

The Importance of the Christian's Testimony

Second Corinthians 3:2; 4:7 and 5:20

"The World is Reading, Watching, and Hearing You"

Evangelist Doug Lowery

In these three consecutive chapters we see three word pictures that show the importance of a consistent, Christ-like testimony before the unsaved. "Is my Christian life an asset or a liability to the cause of Christ?"

1. We are Earthy Letters — *Recording a Heavenly Message*

2 Corinthians 3:2 and 3

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."



In this age of text messaging, Twitter, Facebook, etc.—writing letters is becoming a lost art! E-mail is great, but there is nothing like a hand-written card or letter to warm your heart and build a closer bond with the one who took the time to write you the card or letter. .

When I first arrived at Bob Jones University in 1966, for my freshman year, I came with so little Bible knowledge compared to other students from strong churches. My background had been a liberal Protestant church all my life to that point, and I only knew

the well-known Bible stories like Jonah and the whale, Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, etc. A test question my first week of classes was, "What is an epistle?" I did not have a clue! So I totally guessed. My answer—"An apostle's wife." My answer, I learned later, provided quite a chuckle in administrative meetings! I quickly learned that an epistle is a letter!

*We are Christ's Letter, according to verse 3. The Holy Spirit is the Writer, and He writes **Liberty** on all the pages of our lives. (v. 17 of this same chapter) we are free from sin (its penalty- Romans 8:1; and, its power- Romans chapter 6), and our lives need to reflect that joyful victory!*

The context in this chapter



- a) *deals with Moses receiving the 10 commandments and those two tablets being engraved by God, and now the Holy Spirit is writing on us!*
- b) *talks about this New Testament age being more glorious than the Old Testament age (the Book of Hebrews contains the word **better** 13 times).*
- c) *And, this chapter talks about the glory of God shining from the face of Moses! Our faces need to radiate Christ—in fact, if you have been saved by grace, please inform your face. (Proverbs 15:13 tells us, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.")*

The Holy Spirit gives Liberty—and writes it on all the pages of our lives. (v. 17) And, He grants a Likeness to Christ—and is changing us "from glory to glory." (v. 18- Sanctification is a process not an event.)

The Aspect of our Christian Testimony Seen Here:

A Christ-like countenance that reflects God's glory.

2. We are Earthen Vessels —
Radiating a Heavenly Treasure
2 Corinthians 4:7



But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

*We are nothing more than clay pots/ containers! But, inside us dwells the Holy Spirit of God (1 Corinthians. 6:19, 20). As God's vessels, we have all received a ministry (2 Corinthians 4:1), and that is shining out God's glorious light! (2 Corinthians 4:3-6) **Note the fact that we are to be holy vessels!***



(Turn: 2 Timothy 2:19-21)

This graphic shows the brilliance of light breaking through a blackened sky and darkened clouds. God's wonderful light has burst into our hearts!

Matthew 5:14 tells us that we are the light of the world reflecting the Light of the World, and we are not to hide our light. (Matthew 5:15; Satan tries to hide the light by blinding the minds of the unsaved—2 Corinthians 4:3).

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) Glorify= to give the right impression of!!

The context of the remainder of this chapter—verses 8 through 18—is dealing with trials! Let’s take a moment to read those verses.

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you. We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

We have to bear “a lot of heat” to send off so much light! (2 Corinthians 4:8) Don’t faint under this “light affliction,” because there awaits a greater “weight of glory.”

(vs.14-18) I love that comparison! No matter how hard we have it in this life, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus!

None of us really know what afflictions are compared to 1st century Christians like the Apostle Paul. (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

The Aspect of our Christian Testimony Seen Here:

A Christ-like character that responds rightly to trials!

REVIEW:

We are Earthly Letters Recording a Heavenly Message

A Christ-like countenance that reflects God's glory!

We are Earthen Vessels Radiating a Heavenly Treasure

A Christ-like character that responds rightly to trials!

3. We are Earthly Ambassadors—
Representing a Heavenly King
 2 Corinthians 5:20

New Creation

All things are new in this chapter:

- *We have the promise of a new body in glory vs. 1-4*
- *We have a new purpose in life v. 15*
- *We have become a new person in Christ v.17*
- *We have a new ministry, a new mission vs. 18-20*



All is new now, and someday we will enjoy a new heaven and a new earth. (Revelation 21:1)
We are citizens of different countries here on earth, but if

we are truly God's child, we are citizens of a "holy nation"—of heaven itself. We are truly strangers, foreigners and pilgrims here below. Too often we settle in and get overly comfortable in this world. We need to sing that old chorus, "This world is not my home—I'm just a passin' through."

1 Peter 2:9-11

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;"

Philippians 3:20, 21

"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Ambassadors to the United Nations come to New York City from all over the world! We have the privilege of representing the One to whom every knee will bow some day—the King of Kings and LORD of Lords (Philippians 2:9-11; Revelation 19:16). Yes, we are...



*Ambassador Baptist College is located near Shelby, North Carolina. They have redone their chapel auditorium beautifully. Behind the choir area in large letters are these words: **AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST** and below it the reference—2 Corinthians 5:20.*

Again—

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This ministry is two fold:

- *We are to represent Christ to the lost as an unspotted testimony (Titus 2:11-13)*
- *We are to reconcile the lost to Christ as an unashamed witness (Romans 1:14-16)*

*Be committed to the ministry that has been committed to you!
(Contrast this with 2 Timothy 1:12)*

The Aspect of our Christian Testimony Seen Here:

A Christ-like compassion that reaches out to all people.

What motivates you to be a good testimony for Christ?

It should be the Lord's Commendation! (2 Corinthians 5:9)

It should be the Lord's Crowns! (5 of them/ the crown of rejoicing is for winning the lost—1 Thessalonians 2:19)

Again the question, "Is my Christian life an asset or a liability to the cause of Christ?"

Final Application:

YOU are an Earthly Letter—*what do people read when they read you?! You are the only Bible some people will ever read!*

YOU are an Earthen Vessel—*what do people see when they watch your life?! Do they see radiance and joy—and peace in the midst of storms? Or, do they see a life of carnal reactions, gloom, and depression?*

YOU are an Earthly Ambassador—*what do people hear when they listen to you?! Do they hear gossip, backbiting, constant criticism, a negative spirit—or, do they hear gracious words, a positive spirit and the Gospel message?*

<p><i>Do you give those around you a high impression of the King of Kings by your life and by your words and attitudes?</i></p>
