epistle*” it comes from the heart and manifested for all men to see. This is your outward testimony. His life matched his message. Those that you have helped, won, encouraged, counseled are those that can read the message of love through your actions. These Corinthians had to be taught this and Paul through God's divine Words were learning a great lesson. Do new converts immediately see these things? Children are not natural in seeing these things, they must have time to grow as they are taught.
- B. *Verse 3* You were converted by our ministry, this should be proof enough as you saw the grace of God. Not with a gospel tract or seeing something on TV “*not with ink*” “*not with tables of stone*” but by our presence with you. Paul was contending with those false Jewish teachers that were among them teaching obedience to the law. Look at *verses 6,7*.
- C. *Verses 4,5* His accreditation proof was that he was appointed and sent by God. He did not need letters from someone else but that the evidence of Divine presence and acceptance of his work.
Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul was always tracing his success to Christ. He was always depending upon Him.

D. Verse 5 *“our sufficiency is of God”* The appearance of self ability in the ministry was clearly presented. So not to boast of what we can do. *John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

1. Paul did not feel he was sufficient in himself to think out truths of the gospel; they were communicated by God.
2. He did not think of himself as a smooth talker; it was the Spirit of God.
3. His success did come by his own power, all traced to God. *Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. Exodus 31:1-6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3 And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, 4 To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, 5 And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. 6 And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee;*
4. Paul said *2 Corinthians 12:10 ...“for when I am weak, then am I strong”*

2. God’s **Absolutes** (law and grace) 3:6-18

A. God has made us able ministers; Great contrast between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Verse 6,7 *“letter”* verses *“spirit”* The letter of the Law kills, condemns us to death. We are guilty sinners. The Mosaic Law never gave life. This is the great contrast. Moses could not and was not saved by the Law, he was a murderer.

David broke the Law. There is nothing wrong with the Law, the problem is me, a sinner who has broken it.

- B. *Verses 8-11* He tells us of the glory of the Old Testament, but how much more the New Testament or Covenant. This new righteousness that we have in Christ. He is giving them a great contrast between the giving of the Mosaic Law and the day of grace in which we live.
- C. Paul is addressing some false teachings concerning Law and Grace. Today many churches around the world are dealing with this subject. Seventh Day Adventist would be similar by mixing Law and Grace.
- D. *Verses 12-13* When Moses on Mt. Sinai received the Law the children of Israel were in there camp breaking the first two commandments. As he came down from the mount and in the distance observing their sin he smashed them. He dared not bring the tablets into the camp as they would have been blotted out because of the Law. He goes back to the top of Mount Sinai into the presence of God. He asks for mercy and God gives them a second chance as he gives Moses the second tables of the Law. Now God is tempering the Law with mercy and grace. At the very heart of the Mosaic system is to be a tabernacle and a sacrificial system that will be the basis of approach to God, which is *Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Philippians 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:*
- E. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. *Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*
- F. When Moses came down from the mount the second time, there was joy in his heart. Now they could come to God through the sacrificial system.

- G. *Verses 14, 15* For many the “*vail*” is still there. They do not see Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness. They do not recognize the fulfillment of the Law through him. They are still blinded. People today actually think they can keep it.
- H. *Verses 16,17* When one turns to Christ for salvation the “*vail*” is gone, they realize that works cannot save them. Only the Spirit can lift that *vail*. It is the Spirit of God that brings us to the place of liberty. *Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* It is only through Him and His sacrifice we can have remission of sins.
- I. *Verse 18* The glass represents the Word of God. As we look into the Word of God we see Jesus and all of His glory. As we look, read, study, and pray we are transformed. There is no *vail* to cover His glory, splendor, majesty and holiness in the gospel. We are permitted to look on the full splendor of the divine perfections, the justice, goodness, mercy, and benevolence of God. We are changed and become like him, then others will see Christ in us. Moses face aglow faded away, but the Light of the glorious gospel shines brighter every day. All of this accomplished by God.