

2 Corinthians 3 - Our Sufficiency is from God

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Your Bible there with you. Go ahead and open it up to 2 Corinthians chapter 3. 2 Corinthians chapter 3. And I'm going to read through the chapter and then we're going to get into it here and see what the Lord has for us today. Paul begins this chapter by saying,

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

⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? ⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. ¹⁰ Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³ not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵ Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord are

being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (ESV)

Stop there. Let's pray.

Lord, we give You this time that the ministry of Your Word might have an impact on our hearts. And that it might really, truly change our thinking and the course of our life. We give You, Lord God, this time to speak to our hearts and to direct us according to Your will. Thank you, Lord, for this chapter. Use it, we pray, to minister and feed us. For we ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

You guys, I'm sure know how many trials the apostle Paul went through in his life. I mean, he'll actually enumerate them later on in this letter, and he'll talk about this, and this and the other things that he went through. And you and I would never sign up, willingly for that kind of life and abuse. I mean, good grief.

But I think of all the things that Paul, went through in his life. The thing that he's writing about and dealing with here in 2 Corinthians was probably one of the most, most challenging things. I mean, here's a man who was, had people throw stones at him to kill him. They beat him with rods. They beat him with their fists. They ran him out of town, put him, threw him into prison.

I think he would have accepted all of that gladly if he didn't have to go through what he's going through in this situation. And what this is. It is false brothers who rose up in the Corinthian church to basically pick Paul apart so that they could pick apart the gospel that he preached. Because they don't like it.

You see, there were people, we call them Judaizers, they were basically Jewish legalists. They didn't get it. And frankly, Paul's gospel scared them. And they believed that Jesus wasn't enough to save a person. They believed that in addition to Jesus, you had to also continue to keep elements of the law, the law of Moses.

And so what they would do is they would wait until Paul had spent time in a particular location, ministering, raising up the church, preaching and teaching. And then when he left, they would come after him and they would go into that area, wherever it was, and they would begin to tell the people, Jesus isn't enough, you still have to keep the law.

And their goal was to get people to, to, keep the Sabbath, follow various food laws. On and on, you name it. And that was their MO. And in fact it happened

in the churches in the region of Galatia too. In fact, Paul wrote about it. Let me show you this on the screen from Galatians chapter 2. This I'm quoting this out of the NIV ' because I just like it better. It says,

Galatians 2:4 (NIV84)

[This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

[This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

That was their goal, to make people slaves. Slaves of what? Slaves of the law. Slaves of the law.

And so, one of the strategies that these people had when they would come into an area where Paul had been was, of course, just to begin to talk him down so that they could eventually get to the gospel that he preached. Because, if you can call into question the person who shared Christ with you, right? You begin to call into question everything the person ever said to you.

Have you ever had somebody in your life who really was, made a powerful impact in your life? And then that person messed up majorly? Some of you may have had someone in your life might've been a TV personality who you, a radio personality, somebody that would just, you heard on there and shared, they shared the gospel and you really genuinely were touched and changed and ministered to. And then they went through a time in their life where there was a falling away of some kind or a difficulty or a moral failure and you began to question everything they ever said.

It happens, and that's exactly why these Jewish legalists would make their way into the churches where Paul had ministered and they began to pick him apart and start talking about Paul in a very negative sort of a way because if they can get them to question the integrity of Paul, they can get them to question the integrity of the message.

And so they started, discrediting him in all sorts of ways, and you can only imagine, the things they probably said, so who's this Paul anyway, and why is he an apostle? Was he chosen by Jesus during his public ministry? We know that there were men who He handpicked.

I don't think Paul was one of them. Maybe he's just a self-proclaimed upstart making his way out and doing churches and this and that, but who is Paul

anyway? I mean, where's he come from? And by the way, do any of you guys have any proof that this Paul guy is even approved by the men whom Jesus did choose?

I mean, did any of you get a letter? Did he bring a letter with him from Peter or John or one of those guys telling you that this guy was good to go and you should accept everything he says? I don't think so. So, who is he anyway?"

You can see how that thing goes. That's probably why Paul starts this chapter by saying,

“Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?” (or his next question), *“or do we need, as some do letters of recommendation to you or from you so that we can go other places and minister?”*

Let me just make a point here. Paul was not totally against letters of recommendation. He actually wrote them for other people when they would go out and minister. He would write a letter ahead of time. Hey, sending Timothy to you, make sure he, his needs are met and so on and so forth.

Paul wasn't totally against letters of recommendation per se, but this was different, you see, because Paul lived among these people for a year and a half. He didn't just blow into town, give a quick message and blow out. He stayed there for a year and a half. He lived among them. They got to see every day what kind of a man he was, the kind of a life that he lived, the kind of an apostle that he was, how he responded to the Lord and on and on and on.

But even though Paul had that time with them and so forth, you'll notice as he goes on here to talk about letters of recommendation. He doesn't go on to speak of his own qualifications right here. Now, later on in the letter, he's going to be bullied into doing it, but right now he doesn't do it.

In fact, rather than giving his own qualifications for the right that he has to minister among them, notice what he does. In verse 2, look at verse 2 with me again. He says, *“You yourselves are our letter of recommendation.”*

That's an interesting sort of a concept, isn't it? In other words, Paul is saying that the proof and the legitimacy of our ministry among you is ultimately you, the people that we've touched. Right? That it's the fruit of ministry.

Look at the fruit of a man's ministry or a woman's ministry. That tells you a lot about that person. Now, it doesn't tell you everything because you know what?

We're also to look at the fruit of that person's life. But that's supposed to happen before they start ministering. We look at a person's life. We are fruit inspectors, right? You know, this whole thing about, don't judge. You know, don't, who are you to judge? We've taken the whole judgment thing way too far.

We are to be judges. We're to be fruit inspectors. When we look at people's lives, Paul wrote to Timothy and to Titus, talked to them about raising up men to minister in the church. And he talked about qualifications. He said, hey, basically look at that person's life, make sure their life is in order and that sort of thing.

Right? That's the way we're to be. And a man's, the fruit of his life, meaning his character should be in place before he begins to minister.

Well, once that is in place and he begins to minister, how then do we judge his ministry? Well, the fruit of his ministry, and that's what the point that Paul is saying here. Look at, he says, listen, you guys, instead of a letter of recommendation, how about looking at what God has done among you. Right?

Your lives, you heard the gospel. What happened when you heard the gospel? You received the Holy Spirit. What happened when you received the Holy Spirit? Your life began to be transformed, changed from the inside out. You are our letters of recommendation. You know, this is really a very wonderful sort of a concept somewhere along the line, though, we forgot all about it in the Christian church.

We started deciding leaders needed to be the product of accumulated credits and college degrees and stuff like that. So tell me, which seminary did you attend? I'm not saying there's anything wrong with going to seminary. I have to be really careful I don't say cemetery because that just comes out naturally. Or Bible college or anything.

I mean, I went to Bible college. I didn't go to a seminary, but I did go to a Bible college. But, and there's nothing wrong with, those sorts of things, but that's not where the sufficiency, that is not where the fruit of ministry comes from. And that is not where the fruit of ministry is seen.

But, we've gotten away from all of that and we started, making it all about a man's resume or whatever. And we need to get back to the idea of what the Bible says about, "*you'll know them by their fruit,*" the fruit of their lives to minister. And once they begin to minister the fruit of their ministry, right?

Looking at the people that they've touched and looking at their lives and so forth.

And by the way, just in case you think I'm talking about the ministry and you're thinking, well, I'm not in the ministry. If you are a man here today and you're married, you are the leader of your home and you are in the ministry. That is your first ministry. It's my first ministry. Right? And it's the same thing.

The fruit of your ministry is absolutely huge. And I'll even challenge you here that to say that, that your family, men, your wife, your children, and how they look at you and how they view, their home, their life, their relationships. That is often a reflection of your ministry, the fruit of your ministry, right? It's not just when you become a minister that people can start to look at your life. And it starts right there in the home and with our families and so on and so forth.

Paul goes on in verse 3, he explains why looking at the fruit of a man's ministry is important. And this is going to transform our thinking here a little bit. Verse 3 and on it says, He says, *“And you show that you are a letter from Christ”*

Did you notice that it's not from Paul? It's not from Paul. It's not from any of the other apostles. He says, you show that you're a letter from Christ. But here's the part we play, delivered by us. Paul's the postman, right?

And it's written, this letter from Christ, is written not with ink, he says, but with the Spirit of the living God, and it's written not on tablets of stone. Now he's going to do some contrasting word pictures between the law, the Old Testament law, and the New Covenant gospel of Jesus Christ.

He says, listen, the ministry of the Spirit is written on your heart, not on tablets of stone. It's on your heart. And then he says in verse 4, *“such is the confidence that we have through Christ.”* (toward God)

And so, stop there for a moment. Let me just tell you here, this is the real essence of what it means to minister in Christ.

Paul makes it clear here. He says, I'm the delivery man. But the letter is written from Christ. It's from Christ. It's written with the Spirit and He is the power. He's the power behind this letter of recommendation that your lives represent.

And you know what that tells us or reminds us of is that when we're looking at somebody's ministry, we're not looking for what they've accomplished. We're looking for what they have allowed God to accomplish through them. We're

looking for the fingerprint of the Spirit in the ministry that they have performed. And men, I'll even bring it back to you again in the home. You know, we men we're challenged sometimes in our culture to be men, to man up and pull yourself up by the bootstraps, but when it comes to the ministry of the home, the ministry of the Spirit is what's really containing the power that we need.

We need, men, whether you're in a ministry outside the home or not, you need the power of the Spirit inside the home. You need the power of the Holy Spirit. And that's what you ought to see. That's what, that's the point that Paul is making in these verses. That, that you are, you, (he's talking to the Corinthians), you guys are letters from us, but you're letters. I'm the delivery man. They're letters written by the Spirit with the ink of the Spirit of the living God. And on the living essence of your hearts. And that's what makes ministry powerful, the power of the Lord. I got to tell you something.

I've been teaching now for a long time and I started teaching and I was surprised as everybody that I had the ability to teach. You know, I really was. The first time I taught the Bible, I was, my knees were knocking and I was teaching to some teenagers. I was a youth leader I wasn't a youth pastor yet, but I'd been barnswoggled into helping out with the youth group. And as soon as I got in the gal who led the youth group left. I mean as soon as we got there. And so I'm like, and I was new in the Lord, I was like really fresh. You know I didn't know what to, so I was literally teaching these kids what I was learning like a couple of days before.

All right, guys, open your Bible, I'm going to teach you this. It was like, it was fresh off the presses in my own heart. But I started teaching and I started realizing I can do this. But I'll tell you something: it's been 30 some years now that I've been doing this and over that time I've learned some really incredible things about the ability to teach and make a difference in somebody's life.

And what God has shown me and taught me is that it isn't me. It's Him. It's His Word. It's the power of the Spirit and it's a lot of faith, too. Faith really comes into it. You guys know that? Do you understand that when you come here on a Sunday morning and you come with an attitude and a heart to receive, do you know that God honors that? And he does it through me.

And that, and I'm privileged to do that, but to be that, that tool. But that's it. I'm just like a garden tool that God just pulls out and then puts back in the shed, and stuff. And, but, you don't, when you have a beautiful flower in your lawn, you don't pull out your hoe and go, Look at this hoe! Look what this hoe did! This is a great hoe! I mean, it'd be stupid, wouldn't it?

You look at the flower and you go, isn't that flower gorgeous? Well, who made that flower? God made that flower. You don't sit and make a big deal about the tool, the instrument, right? Like Paul says, we're the, we're delivery men.

We've just delivered the letter of God and you are the letters of God. He's the one who wrote you. He's the one that anointed you. He's the one who empowers you to be and to hear his word and to receive it and respond. And that's what I've learned as I've been teaching the word now for over 30 years, I've learned that it's God. It's Him, and it's not me. And it takes all the pressure off, frankly.

I really like that. It's Him. Otherwise, I would probably be really intimidated thinking that, "Oh man," but the fruit is from Him. In fact, even if you ever stopped to think about even the giftings that you and I have in Christ, those are from Him too.

I mean, he gives you the gift and then he uses that gift. And then he gives it the power to change lives. And it's just really amazing anyway. So that's what Paul reiterates. Look at verses 5 and 6 with me. And these are, I'm just telling you here ahead of time. These are really important verses, so pay attention. Here we go. Verse 5,

"Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient. To be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit for the letter kills, but the spirit gives life."

First of all, there's a lot of things that he's saying in these verses, but the thing that hits me right off the get-go is just how the fact that Paul's ministering to these people. And you might say, why is that weird? It's because, you have to understand, Paul's under attack here. And when you're under attack, you tend to go into defense mechanism mode. And he's not doing that.

He's going to defend his ministry, but in the, throughout the course of this letter, he's also going to minister to the people. And the reason I'm really impressed by that is because I've, I know what it is to be under attack. I know what it is to be criticized by people. And I'll tell you how I act. I'm like those little bug thingies, insect thingies that when you go near them, they roll up into a ball.

They're like what, roly polies? I had to get the name from somebody in first service. But what they do is they just, they have this outer shell that's hard and if they feel threatened, they just they're just rolling a ball and you can sit and roll them around the table and stuff like that. But it's called defense mode and I get

that way sometimes when people are attacking me or criticizing me, I can easily go into defense mode. And I love... It blesses me to see the apostle Paul, even while he's being attacked, loving people and ministering the Word of God into their lives. That just really impresses me.

But one of the beautiful reminders that he passes along in these verses 5 and 6, is one of the privileges that you and I have in the ministry. And I want to read verse 6 to you again, please. Listen to this carefully. He talks about God who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant. It's not the old mosaic covenant. But it's the new covenant, not of the letter. And he's talking there about the letter of the law, right? It's not of the letter of the law.

Have you ever met somebody who's a letter of the law person? They're really fun to be around. Not. They're just like always cracking the whip and you do it this way. And this is the way we do it around here, sort of a thing.

But he says, that's not the ministry that we have. It's not of the letter of the law because the letter of the law kills. What we are ministering is the Spirit. Because why? What does he say at the very end of that verse? The Spirit gives life.

Oh, don't hear those words and ignore them. We get to be life givers. Well, the Spirit's the life giver. We get to cooperate with the Spirit as He dispenses life to people. And it's one of the coolest things ever.

Have you ever noticed how much death and negativity and corruption we deal with in this world? And if you sit and focus on it, I mean, if you really sit and focus on it, like, and what I'm talking about, listening all day to like news talk radio, you're, after about a week, you're going to be ready to, to just, you're going to probably think I just need to kill everybody because that's the only answer.

It's just rampant negativity and corruption and talking about just, oh man, do you know that the world's full of that? And you and I, God comes along and He says, I have gifted you to be a purveyor of life along with Me. I'll provide the life, but you get to go around doing it. And the people that you talk to and the people that you minister to and the things that you are able to give to people is going to have an effect on their lives. And it's not going to be negativity and it's not going to be death. It's going to be life and not just life that is in your nostrils that, and is regulated by the beating of your heart. I'm talking about eternal life. The life that is truly life.

That's what you and I get to share with people. And it's awesome. I mean, incredibly awesome.

I want you to notice here as we move on. Paul contrasts that life giving Spirit that we're talking about and that you and I get to cooperate, with what he calls the letter that brings death. And did you notice how many times he used fairly negative terms to describe the Mosaic Law? He calls it “*that which gives the ministry of death.*” (2 Corinthians 3:7)

How would you like to have the ministry of death? I have the ministry of death, thank you. Or the Ministry of Condemnation. It's another term he uses. And so, he's going to contrast the life that you and I get to share with others with that which condemns. And the reason he calls the Mosaic Law that, he calls it the ministry of death, and it sounds like a really negative thing. It's like, well, Paul, don't you respect the law of God?

We just went through the 10 Commandments last Wednesday night. We're in Deuteronomy on Wednesday. And we, I got through the 10, I didn't get through the whole chapter, but we got through the 10 Commandments and we talked about what they are. We talked about what they aren't, and we really took some time to unpack what's in those verses.

And, the 10 Commandments, my thought was, these are beautiful! I mean, these laws are, you can't find fault with the 10 Commandments. You know what thou shalt not steal or commit adultery or murder. Can you find fault with those? I mean, it's well I think we ought to be able to steal, or something like that. Nobody's going to say that. The law of God is beautiful.

And yet, you know what it does to us? It condemns us and ultimately puts us to death, because we've been condemned, That's what the law does. So if you're giving people, the law, just know that you're giving them an instrument of death. And, you might be a little confused about that from the standpoint of saying, well, why would God give us something that puts us to death?

Well, He didn't. He just gave us a beautiful set of laws. It's the sin in our lives that ultimately leads to death. Let me show you a passage from Romans chapter 7 that outlines this. Paul says, he says,

Romans 7:12-13 (ESV)

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good...

So the law (in and of itself, he says) is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (he then asked the question?) Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, (in me, sin that [is]) producing death in me through what is good...

And so you see the law is good. Sin is bad. The letter of the law kills. And that's the point that Paul is making. And here's why he's making it.

It's because there's these Jewish legalists, these Judaizers that are following him around, trying to bring people under the law. He's making the point, listen, I'm going to contrast for you guys here for a while, the outcome of the law and the outcome of the gospel of Jesus.

And he, boy, he comes out swinging. He says, listen, the outcome of the law is death. It's what's going to happen. But the outcome of the gospel of Jesus, the ministry of the Spirit, is life.

And that's the part that he really wants to emphasize. He goes on in this contrast, look at verse 7. He says, *“Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end,⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?”*

Or he puts it in another way in verse 9, *“For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory.”*

And it does. Here's the point of all this. Paul is saying that even though the law, the Mosaic law, results in condemnation and death for you and I, it still came with glory. Right? It still came with glory.

Now it was a fading glory. And that's the point that he's making here as he's talking. Look in verse 7, look with me again. *“Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end,” (Or was fading)⁸ “will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory?”*

He's talking about when Moses used to come down from the mountain after spending protracted periods of time with God. The Bible says that his face glowed. Yeah, it was a glow- in-the-dark sort of a thing. He'd come down and Moses wasn't aware of it. He didn't look in a mirror. And he comes down the

hill and people are kind of like, what in the world? And they were a little bit freaked out by it. And so Moses would wear a veil over his face.

Paul is making the connection that he didn't want them to see the glory fade. But the connection he's making for you and I in 2 Corinthians here is that is the characteristic of the old covenant. It has a fading glory. Okay. He's basically saying the picture of Moses's face fading from the glory of the Lord is a picture of the law. And God was showing us. He's saying through that, that the law had a temporary glory, nonetheless, but temporary, right?

Now, Paul's going to use that picture even further. Look at verse 12. Now, as far as we're concerned, *"Since we have such a hope,"*

And the hope he's talking about is the hope of an unfading glory in the gospel of Jesus, right? We're not worried. I'm not worried about letting people see my life, or your life or whatever, because it's an unfading glory that is reflected on us through Jesus Christ. There's no fading element to it. he says, *"Since we have such a hope, we are very bold,"*

We're not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the people, wouldn't look at what was being brought to an end. And then he says in verse 14, now this is interesting here. He says, *"But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant,"* (and it's talking about the old Testament), *"that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away."*

Now you'll notice he changes the figure of the veil and he uses it as a barrier or a cover or blinders upon those who read the Old Testament, not meaning everyone, but those who have rejected Christ, he says, there's this veil that covers their eyes and keeps them from seeing the glory of what Jesus did for them. And keeps them consequently in bondage thinking they have to earn their way to heaven. Because that's the MO of the Jews thinking they had to earn their way to heaven. But it's the MO of people, isn't it? That's what people think. People think they have to earn their way to heaven.

So there's a veil that remains, he says. But then look at verse 16. This is the neat part. He says, *"But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed."*

Isn't that cool? They turn to the Lord, the veil is removed. You might be thinking, wait a minute, that seems weird. Wouldn't the veil be removed so they can turn to the Lord?

No, that's not the way things work in the kingdom of God. I've talked to people who are like, I just want God to show me this or this, and then I'll turn to Him. Let me tell you something. He'll show you those things after you turn to Him. That's the way things work in the kingdom.

Faith operates as we step out in that faith and God meets us at that place of faith. But, if you're waiting for God to, like, show you a sign so you can believe in him, you're going to be waiting a long time. It just doesn't work that way. When you turn to the Lord, the veil is removed. You turn to the Lord, it's like, if God would just give me peace in my heart, I would turn to Him.

Hey, turn to Him and He'll give you peace in your heart. Right? It's when you take that step to come to Him, to respond to His Word by faith. Faith activates that relationship. Boom! Suddenly, it's just this world is open to you that didn't seem to be there before.

Here's Paul's conclusion from these comments. Verse 17, remember he's been contrasting the Old and the New Covenant. Verse 17, now he says, "*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*"

I was so blessed this morning, in our worship time, how we sang about freedom. We had two songs. I don't know if you were paying attention, but there were two songs that specifically talked about the freedom that we have in Jesus Christ. Your Bible, by the way, in this verse might use the word, liberty. Don't get whacked out, it's the same word. They mean the same thing.

Anyway, here's the deal. The Judaizers, the legalists, were there in Corinth because they didn't get it. And in fact, the gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul preached scared them to death. And they did not believe it was possible for people to be righteous apart from the confines of the law.

How in the world are these people going to do what's right when you take the law away from them? They didn't get it. They didn't get that when you come to Jesus, the law giver comes to live inside of you. And suddenly this law that was previously written on stone tablets is now written on the human heart and it's no longer, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" (Exodus 20:14)

It's, I don't want to do that. I want to be a faithful man, right? You see, you see the difference? The law has come inside. They didn't get that.

And it scared them to think that you're going to remove the law from people. Well, when you come to Christ, you don't remove the law from people. It is now

a life-giving Spirit though, because the Spirit comes inside to indwell and to begin to communicate to the life of the believer the heart of God, the righteousness of God. Right? That's beautiful. They didn't get it. And they thought, well, you just can't give people that freedom. They're just going to go, they're going to go ballistic on you.”

They didn't understand freedom. But what Paul is saying in this passage is that when we come to Christ, we are set free. Jesus said the same thing. Let me show you the passage from John chapter 8, verse 36. “*If the son sets you free, you will be free*” (And then he even adds that little word) “*indeed.*”

And you know what that means? That means fully. When the Son sets you free, you “*will be free*” fully or “*free indeed,*” right? This is the part they didn't get. And frankly it's a part that a lot of Christians don't get either.

First of all, what are we set free from or to? Lots of things. I could go on for a long time. I won't. But first of all, we're free from the judgment of the law, the condemnation and the judgment, right? We're free from that when we come to Christ. We're no longer under the condemnation of the law.

Remember what Paul also wrote? That for now, he says, “*There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” (Romans 8:1)

The law has no power to condemn you any longer. We are free from the dominion of the flesh for it to dictate our lives.

Do you understand that before you came to Christ, you didn't have a choice in the matter of whether to sin or not? You didn't have the choice. You might've thought you had one, but you didn't. You are under the dominion of the flesh. When you came to Jesus, he broke that dominion.

We also have freedom now to live for Christ. I can have, I can take, I can have a new master. You see before Christ, the flesh was my master and it was ruled in the kingdom of Satan. Now I am free because that old dominion has been demolished. I am free to have a new master. To make, make Jesus my master.

I'm free also to enter his presence at any time. That's pretty sweet. Here's the one that really makes people, makes their heads spin. You are also free to walk away from God. And if you're not free to walk away from God, you are not free indeed. Listen, freedom is either total or it's not total freedom.

And that means, as a Christian, you can come to the Lord with all of your heart. Be set free from all these things I talked to you about and then go back and live a life of sin. And you know people do. And I've had people come to me all hot and bothered and worried and stuff. And it's like, Paul, I, I prayed to receive Jesus as my Lord. And I really genuinely thought it was a real, happening in my life. But now I'm starting to doubt it.

And I'll say, well, why are you doubting that? Well, because I still sin. Really? What they're dealing with is they're dealing with the reality that when you're set free, you can choose to follow Jesus now, or you can still choose to follow the flesh.

But I'm here to tell you don't question your salvation just because you've made a wrong choice. Question your heart by all means. Your past, your addictions, or whatever the issues might be, but don't question your salvation. Listen, you've been set free. Some people who've gotten genuinely born again go out the day after and do some of the dumbest things you can imagine because now they're free.

Well, Pastor Paul, I thought when you get saved, you don't do that anymore. Really? Who told you that? I'm not saying that we should. I'm not saying that there's a license to go do those things. I'm just saying that when you're set free, you're set free. And that means that you can still choose to sin. So why is it a Christian sins? We want to. We choose to. Do you understand?

Before you came to Christ, you didn't have a choice. Now you do. You can say no. See that's the point. You're not only free to go back and sin you're free to say no to it. You are free now according to Romans chapter 6 to believe in your heart, know in your heart that you've been crucified with Christ and sin no longer has that devilish, tyrannical hold over your life. And you can say, no! I'm not going to do that.

You can do that now. You couldn't do it before. Now you can. Because why? Because you're free. You're free to live for Christ. Why did God set you free to be free? That's deep, isn't it? You can quote me on that one. You were set free to be free. Go be free. Can I have you close here by following me over to the Book of Galatians?

It's right after 2 Corinthians, go to Galatians. Chapter 5, and I'm going to have you read a verse with me, and we're going to end with this. Galatians chapter 5. Paul writes this. *“For freedom, Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”*

Here's the point. Yes, I'm free to go back and sin if I want to, but you know what I'm also, what's going to happen? I'm not free from the consequences of that choice. And the consequences of that choice is I walk back into slavery.

The very thing Christ set me free from Paul says right here in Galatians, it is for freedom that you've been set free. So be free and don't go back. Don't go back to that yoke of slavery that once kept you away from God. Why would you go back and live in the slave quarters when you've been liberated to live a life unto God? You're now free to choose your master. Choose well. Choose Christ.

He is the only master who will make you completely free and keep you completely free. For when He sets us free, we are free indeed.