

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A
MAN OF GOD, WEEK 9

TITLE: LIVING LETTERS

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 3:1-6

INTRODUCTION: (1) RESUMES, REFERENCES AND
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION ARE TOOLS USED IN
TRYING TO FIND A JOB IN OUR DAY.

* AND A GOOD LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BY A WELL-
KNOWN RELIABLE TRUSTWORTHY PERSON OF POSITION
AND INTEGRITY CAN BE A KEY THAT UNLOCKS AN OPEN
DOOR FOR A JOB HUNTER.

** WELL, IN PAUL'S DAY, A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION
FROM A REPUTABLE PERSON COULD GUARANTEE THE
SUCCESS OF ONE'S ENDEAVORS, IT COULD OPEN DOORS
FOR THAT PERSON IN DIFFERENT VENUES.

*** AND EVEN IN FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY
TRAVELING CHRISTIAN PREACHERS CARRIED LETTERS
OF RECOMMENDATION.

**** AND THESE LETTERS WERE THEIR PASSPORTS TO
ACCEPTANCE AMONG THE CHURCHES.

(2) FOR AS THEY TRAVELED FROM CHURCH TO CHURCH, THEY WOULD PRODUCE THESE LETTERS, PERHAPS SIGNED BY AN APOSTLE OR A PROPHET OR A TEACHER, OR OTHER REPUTABLE PERSONS AND THAT LETTER WOULD GIVE THEM A PLACE TO STAY, IN HOSPITALITY BY OTHER CHRISTIANS, MEALS AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO A CHURCH.

* AND YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW IMPORTANT THESE LETTERS WERE IN A DAY WITH NO CELL PHONES, TEXTING, E-MAILS, TWEETING, FACEBOOK AND INTERNET.

** IN FACT, SOME OF YOU MAY WONDER HOW COULD YOU LIVE WITHOUT THOSE THINGS? HOW DID THEY SURVIVE AND SOME OF YOU THAT ARE YOUNGER MAY BE GETTING THE SHAKES EVEN THINKING ABOUT IT.

*** WELL, MY POINT IS WRITTEN LETTERS OF REFERENCE AND RECOMMENDATION, AND LETTERS IN GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATION WERE VERY VERY IMPORTANT AND ESPECIALLY IN CHRISTIANITY.

**** WELL, APPARENTLY SOME FALSE TEACHERS GAINED ACCESS TO THE CORINTHIANS CHURCH WITH SUCH LETTERS.

(3) BUT INSTEAD OF USING THEIR INFLUENCE TO FURTHER THE CAUSE OF CHRIST, THESE FALSE

APOSTLES CRITICIZED THE APOSTLE PAUL'S AUTHORITY, HIS MESSAGE AND HIS TEACHING.

* AND PART OF THAT CRITICISM WAS PAUL'S LACK OF LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.

** IN OTHER WORDS, SINCE PAUL DID NOT HAVE ANY LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION TO GIVE TO THE CORINTHIANS AT THIS TIME OF HIS LIFE, HOW COULD HE BE LEGITIMATE?

*** HOW COULD HE BE AN AUTHENTIC APOSTLE? HOW COULD PAUL BE THE REAL DEAL?

**** WELL, PAUL WOULD RESPOND TO THESE ACCUSATIONS, WITH THE RISK IT MIGHT APPEAR HE WAS COMMENDING HIMSELF AND BLOWING HIS OWN HORN. AND ANYTIME YOU HAVE TO DEFEND YOURSELF, IT CAN BE COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD.

(4) BUT PAUL'S REAL CONCERN WAS NOT SELF AND HIS AUTHORITY, BUT GOD'S GLORY AND CHRIST'S AUTHORITY. MINISTRY FOR PAUL WAS NOT I, ME, AND MYSELF, BUT IT WAS CHRISTOCENTRIC, REVOLVING AROUND CHRIST, HIS GLORY AND HIS GOSPEL.

* AND TO PAUL, IT SEEMED FOOLISH TO DEFEND HIS MINISTRY AND APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY TO A CHURCH HE

HAD ESTABLISHED HIMSELF TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH.

** FOR THE CORINTHIANS WERE A LIVING LETTER OF CHRIST, KNOWN AND READ BY PEOPLE AROUND THEM.

*** AND PAUL'S CREDENTIALS, PAUL'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WAS NOT WRITTEN WITH INK, BUT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD.

**** IN OTHER WORDS, PAUL'S AUTHENTICITY WAS HIS IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF THE CORINTHIANS, PAUL'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WAS THE CORINTHIANS THEMSELVES, THEIR CHANGED LIVES FROM HIS PREACHING THE GOSPEL AND GOD SAVING THEM.

(5) IT IS TO SAY THE CORINTHIANS THEMSELVES WERE PAUL'S LETTER OF LEGITIMACY, HIS CREDENTIALS. THEY WERE PAUL'S LIVING LETTER WRITTEN IN HIS HEART, KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN.

* THEREFORE IN PAUL'S CASE THERE WAS NO NEED OF A LETTER WRITTEN WITH A PEN AND INK FOR THE CORINTHIANS WERE THE FRUIT OF HIS MINISTRY.

** SO PAUL WILL DEFEND HIMSELF AND HIS AUTHORITY AGAINST THOSE WHOM SAID HE WAS NOT LEGITIMATE AND DID NOT HAVE ANY AUTHORITY OR LETTER OF

RECOMMENDATION BY POINTING TO THE CORINTHIANS, THAT THEY WERE HIS LIVING LETTERS.

*** HENCE I'VE TITLED OUR MESSAGE TODAY, "LIVING LETTERS."

**** AND UNDER THAT THEME AND TITLE, WE'LL LOOK AT 4 POINTS TODAY AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH II CORINTHIANS 3:1-6.

(6) NO. 1 THE COMMENDATION, V. 1; NO. 2 THE CONTRAST, VV. 2&3; NO. 3 THE CONFIDENCE, V. 4; AND NO. 4 THE CONSIDERATION, VV. 5&6.

* AND WITH THOSE POINTS TO HANG YOUR THOUGHTS ON, LOOK AT V. 1 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE COMMENDATION. LOOK AT II CORINTHIANS 3 VERSE 1 PLEASE.

I. THE COMMENDATION, (READ V. 1)

A. NOW PAUL HERE IN V. 1 ASKS 2 QUESTIONS, BOTH OF WHICH DEMAND A NO ANSWER.

*** AND THE FIRST QUESTION IS: "ARE WE BEGINNING TO COMMEND OURSELVES AGAIN?" (AND THE ANSWER IS NO)**

**** AND THE WE WOULD PROBABLY COMMUNICATE TIMOTHY, A CO-LABORER OF PAUL AND PAUL HIMSELF.**

***** AND IT APPEARS PAUL WAS ANTICIPATING AN ACCUSATION THAT HE HAD HEARD FROM THE FALSE TEACHERS THAT HAD INFILTRATED CORINTH.**

****** SO IN ANTICIPATION OF A CHARGE HE HAD HEARD BEFORE, HE ADDS THE ADVERB AGAIN IN V. 1.**

1. HE HAD HEARD THIS CHARGE BEFORE AND NOW WAS ANTICIPATING IT AGAIN.

*** AND THE CHARGE WAS, PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS WERE COMMENDING THEMSELVES.**

**** THAT PAUL WAS COMMENDING HIMSELF IN A SELFISH, PROUD MANNER, THAT PAUL WAS MOTIVATED BY SELF-EXALTATION, THAT HE WAS ONE WHOM WOULD BRAG ABOUT SELF.**

**** AND PAUL WAS THE ANTITHESIS, THE EXACT OPPOSITE OF A PROUD, SELF PROMOTING BRAGGART.**

***** PAUL WAS THE EPITOME OF HUMILITY. BUT PEOPLE WHO ARE OUT AFTER A PERSON LIKE PAUL WILL LIE AND EXAGGERATE TO TEAR DOWN AND MAKE THEIR**

POINT TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF PEOPLE WHO WILL COME TO THEIR SIDE AND FOLLOW THEM.

****** SO PAUL ASKS, ARE WE BEGINNING TO COMMEND OURSELVES AGAIN? AND THE ANSWER IS NO.**

2. THEN HE ASKS: “DO WE NEED, AS SOME, LETTERS OF COMMENDATION, LIT. RECOMMENDATION IN THE NIV AND ESV, TO YOU OR FROM YOU?”

*** AND THE “SOME” HERE ARE THE FALSE TEACHERS, THE FALSE APOSTLES AT CORINTH THAT WERE ATTACKING PAUL’S AUTHORITY AND TEACHING.**

**** AND IN THEIR ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT PAUL THAT PAUL DIDN’T HAVE THE PROPER CREDENTIALS, THE PROPER LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION, THAT HE WAS NOT CERTIFIED, THAT HE WAS A FALSE APOSTLE WITH NO AUTHORITY.**

***** IN DOING THAT, THEY ATTEMPTED TO EXALT THEIR OWN AUTHORITY, FOR THEY HAD, NO DOUBT FAKE LETTERS, FAKE ID’S, FAKE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION.**

****** SO PAUL IS SAYING IN ESSENCE TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WHO OBVIOUSLY WERE GETTING SUCKED INTO THE LIES AND ARGUMENTS OF THE FALSE TEACHERS,**

PAUL WAS SAYING TO THE CORINTHIANS, DO I NEED TO RE-INTRODUCE MYSELF TO YOU AND WHO I AM?

3. DO I NEED A WRITTEN LETTER FROM SOMEONE OR EVEN FROM YOU TO SHOW THAT I AM LEGITIMATE?

*** AND THE ANSWER IS NO. THEY KNEW PAUL WELL, PAUL HAD SPENT 18 MONTHS WITH THEM, THEY KNEW HIS CHARACTER AND LIFE.**

**** SO PAUL WILL CONTRAST IN VV. 2&3 THE FALSE TEACHERS WRITTEN LETTERS WITH HIS LIVING LETTERS. THEREFORE LOOK AT V. 2 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE CONTRAST.**

II. THE CONTRAST, (READ V. 2)

A. NOW PAUL BEGINS IN V. 2 BY SAYING TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS, "YOU ARE OUR LETTER."

*** MEANING: THE CORINTHIANS THEMSELVES WERE PAUL'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.**

**** IT IS TO SAY, PAUL'S AUTHENTICITY WAS EVIDENT FROM HIS IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF THE CORINTHIANS. I MEAN THEIR LIVES HAD BEEN CHANGED, AND YES THEY WERE ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES IN SOME AREAS, BUT THEY HAD BEEN SAVED FROM A LIFE OF VILENESS AND SIN AS CORINTH WAS A WICKED TOWN.**

***** IN FACT PAUL WOULD TALK ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE SAVED OUT OF IN I CORINTHIANS 6:9-11: (QUOTE THEM).**

****** NOW THE DIVINE WORK OF SALVATION AND A CHANGED LIFE THAT FOLLOWS GAVE AMPLE EVIDENCE OF PAUL'S TEACHING AND PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD.**

1. SO THE VERY EXISTENCE OF THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH TESTIFIED TO THE LEGITIMACY OF PAUL, THEIR CHANGED LIVES WERE HIS LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.

*** AND UNLIKE THE FALSE TEACHER'S LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION, PAUL DID NOT CARRY HIS LETTER PER SE IN HIS POCKET OR LUGGAGE, FOR IT WAS WRITTEN IN HIS HEART, HE SAID HERE IN V. 2.**

**** AND THAT EXPRESSION, WRITTEN IN HIS HEART, SHOWED, IT REVEALED PAUL'S GREAT LOVE AND AFFECTION THAT HE HAD FOR THE CORINTHIANS.**

**** AND LATER ON IN II CORINTHIANS 7:3B, IN USING THAT KIND OF LANGUAGE PAUL SAID, "YOU ARE IN OUR HEARTS TO DIE TOGETHER AND TO LIVE TOGETHER."**

***** SO THE CORINTHIANS WERE PRECIOUS TO PAUL, HE LOVED THEM, THEY WERE IN HIS HEART.**

****** AND AFTER HE MAKES THIS AFFECTIONATE STATEMENT, PAUL MAKES ANOTHER POINT BY SAYING THE CORINTHIANS WERE “KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN.”**

2. AND THE TRUTH HERE IS, PAUL’S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WAS NOT A PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE HIDDEN IN HEARTS AND READABLE BY ONLY A FEW PEOPLE. NO, PAUL’S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BY THE CORINTHIANS WAS KNOWN AND READ BY ALL MEN.

*** THE CORINTHIAN’S LIVES WERE ON DISPLAY, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, AND ALL WHO WITNESSED THE TRANSFORMED LIVES OF THE CORINTHIANS HAD READ IT.**

**** AND PAUL CONTINUES TO EXPAND ON THIS WONDERFUL METAPHOR. LOOK AT V. 3 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 3. NOW PAUL WAS NOT THE AUTHOR OF THIS LIVING LETTER, THE CORINTHIAN’S CHANGED LIVES, FOR THE CORINTHIAN’S WERE A LIVING LETTER OF CHRIST, BECAUSE IT IS BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE THAT A PERSON IS SAVED FROM THEIR SINS AND THEN SANCTIFIED.

*** AND YES IT IS THROUGH THE PROCLAMATION OF GOD'S WORD THROUGH FAITHFUL SERVANTS LIKE PAUL THAT GOD SAVES SINNERS, BUT PAUL DIDN'T SAVE THEM, CHRIST DID, SO THE CORINTHIANS ULTIMATELY WERE LIVING LETTERS OF CHRIST.**

**** BUT IN GOD'S PLAN OF SAVING THEM, "CARED FOR BY US" IN V. 3. AND THIS PHRASE ELUDES TO PAUL'S MINISTRY, PAUL'S ROLE IN GOD'S PLAN AS THE PROCLAIMER OF THE GOSPEL THAT THE LETTER CAME TO BE WRITTEN.**

***** SO IN THIS METAPHOR, CHRIST WROTE THE LETTER, AND PAUL IN HIS MINISTRY OF PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL DELIVERED IT TO THE CORINTHIANS.**

****** PAUL DIDN'T WRITE IT, HE DELIVERED THE TRUTH AS PAUL SAID IN I CORINTHIANS 3:6-7 (QUOTE THEM) ALSO QUOTE ROMANS 10:14&15 AND 17 AND I PETER 1:23&25.**

1. NOW AS PAUL RETURNS TO HIS ANALOGY AND THIS ILLUSTRATION OF A LIVING LETTER, HE SAYS THAT THIS LETTER, UNLIKE THE FALSE TEACHER'S LETTERS, WAS WRITTEN NOT WITH INK, BUT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD.

*** HENCE, ANYONE CAN WRITE A LETTER WITH INK ON PAPER, BUT ONLY CHRIST, THROUGH THE**

SUPERNATURAL POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD, CAN WRITE A LIVING LETTER.

**** FOR ONLY THROUGH THE REGENERATING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD DOES A PERSON BECOME A LIVING LETTER, A NEW CREATION. THE WORD OF GOD APPLIED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD CREATES LIFE AND ENABLES A DEAD PERSON TO COME ALIVE SPIRITUALLY AND TRULY REPENT AND RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST.**

***** AND THE RESULT OF THIS WORK OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD WAS A LIVING LETTER, KNOWN AND READ BY ALL, THEREFORE PAUL NEEDED NO FURTHER AUTHENTICATION OF HIS MINISTRY.**

****** BUT PAUL MAKES ONE MORE CONTRAST AT THE END OF V. 3, FOR PAUL NOTES THIS LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION WAS NOT WRITTEN ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF HUMAN HEARTS.**

2. AND WITH THIS STATEMENT, PAUL DIRECTLY CONTRASTS THE FALSE TEACHERS WHO PREACHED A FALSE GOSPEL THAT MIXED GRACE AND KEEPING THE LAW.

*** FOR THE TABLETS OF STONE WERE WHAT THE 10 COMMANDMENTS WERE WRITTEN UPON. AND JUDAIZERS OF PAUL'S DAY SAID, YOU MUST HAVE FAITH PLUS, FAITH IN CHRIST PLUS KEEP THE LAW. FAITH IN CHRIST PLUS CIRCUMCISION. FAITH IN CHRIST, PLUS CEREMONIES.**

**** BUT THE BIBLE TEACHES WE ARE JUSTIFIED, SAVED BY FAITH ALONE, QUOTE ROMANS 4:5 AND ROMANS 5:1**

***** AND OF COURSE THE LAW DRIVES US TO CHRIST SO THAT WE CAN BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, QUOTE GALATIANS 3:24&25, ROMANS 3:20.**

****** SO THE LAW STRIPS US OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, SHOWS US OUR NEED OF CHRIST AND DRIVES US TO THE SAVIOR. THE BAD NEWS PREPARES US FOR THE GOOD NEWS.**

3. AND AT CORINTH, GOD HAD WRITTEN NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE, BUT ON HUMAN HEARTS. THE LAW WAS WRITTEN ON EXTERNAL TABLETS OF STONE, BUT IN SALVATION GOD CHANGES THE HEART AND GIVES A NEW ONE.

*** AND AS JEREMIAH THE PROPHET RECORDED IN JEREMIAH 31:33 – “BUT THIS IS THE COVENANT WHICH I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS,” DECLARES THE LORD, “I WILL PUT MY LAW WITHIN THEM AND ON THEIR HEART I WILL WRITE IT; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.”**

**** AND SIMILARLY EZEKIEL THE PROPHET WROTE ABOUT A FUTURE DAY AND SAID IN EZEKIEL 11:19&20 –**

V. 19 – “AND I WILL GIVE THEM ONE HEART, AND PUT A NEW SPIRIT WITHIN THEM. AND I WILL TAKE THE HEART OF STONE OUT OF THEIR FLESH AND GIVE THEM A HEART OF FLESH,

V. 20 – THAT THEY MAY WALK IN MY STATUES, AND KEEP MY ORDINANCES AND DO THEM. THEN THEY WILL BE MY PEOPLE, AND I SHALL BE THEIR GOD.”

***** AND THIS NEW COVENANT PROMISE HAS BEEN FULFILLED, SIGNED AND PAID FOR BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST. AND NOW GOD DOES A WORK IN HEARTS, AS HE DID WITH THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.**

****** AND THE TRANSFORMED LIVES OF THE CORINTHIANS AND THE REALITY THAT GOD’S LAW WAS WRITTEN ON THEIR HEARTS, PROVED PAUL’S AUTHENTICITY THEY WERE HIS LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.**

4. WHICH LEADS US TO OUR THIRD POINT TODAY IN V. 4, THE CONFIDENCE OF PAUL, LOOK AT V. 4 PLEASE.

III. THE CONFIDENCE, (READ V. 4)

A. NOW PAUL WAS SUPREMELY GOD CONFIDENT!

*** AND IN THE MIDST OF CRITICISM AND ATTACKS BY FALSE TEACHERS, PAUL WAS NOT SHAKEN IN HIS LASER FOCUS IN MINISTRY AND SERVING HIS LORD.**

**** HE WAS NOT COMMENDING HIMSELF AS HE SAID IN V. 1 AND HE WAS NOT AN EGO-MANIAC, BUT PAUL DID NOT LACK CONFIDENCE IN WHAT GOD CALLED HIM TO DO.**

***** BUT UNDERSTAND PAUL'S CONFIDENCE WAS NOT AN ARROGANT BRASH TRUST IN HIS OWN ABILITIES.**

****** IT WAS NOT SELF-CONFIDENCE, BUT CLEARLY CONFIDENCE THROUGH CHRIST TOWARD GOD.**

1. PAUL ACCOMPLISHED HIS MINISTRY NOT BY HIS OWN ABILITIES OR TALENTS OR EDUCATION, BUT THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRIST WORKING IN HIM.

*** HOWEVER, THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE SELF-CONFIDENT AND ARROGANT TRUSTING IN THEMSELVES.**

**** IN CONTRAST, THE GOAL OF PAUL'S MINISTRY WAS THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRIST TO PLEASE GOD – "THROUGH CHRIST TOWARD GOD."**

***** AND WE SEE THAT FREQUENTLY, DEPENDENCE ON GOD'S GRACE AND POWER, QUOTE PHILIPPIANS 4:13, I CORINTHIANS 15:10, I TIMOTHY 1:12.**

****** AND BELOVED, IN APPLICATION, OUR CONFIDENCE IN LIFE AND MINISTRY SHOULD BE THROUGH THE POWER OF CHRIST TO PLEASE GOD, NEVER IN SELF-CONFIDENCE.**

2. AND PAUL EXPANDS ON THIS CONFIDENCE IN VV. 5&6, BY GIVING THE CORINTHIANS AND US SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER, LOOK AT V. 5 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE CONSIDERATION.

IV. THE CONSIDERATION, (READ V. 5)

A. NOW SO THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT PAUL'S STATEMENT ABOUT HIS CONFIDENCE, HE ADDS THE DISCLAIMER: "NOT THAT WE ARE ADEQUATE IN OURSELVES."

*** AND THE GREEK ADJECTIVE FOR ADEQUATE HERE LIT. MEANS COMPETENT, SUFFICIENT, FIT, OR SUFFICIENT IN ABILITY.**

**** PAUL'S SUFFICIENCY, PAUL'S COMPETENCE, HIS CONFIDENCE, WAS NOT IN HIS OWN ABILITY, STRENGTH OR WISDOM. HE KNEW ON HIS OWN HE COULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING. AS JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES IN JOHN 15:5 (QUOTE IT).**

***** AND PAUL UNDERSTOOD THIS TRUTH COMPLETELY, FOR IN THE REST OF V. 5, WE SEE THAT HE HAD SO LITTLE TRUST IN HIS HUMAN ABILITIES THAT HE MADE THE INCREDIBLE CONFESSION THAT HE WAS UNWILLING "TO CONSIDER ANYTHING AS COMING FROM HIMSELF – OURSELVES."**

****** AND THE GREEK VERB CONSIDER LIT. MEANS TO CALCULATE, TO COMPUTE, TO COUNT, TO CREDIT TO ONE'S ACCOUNT.**

1. AND APART FROM GOD'S POWER AND GRACE HE WAS NOT ADEQUATE TO SERVE OR DO ANYTHING.

2. THEREFORE HE SAID AT THE END OF V. 5, OUR ADEQUACY IS FROM GOD. PAUL HAD PROPER PERSPECTIVE, HE WAS NOT A CHRISTIAN FILLED WITH PRIDE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE, BUT HE WAS GOD CONFIDENT.

*** AND UNLIKE SOME CHRISTIANS TODAY WHO SAY YOU NEED TO BELIEVE MORE IN YOURSELF, PAUL WAS DETERMINED TO BELIEVE LESS IN HIMSELF AND BE DEPENDENT ON HIS LORD WHO WAS HIS ADEQUACY.**

**** AND TWO MORE CONSIDERATIONS IN V. 6 AND I'LL MAKE SOME APPLICATIONS. LOOK AT V. 6 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 6. NOW AGAIN, GOD IS THE ONE WHO MAKES US ADEQUATE, A CONTINUATION OF V. 5.

*** BUT SPECIFICALLY WHAT PAUL AND TIMOTHY AND OTHER CO-LABORERS WERE ADEQUATE FOR (THE US OF V. 6) THEIR ADEQUACY WAS AS SERVANTS OF THE NEW COVENANT.**

**** AND THE WORD SERVANTS IS THE GREEK WORD DIAKONOS TRANSLATED DEACON ON A FEW OCCASIONS IN THE N.T. AND LIT. MEANS ONE WHO SERVES ANOTHER, ONE WHO SERVES A MASTER, ONE WHO SERVES A KING.**

***** AND PAUL'S MASTER WAS CHRIST AND THEREFORE HE WAS A SERVANT OF THE NEW COVENANT. PAUL WAS A PROCLAIMER OF THE NEW COVENANT, NOT THE COVENANT OF THE LAW, BUT THE NEW COVENANT OF GRACE SIGNED BY CHRIST IN HIS BLOOD, QUOTE MATTHEW 26:28.**

****** AND BELOVED THE HEART OF THE NEW COVENANT AND THE GOSPEL MESSAGE IS THE CROSS, NOT RATIFIED WITH THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS BUT BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.**

1. AND PAUL AS A SERVANT OF THE NEW COVENANT WAS A SERVANT NOT OF THE LETTER BUT OF THE SPIRIT.

*** AND HERE WE HAVE A CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LETTER WHICH KILLS AND THE SPIRIT WHICH GIVES LIFE, AND THAT CONTRAST OF THE LETTER – THE LAW IS THE OLD COVENANT, TO THE SPIRIT WHICH COMMUNICATES THE NEW COVENANT.**

**** BELOVED, THE TWO TERMS LETTER AND SPIRIT ARE WORDS TO DESCRIBE TWO PERIODS OF REDEMPTIVE HISTORY.**

***** THE LETTER REFERS TO THE OLD COVENANT, THE LETTER OF THE LAW, AND EXTERNAL ADHERENCE TO THE LETTER OF THE LAW WILL NOT RESULT IN SALVATION, QUOTE ROMANS 3:28.**

****** AND THE POINT IS THAT THE LETTER KILLS THOSE WHO SEEK SALVATION THROUGH KEEPING THE LAW WHETHER THEY LIVED IN O.T. TIMES OR TODAY, BECAUSE NO ONE HAS KEPT IT PERFECTLY, AND JAMES 2:10 SAYS: (QUOTE IT).**

2. BUT IN CONTRAST TO THE LAW, BY THE SPIRIT PAUL HAD IN MIND THE NEW COVENANT INAUGURATED BY THE DEATH OF GOD'S SON JESUS CHRIST FOR SINNERS.

*** AND AGAIN BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE, SINNERS ARE RECONCILED TO A HOLY GOD, NOT BY OUR WORKS OR LAW KEEPING BUT FAITH ALONE, SOLA FIDE IN LATIN.**

**** AND THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT MAKE REFERENCE TO WHAT THE FALSE TEACHERS, THE JUDAIZERS TAUGHT, COMPARED TO SPIRIT AND THE NEW COVENANT, WHICH PAUL TAUGHT. AND THE LAW LEADS TO DEATH BUT THE SPIRIT BRINGS LIFE.**

IN WRAP UP: (1) I WANT TO MAKE A COUPLE OF APPLICATIONS FROM OUR STUDY TODAY. NO. 1 WHAT ARE YOU TRUSTING IN TODAY FOR FORGIVENESS OF SINS?

*** YOUR OWN ABILITY, YOUR GOOD WORKS, YOUR GOOD DEEDS, EVEN RELIGION FOR SALVATION? REMEMBER THE LETTER KILLS, IT BRINGS ETERNAL DEATH SEPARATED FROM GOD IN HELL FOREVER.**

**** AND IF YOU THINK YOU ARE MADE RIGHT WITH A HOLY GOD BY KEEPING THE 10 COMMANDMENTS, YOUR WORKS AND EFFORTS, OR BECAUSE YOU ARE RELIGIOUS, YOU HAVE BEEN DECEIVED.**

***** YOUR NEED TODAY, TO TURN FROM YOUR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PRIDE AND TURN TO JESUS CHRIST IN REPENTANT FAITH.**

****** THERE ARE TWO BASIC RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY. DO AND DONE. TRUE BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY IS FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST, NOT FAITH PLUS. TURN TO CHRIST TODAY.**

(2) NO. 2 TRUE BELIEVERS, YOUR LIFE IS A LIVING LETTER READ BY PEOPLE EVERYDAY. AND YOU'VE HEARD THIS BEFORE, THE ONLY BIBLE SOME PEOPLE READ IS YOUR LIFE.

*** HOW MUCH OF CHRIST DO THEY SEE IN US? HOW MUCH LIGHT DO THEY SEE? AND YES WE MUST DIRECT THEM TO THE SCRIPTURES.**

**** BUT ARE WE SALTY CHRISTIANS THAT MAKE PEOPLE THIRSTY FOR THE WATER OF LIFE? WE ARE LIVING LETTERS, WHAT KIND OF MESSAGE DO PEOPLE AROUND US GET OF CHRIST AND HIS TRANSFORMING SAVING POWER.**

***** BUT QUICKLY, LAST OF ALL. PRIDE IS A DEBILITATING SIN AND A DAMNING SIN.**

****** AND ON ONE HAND, FOR THE BELIEVER, GOD RESISTS THE PROUD AND GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE LIKE PAUL. SO MAY WE HAVE PROPER PERSPECTIVE AND NOT COMMEND OURSELVES AND BLOW OUR OWN HORNS.**

(3) BUT REALIZE THAT WE ARE ADEQUATE ONLY IN CHRIST AND KNOWING THAT, DO WHAT HE HAS CALLED US TO DO IN HUMILITY.

*** BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, PRIDE IS A DAMNING SIN IN THINKING YOU CAN JUSTIFY YOURSELF IN THE EYES OF A HOLY GOD. YOU CAN ONLY BE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE. I CALL YOU TO HIM TODAY. (LET'S PRAY)**