

## The Spirit Gives Life

II Corinthians 3: 1-11

1/6/02

### Intro

- Pray for Steve on his way to Africa.
- .....

In this chapter, Paul addresses the false message of those that had been attacking his ministry. They were trying to convince the church that the gospel needed something else added to it, namely, the keeping of the old covenant laws.

As he writes to this issue, we receive great insight into the power of the Holy Spirit in giving life, while the law can only bring death. What good is our faith if it does not make a difference in our lives? This section is about how the Spirit gives life.

Insights into how the Holy Spirit gives life.

### **I. You are a letter of Christ, written by the Holy Spirit.**

Vs 1-3

A. Was Paul needing a letter of recommendation?

- Some were winning their way into the church by producing letters of recommendation.
- But these can be and often were dubious in nature.

*Illus- When I was told I could write my own letter of recommendation. What an opportunity!!*

### B. How are we to be letters of Christ?

- By the character of Christ seen in our lives.

*Illus- the pastor who didn't yield and then was followed to the church.*

- By the change we make in others lives.
- More than being just a nice guy, **we are called to make a difference in the lives of others.**

### C. We are letters written by the Holy Spirit.

### **II. Our adequacy is from Christ.**

Vs 4-5

A. Not from people.

*Illus- Paul would say, "I am not so concerned about what others think of me, but what Christ thinks of me."*

Some people are just plain wrong.

- Noah preached for 120 years with no converts.

- Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address was criticized as insignificant.
- Thomas Edison's grade school teacher said he was stupid.

B. Our adequacy is from Christ.

- John 15:5 – I am the vine... apart from me, you can do nothing.
- Phil 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

**Illus-** The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco was built between 1933 and 1937. During the first half of the construction, over a dozen men fell off the structure, falling as far as 700 feet to their death in the water below.

So they installed a net to catch any who fell...  
(His hand upholds me.)

**III. The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.**

Vs 6-11

A. The letter kills.

- This is often taken out of context by those who try to say that the TEACHING of the Word brings death.
- See **Romans 5** – the letter of the Law produces death.

B. Law vs. Spirit is about behavior verses inner heart.

- To focus on behavior only is to create those who try to fake it.

C. The Spirit comes with greater glory.

**Illus- Moses hid the diminishing glory.**

- Those that are justified by outward behavior have to hide who they really are.
- But the message of the gospel does not need to be veiled.
- God forgives us of our sins!!

Conclusion

**Instead of imitating the behaviors of goodness, we would gain great insight if we could understand that the Spirit is Who gives life. He is our source, the glory of which does not fade away.**