

# Our Sufficiency Is of God

By Dr. Kenny Baldwin

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**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 3:1-6  
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**Crossroads Baptist Church**  
5811 Hoffmans Lane  
Bailey's Crossroads, VA 22041

**Website:** [www.ourcrossroads.org](http://www.ourcrossroads.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/ourcrossroads](http://www.sermonaudio.com/ourcrossroads)

## 2 Corinthians 3.

1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? 2 Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: 3 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. 4 And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 6 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Let the church say amen.

*Father, I pray that you add thy blessing to the reading of your word. Cleanse me of sin, empty me of self, and fill me with your Spirit. Help me to be a blessing whatever the cost, it's all for the cause. Help us to follow. Somebody today may need to follow you to salvation so they don't die and go to hell. O God, help them to follow you. Thank you, Lord, you never led us astray. Bless now the preaching of your word. Keep the devil out of the way and keep Jesus lifted up. In his name we pray. Amen.*

You may be seated. Thank you for standing.

The providence of God led the Apostle Paul to the city of Corinth where he spent a year and a half and planted a church. You've heard me say many times that Corinth wasn't exactly the best place to plant a church by men's standards because that city was full of sin, but could I tell you a city full of sin is a great place to plant a church. How else are people going to get out of sin unless they get somebody that tells them about a Savior. And God planted a church there and I imagine people thought you couldn't plant one there and yet God did build one there and God built a good church there and that church was made up of people that had been justified and sanctified, they had been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ and Paul said, "You used to be some folks that are ashamed of what you had done but now you're saved and you're going to heaven. You've been washed in

the blood of Christ. He's changed your life and God has done a great work in your life." God did that in Corinth and, by the way, God can do that anywhere.

Not long after Paul had left there and planted the church, that church got infiltrated with sin, that got infiltrated with division, discord. They became a disgrace and the man who had planted that church got burdened about what was going on in that church, picked up his pen and wrote the first letter, the first letter to the church of Corinth known in our Bibles as 1 Corinthians and he dealt with every issue of sin they had in that church. I don't have time to give you an exposition on the book of 1 Corinthians, but I will tell you he dealt with their division; he dealt with their cliques; he dealt with their carnality; he dealt with their envying and jealousy; he dealt with them tolerating fornication and incest in the church; he dealt with Christian people having legal disputes between each other that they wouldn't settle the Bible way and they tried to settle the legal way; he dealt with them causing others to stumble; he dealt with them misusing the gifts of the Spirit; he dealt with their confusion about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; he dealt with them about giving faithfully to the Lord. Every issue that the church was dealing with, Paul took the word of God and he dealt with it and he dealt with them rather harshly, perhaps wondering if he was too hard until later he got word from Titus who had visited that church and said, "Let me tell you something, them harsh words you gave them, they got that stuff right. Their fornication, they got it right. Their sin, they got it right. Those decisions that they had made wrongly, they got them right. They had some godly sorrow. They've cleared themselves. They've gotten their sin right." And by the way, none of us are perfect but when we're confronted about our sin, we need to get it right.

That was good news. Titus also came bearing some bad news. They had made a promise to give money to those that were in Jerusalem and it was a year later and they hadn't kept the promise, hence 2 Corinthians 8, 9 and 10, which we also use, 7, 8, 9 we use for missions giving and he reminded them of those three chapters, 8, 9 and 10, that if you made a promise to God, you need to keep it. Amen.

But there was a broader issue going on in the church of Corinth, false teachers by the name of Judaizers had crept in and into this church that Paul had planted, that had begun as a great church, heresy had crept in. Listen to me: you get the wrong kind of teaching in a great church, it will go from a great church to a bad church. Amen. Thank God for good music, thank God for good facilities, thank God for great nurseries, thank God for a good security team, thank God for clean bathrooms, thank God for all those things that churches have but I'll tell you what keeps churches pure is sound Bible preaching, line upon line, precept upon precept. Don't pick the church by how the choir rocks, pick the church by how the preacher handles the word of God. That will keep you straight. Amen. That's good preaching if I'm preaching it.

Judaizers. Here's the problem with Judaism: it was a mixture of the law and grace. Here's what these Judaizers said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, you need grace in order to be saved but you also need to keep the law." So they said in order to go to heaven, you have to work to go to heaven and so they mixed this in and they said, "Yes, a little bit of grace, a little bit of works." In other words, salvation is not all God, it's some God and some us. And they

crept into this church. They taught that the root of salvation was works instead of the fruit of being saved. Are you listening to me now? If you want a deeper exposition on Judaism, read the book of Galatians and Paul deals with it in those six chapters and really silences, if you would, the argument of Judaizers. Listen to me: there are works in there and there is grace in there but you'd better make sure you put them in the right place. Amen? Listen to me: good works are not the root of your salvation, they are the fruit of your salvation. Grace is the root of your salvation and good works are the fruit of your salvation. You say, "I don't understand." I'm just simply saying you don't go to heaven because you're good, you go to heaven because of God's grace and when God's grace saves your wretched soul, then you'll start doing good. But you don't do good to get saved, you do good because you got saved. Somebody say amen.

So they were coming in and Paul was a little protective about this. They had infiltrated the church and it was affecting the people that he loved so he picks up his pen and writes 2 Corinthians and he's addressing these folks that are being affected by Judaizers while at the same time addressing the Judaizers themselves. Now, they were infiltrating, if you would, sowing the seed of heresy in the church. By the way, not every building with a steeple on it is a good church. Not every man with Rev. before his name is a God-called preacher. Not everybody that opens the Bible knows how to handle it. Amen. Not every television preacher you need to be watching. Not every theological writer you need to be reading after. Amen. Get up and go to church and listen to somebody that preaches the word of God and he ought not be afraid of you looking at the Bible when he's preaching to make sure he's preaching the truth. Many people have been led astray by these shysters. Some are men and some are women who don't belong up here either.

They were sowing the seed of heresy in the church. Here's the other thing they were doing: they were questioning the legitimacy of Paul's apostleship. In other words, they were coming into the church and they were stirring up these Corinthians, "That man that spent a year and a half with y'all and taught you the truth, told you about Jesus, led you to the Lord, told you to get baptized, formed this church, he ain't the real deal. He ain't a real apostle. He's a fake. He's a counterfeit. He's not legitimate. He's not straight down the line. He's a liar. He's a phony." And now these people that Paul loved, those that he had begotten in the truth of the Gospel were now kind of battle whether to believe Paul or whether to believe these Judaizers. I could imagine there were some personal feelings that Paul was writing this letter with, and if we're not careful when people attack us, we'll take things so personal that we forget to deal with principles over passion. Come on. I mean, nobody likes to be run down, nobody likes to be questioned, nobody likes to be slandered, nobody likes to be hated on, nobody likes to be doubted, so Paul is picking up his pen and he's writing to these folks in Corinth and he's got this mindset of, "I don't want you to fall prey to heresy. I want you to live according to the truth of the word of God. I want you to be who God wants you to be. I want you to go where God wants you to go. I want you to do what God wants you to do. When God saved you, he began a good work in you and you can live that work out through his grace and I'm not very keen on what them people are telling y'all about me either."

So in 2 Corinthians 3, he's writing to deal with these issues. He could have lambasted them and said, "How dare you." He could have gone off for the next five or six chapters and gave them a piece of his mind. He could have cited his training under Gamaliel. He could have bragged on his master of multiple languages. He could have said to them, "Do you realize how big of a Pharisee I was? What family I was born in? How much I studied the law? Do you realize how well trained I am and you've got the nerve to tell people that I love that I'm not the real deal?" He could have spent a whole chapter bragging about himself and if anybody had reason to brag about how smart, how wise, how trained and how talented he was, Paul could brag but in 2 Corinthians 3 he says to those Corinthians, to those Judaizers, and to anybody that was questioning whether or not he could do the work of God, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Now hear this now: "hikanos" it is in the Greek, it literally means "considerably strong; fit; suitable; competent; worthy enough." That's what the word "sufficient" means. Now watch what Paul is saying, Paul is saying, "I stand competent, able, worthy. I stand with everything I need. I've got enough to keep on preaching. I've got enough to keep on singing. I've got enough to keep on serving. I've got enough to keep on standing. I've got enough to keep on working. I've got enough to keep on witnessing. I've got enough to keep on worshipping. I've got enough to keep on praying. I've got enough to keep on praising. I've got enough to keep on persevering." And he said, "My enoughness doesn't come from my school, it doesn't come from my talent, it doesn't come from my genetics, it doesn't come from my teachers, it doesn't come from my charisma, it doesn't come from my personality, my sufficiency is of God." And he said, "That's why I'm still standing."

I want to preach on that today because, I'm telling you, the more that I pastor, the more places I travel, the more Christians I'm around, too much of Christianity is bound up in man-made talents, human resources, the personality of a man. Thank God for personality and we've all got our own personality but Crossroads Baptist Church is not going to stand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a postmodern society where they've got all kinds of mess going on in the world, Crossroads is not going to make it on the personality of your pastor. Crossroads is not going to make it on the talent of this choir. Crossroads is not going to make it on the well-dressed nature of our men or the hard-working attitude of our women. Crossroads is not going to make it on retreats, on conferences, on giving, on facilities. Crossroads is not going to make it on social media, on the dissemination of great information or how we package our product, and I'm for all those things, but Crossroads Baptist Church is going to make it with every man, woman, boy or girl realizing, "My worthiness, my sufficiency, my spiritual competency is not in me, it's God."

He's enough. And whose competency are you serving? Why is it that people are falling off? Well known preachers falling in sin? Because they can stand up and captivate an audience with the skill of eloquence but eloquence may keep the crowd looking at you for 45 minutes but it won't keep your eyes from looking at the wrong woman unless you are leaning on the sufficiency of Almighty God. Preach, pastor!

Now let me quickly give you a couple of things from this passage of Scripture. Our sufficiency is of God. 1. I want you to notice Paul lists the credibility of his credentials.

"Oh, so y'all don't think I'm real?" That's what he's saying. "Y'all don't think I'm real? Is there an asking of letters? Do we begin to commend ourselves? Need we as some others epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" He's saying, "Y'all need some references on me? Y'all need me to get on whatever form of communication and call some well-known preachers in the area and tell them to send y'all a letter and vouch for me? 'Oh, Paul is a real apostle. Oh, the apostle is the real deal. We've been around Paul. We met Paul when he first got saved. We heard about the testimony of Paul. We've seen God work in Paul.' Do I need those kind of letters? Do I need human credentials? Do I need man-made verification? Do I need the reference by somebody?" By the way, we'd better be careful when we lean on the opinions of man more than we lean on the verdict of Almighty God, and we're living in a world today where men love to brag on what everybody thinks about them, on how many hits they have, how many Facebook followers they have, how many Instagram posts people have liked. Let me tell you something: that will come crashing down when the flesh gets riled up and the devil jumps on your back. Paul said, "You're asking about letters. Let me give you an answer of lives. Ye are epistles written on our hearts, known and read of all men." Paul said, "I don't have any letters to pass out and tell you what people have said about me," he said, "but you go to that church of Corinth, you show up on a Sunday morning and stop pass one of those pews and I'll show you a drunk that used to drink all the time that's sober now; I'll show you a liar that's learned how to tell the truth; I'll tell you a couple that knows what marriage is all about; I'll show you a son of a drug addict who is living a clean life. Forget about letters, show me some lives."

Do you want some credibility? Do you want some credibility for whether or not you're real? Show me whose life you're touching. I tire of bragging Christians who know a lot of Bible but have failed to deposit it in anybody else. Oh, I don't want my living to be in vain. Listen, I've only got one life and I'll tell you, sometimes like during this season of life, sometimes it seems like that I'm just running all kinds of different directions at one time and preaching here and preaching there in this place and that place, and I'm telling you, the arm of flesh will fail you and sometimes you sit down in a car and you start thinking, "Man, is this body going to tick any longer? Is this mind going to remember where I am? When I open my mouth, let something that makes sense come out of my mouth." Then I'm reminded that when I stand at Crossroads Baptist Church, I'm not on the American Idol stage, I'm not on Who Wants to be a Millionaire stage, I'm not on the America's Got Talent stage, I'm not in the NBA playoffs, I'm not in the Major League World Series, I'm not trying to handle the stock market. Sitting in this building today are sinners that used to be going to hell but under the preaching of the word of God, they got saved, they got baptized, their lives have been changed. If I never make a million, if I never preach on TBN, let me stand up here and touch somebody's life. Who are you touching? Amen.

"Well, pastor, do you want to know how legitimate I am? Listen to me sing a special." That isn't good enough. Somebody out in the world can sing about a better special than you. "Well, listen to me putting together a lesson." That isn't good enough. Thank God for it but you'd better make sure that when you handle the business of Almighty God, you're touching somebody's life.

Oh, I want to touch somebody. I want to touch somebody. That's why I'm standing up here this morning. I'm not standing up here this morning for a paycheck. I'm not standing up here this morning because I like being in charge. I'm not standing up here this morning because I want somebody to see me on the camera. I'm standing up here this morning because I believe that the all-seeing hand of God at the providence of God woke somebody up this morning, started them on their way, gave them clothes on their back, a roof on their head, gas in their car, and a right mind, gave them the will to go to a church that maybe they don't normally go to, they pulled in the parking lot wondering if they'd find a parking space. We double park, triple park, trying to keep people from getting a ticket. You say, "Why do you fill up this parking lot? Why are you doing what you're doing?" Because maybe when I finish preaching somebody is going to come to the altar and say, "I've decided to follow Jesus. I'm ready to serve God. I ain't gonna run my wife down. I ain't gonna disobey my parents anymore. I ain't gonna listen to that dirty music. I'm ready to serve the Lord." That's my answer to the critics. Amen. "Well, what's so special about Crossroads Baptist Church?" Nothing other than the fact people come here and their lives get changed. I don't know what you're after but that's what I'm after.

The asking about letters, the answer of lives, the author of legitimacy. Who wrote the letter? Verse 3, "not ink, the Spirit of the living God." Remember, the letter is a life. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Do you remember what your letter looked like before you met Jesus? Amen. Amen. I mean, before you met Jesus, your letter was signed with the devil. Amen. Your letter was connected to Adam. Amen. Your return address was hell. Somebody help me preach! But now that you know the Lord, he didn't X out the things on the paper, no, no, no, no, he cleaned the whole paper and he wrote you a brand new letter. Do you know what it says? "Saved by grace. Adopted into his family. Born again by the Spirit of God. Headed to heaven. Never going to hell. Indwelt by the Holy Ghost of God. God's his Father. Jesus is Savior. Holy Ghost is comforter." And it's written, signed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

The asking of letters, the answer with lives, the author of legitimacy, the assurance for our labor. Verse 4, "And such trust have we through Christ. Because let me tell you something: I have people all around trying to doubt I'm real. I'm not going to spend the rest of my life visiting every city or visiting every conversation where my haters reside. I'm not going to look for them. Let them come and find me and when they find me, let them look at what this Gospel I'm preaching is doing to people that are listening to it." Amen. And by the way, let us never sway away from that. Amen. Thank God for hand-clapping and foot-stomping but when you leave out this building, you'd better take those hands that were clapping and those feet that were stomping and knock the devil out and go somewhere and tell somebody about Jesus. You'd better take that foot that was stomping and make sure you take it to the right place tomorrow. And those hands that were clapping and make sure you don't put them on somebody that doesn't belong to you, those eyes that were looking at that choir and make sure they aren't looking at any pornographic site. You'd better take that hearing that was listening to that Gospel singing and make sure it isn't listening to any hip-hop nonsense. I'm trying to tell you the only way I can live for God when I leave this place is that my sufficiency is of God.

2. Not only the credibility of his credentials but, if you would, the contrast in covenants. He says, "Here's the problem with Judaizers, they're hung up on the law, the old covenant." He says, "Christ comes bringing a new covenant." He said, "Now I want you to notice, let's compare these two. Let's compare their ministry production. What did the old covenant do?" Well, I'm glad you asked. Verse 6, the Bible says the old covenant hath a letter that killeth. Verse 7, the old covenant has "a ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." This is the law.

"Pastor, I don't understand. I don't understand how the law killed?" Well, I'll tell you how it killed: the law kills because when you read it, you find out you can't keep it. I'm teaching now, listen, listen: the purpose of the law was to elicit the awareness in the life of a human being that outside of God we're no good, and the Ten Commandments were given as a law of God to elicit man's realization of his need for God. The more I read the Bible, the more I realize how bad I need God. Listen to me now: one ministry production, is that of a sentence of condemnation. The law condemns me. But I want to tell you about this new covenant that comes through grace through Jesus Christ. The old covenant brings a sentence of condemnation but the new covenant brings a spirit of conversion. Aren't you glad that where sin did abound, grace did much more abound? Now the law came bringing to us a realization that we're sinners but, thank God, the fulfillment of that law came through the Lamb of Jesus Christ and when the law condemned us, Jesus died and where sin abounded, grace did abound. Now hear me now, Paul said, "Don't get hung up on the past."

The ministry and production, notice the manifesting phenomenon. He said Moses went up and got the law. When he came down, there was a glow on him. The glow was so bright the people couldn't look at him. Are you hearing me now? But he pulled down a veil. Look at the Scripture. "Moses put a veil over his face," verse 13, "that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." "Now, Moses have you been with God?" You read Exodus 34, Moses went up on the mountain with God and after he had come down with God, he was glowing. By the way, after you get around God, you ought to glow too. There is something wrong with these dark Christians and I'm not talking about complexion. We're all different complexions but when God shines through us, there ought to be a light on us. There is something wrong with people saying they've been hanging with Jesus but they're always talking about dark stuff and dirty stuff and wicked stuff and vile stuff and unbecoming stuff for a Christian. The more I hang with Jesus, the more he shines on me. You say, "I want people to know I've been with Jesus." Let me tell you something: they'll know. You'll have a glow on you.

Moses pulled the veil over his face. Well, he didn't want them to see the glow? No, the Bible says he didn't want them to see the end. Here's what Moses knew, "I'm glowing but my glow is going to fade. I'm covering my face so that when my glow fades, they don't see the end of my glow." That's what the law does. The law shines but it shines and fades, but Christ came with something different than the law. Christ came with grace. Somebody say amen. You see, the law gives us a fading glow of a system but Christ gives us the faithful glory of the Son. The veil is done away in Christ. The law is like a

man holding a candle in the dark at nighttime, but grace is light when the sun comes up in the morning. Many religions are bound up in doing stuff. "If you do it, if you get baptized, if you speak in a tongue, if you pay tithes, if you take the right hand of fellowship, you'll get saved." That candle burns a little while and then it fades out. Christianity isn't based on doing, it's based on what Jesus did. He died, he was buried, and he rose again. It's not nighttime anymore. The Son has risen. And Paul is providing a contrast. Is there anybody that thinks that what he does for God is bound up in himself? Is stuck on man and not stuck on the Master?

Lastly and I'll close. The credibility of his credentials, the contrast in covenants, and the clarity in Christ. Notice, if you would, he says in verse 18, but now we've got an open face. Huh? Verse 15, "the veil is on their heart." He said to this day. Moses had the veil in front of him so the people of God couldn't see when his glow faded. He's says here's the explanation of Israel: they've still got a veil. The hardest people to lead to the Lord today are Jews. They'll tell you that the Messiah still hasn't come and they're still trusting in what they do to go to heaven but do you know what? Jews aren't the only people like that. Come on, somebody say amen. You can go down the road to some churches now in America and let me tell you something, you can sit in church for two hours and can't find out how to go to heaven. You can find out how to join that church. You can find out how to get a position. You can find out how to make money. You can find out how to get some self-esteem and still die and go to hell. Do you know why? They've got a veil over their eyes. They've got blindness over their eyes. And by the way, when you've got a veil over your eyes, it'll blind you to Christ and you'll go to other things because when you don't lean on Christ, you've got to lean on a crutch. Hence drug addiction. Alcohol. Depression. All these things that seem to be a crutch for people to lean on, why? They're trying to find something they can trust in only to find out that eventually your weight gets so heavy that that crutch breaks, but in Christ, he's the solid rock. And on Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. Do you remember the day you met Christ? All of a sudden it was like that veil was lifted and you began to find out, "I've been looking at the wrong place. I've been looking at the wrong person. I've been trying the wrong performance. I don't need to trust in myself. He died for me. He was buried for me. He rose again for me." And when that veil comes up, you begin to see Jesus for who he is.

Wow, that's why he came, to get the blinders off your eyes. The blindness of the law gives us a limited capability, a level of callousness. I was telling my Sunday School class this morning about the one lady who said, "I finally got in touch with my inner self and she's just as confused as I am." You can spend the rest of your life looking for your inner self and die and go to hell. Amen. You aren't going to find you until you find him and he'll introduce you to who you are. Amen. You say, "Well, you YOLO, you only live once. We've got to find a champion inside of us and build up our self-esteem and learn how to make money and learn..." Let me tell you something, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Paul said, "I had all of that." Solomon said, "I had all of that and it was vanity." He said, "But when I got Christ, the blinders came off my eyes. I set all that stuff aside. I count it but dung. I'll tell you what I want to know, I want to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his



sufferings being made conformable unto his death. I want the mind of Christ to be in me which is also in him who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man, and being found and fashioned as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God has highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that one day at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Somebody in here is drowning in immorality, drowning in drug addiction, drowning in material chasing, drowning in trying to find out who you are. Drop all that nonsense, look to Jesus, get that veil off your face and find out he's enough.

He's enough. This is the message for our day and it's the one we're going to preach up in here. I'm not trying to pastor a bunch of millionaires. Amen. The love of money is the root of all evil. If God gave us a church full of millionaires, we'd have more sin than we have now, and I'm not against one or two of you becoming a millionaire, just love Jesus first so when that money hits your tank, you know how to honor God with a lot because you were honoring him with a little.

Listen, I'm not trying to pastor a choir of skilled musicians and I'm not offended with skilled musicianship but if all they do is sing with skill and not the touch of the Spirit of God, as far as I'm concerned, they can sit down somewhere. Amen. We're not looking for Sunday School teachers all of them who have Master's degrees in teaching. Amen. We're looking for people that have got a heart for souls, a burden for people. They leave their classroom but they take their students home with them. I'm not talking about physically, I'm talking about in prayer. I'm talking about in burden. When their Sunday School students have a burden, they call their teacher because they know she's not just going to give them a lesson, she's going to give them her life. Is anybody listening to me this morning?

That's how Christ opens your eyes and you begin to hazard your body and sacrifice your time. I'm not talking about cutting yourself, I'm talking about wearing yourself out and you find yourself spent. You're so tired you can't sleep but you're burdened for somebody. Your heart breaks when your people are wounded and when a church member loses a loved one, and your heart rejoices when God blesses one of your own sheep. Why? They've become more than a hedge account upstairs on the attendance record, they've become a heart that's become a part of yours. Have you ever learned how to live that way or are you just up in here just letting us know you're up in here?

There are people in the building today that brought somebody with them. They want them in on what they're in. I commend that. I commend these bus workers that got here before you did and they'll get back here after you're gone. They've changed the way they eat on Sunday afternoons because they don't have time to cook and sit down because while you're sleeping, they're dropping kids off home whose mommas and daddies don't come. But some of those boys are called to preach and some of them girls have learned how to be a lady after God's own heart and they would rather pour their life into those kids than eat a fancy dinner on Sunday. Why? Because something that touched them

when they got saved just doesn't feel right unless they give it to somebody else. Men are in the jails three times a week. Ladies in the jail. I'm talking about people discipling. I'm talking about people investing. I'm talking about people loving on somebody, answering the phone when they're sleeping, driving and dropping somebody off that's not on the way home, studying for a Sunday School class so they can teach it, that somebody understands it. Why? Jesus didn't come for one kind of people, he came for everybody.

The blindness of the law, the belief in the Lord. When they turned to the Lord, verse 16, the veil is taken away. "None of this Christian stuff makes sense to me." You turn to Jesus and it will. The veil is not removed until you turn. He's not talking about your actions, he's talking about your attention. It's a change of mind. Listen, you look at Christian people in there and think, "I can never be a Christian like that." There was a day when they thought the same thing of themselves. They're doing stuff today that 20 years ago they laughed at people were doing. Some of you in here who look dignified, saved, can find Habakkuk in the Bible yourself, you remember the day people went to church and you thought, "What they goin' up in there for? I ain't goin' to no church." You went on Easter and were glad that was the only time you went, and then on Christmas, and then one day you walked down that aisle and you let somebody take a Bible and show how you can know for sure that you're going to heaven and you prayed. I'm not just talking about prayer that you prayed just to make it feel good, I'm talking about you put your faith and trust in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you trusted in him and him alone, and his blood washed your sins away, and you opened your eyes and the world looked different, the Bible looked different, television looked different, your values looked different, your opinions seemed different, how you talked about people seemed different, how you went to work seemed different, and people are going, "What happened to you? You went to 12 step? You went to AA? You had an appointment with a psychiatrist?" No, no, no, no, no, I met Jesus. How could I want more?

People are blind. They live how they live because they're blind. Don't talk about them, give them something. I don't want to pastor a bunch of Christian stuck-up spoiled brats that look at the world and think they're better than everybody. I mean, if people walk up here and sit by you and you're going, "Uhhhh...." You let them stay and you leave. I mean, if it's picking between you and them, don't let the door hit you on your way out. You say, "Pastor, would you tell anybody to leave church?" I don't want anybody to leave the church but I don't want you here if you don't think someone else should be here. What makes you special? You were headed to the same hell. You're saved by the same blood. "Well, they ain't saved yet." You didn't deserve to get saved. You got in on something somebody else bought. You couldn't afford it. You couldn't find it. You couldn't manufacture it. The preacher couldn't hand it to you. But because grace and mercy looked for you when you weren't looking for them, now you're going to heaven. You're saved by the grace of God. Let them come on in here, red and yellow, black and white, they're all precious in his sight. God didn't come to heal well people, he came to heal sick people. He didn't come to call the righteous, he came calling sinners and you'd better be glad he did because when he found you, you were as sick and unrighteous as they come. Were it not for the grace of God. I'm looking over my glasses, Ethan. You say, "Pastor, I know you're serious when you start looking over them glasses."

Boy, I'm telling you what, I don't know if segregation is anymore prevalent today than it is in most churches. Yeah, I've said it. I'm preaching it. Amen. And if it wasn't for the fact I'm so polished, something as dark as I am wouldn't be there. "We love black folk," you hear it. No, you love polished black folk. Jesus didn't come for the polished, amen, he came for people. Amen. And if you're black and you've got a problem with white folk, you're mixed up too. Run and tell that. We aren't preaching black stuff, white stuff, we're preaching Bible stuff and it will knock you upside the head whatever color you are. Amen. Amen. Let me have a State of the Union address, I'll tell them what they need to hear. I mean, people haven't gotten more married to the Constitution than they are the Bible. They don't want anybody to take their guns but they wouldn't care if they took their Bible. Amen! "Ah, these people come over to our country." Let me tell you something: you ought to be glad somebody is here that you can tell about Jesus. I'm not preaching policy, I'm preaching principles. "Well, they don't belong here." That isn't my problem. As long as they are here, let me tell them about somebody that saved my soul and made me whole. I'm so sick of people that claim they are morally right, have no compassion, have no heart for people. You don't love God if you hate people. You go and turn in your little political persuasion, flush it down the toilet and come back with a Bible. Black Lives Matter, all lives matter. All of them, every last one of them. Every last one of them. And whatever our country has done in the past, shame, but we don't have time to relive the past. We've got to do something now. Amen. We've come a long way but there is still a whole lot of junk in the trunk. Racism everywhere, all kinds of sides. The answer is not better education, the answer is not gentrification, the answer is getting down in the word of God. We don't need just better schools and better laws and better gun control, we need somebody to realize Jesus is the answer. He's the only way man can be saved.

"I thought you weren't a political preacher?" I'm not a political preacher, I'm a Bible preacher and when you preach the Bible, it'll fix politics. You preach politics, you'll just be talking politics. You preach the Bible, it'll bust everything up like with those automatic weapons, it'll just hit everything. In the name of Jesus. I've got to get to Baltimore tonight and I don't know if I'm going to have anything left in my tank, but if I die on the way, you tell somebody he left it all on this platform. I don't know what I'm going to do Sunday, Monday night, Tuesday morning, Tuesday night, headed somewhere on Friday. I don't even know what I'm going to have left but I know you're here today and whatever I have, I'm dumping it on you.

We need Jesus and churches who are not teaching him anymore, who are not demonstrating him anymore, who are not living him anymore, whose lifestyles don't resemble him anymore, they're hurting people. People leave there pumped-up, crumped-up and everything else and going to hell. Good night alive! If you some of you read as much Bible as you watch Fox and CNN, you might do something for God. I like the news too, but there isn't any better news than he died, was buried, and rose again. Boom shackalalakaka.

Repentance of sin brings the removal of scales and the blessedness of liberty. I'm closing. The blindness of the law. I've got to get to Baltimore. The belief in the Lord. The blessedness of liberty. Now the Lord is that Spirit. Capital S-p-i-r-i-t. I'm not just talking about a feeling you get when you come to church, I'm talking about the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. Listen to me, I've preached in so many churches that don't have any liberty. People want to smile. They're scared they'll break the church constitution for smiling about Jesus and then they leave that same building and turn the football game on and scream. There's something broke, wrong, bad, cuckoo about that. You get in love with Jesus, you'll learn liberty. I'm free to worship in English. In English. I'm free to praise. I'm free to lift up holy hands and magnify his name. Amen.

He whom the Son sets free is free indeed. Listen to me, I'm not talking about the Emancipation Proclamation, I'm talking about a greater proclamation that Jesus made, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. I'm meek and lowly of heart and ye shall find rest unto your soul." My sister-in-law said to me yesterday as she was here for the ladies' conference, she said, "I just read recently that the answer to stress is not rest, the answer to stress is enjoyment." Sometimes I don't want to go to sleep, I just want to stay awake and do nothing. When you're doing what you enjoy, you're not stressed. You'll never enjoy anything more than serving God. I'll tell you why people are stressed: they've lost the joy of their lives because they're serving somebody other than Jesus. Does it get hard? Sure it does. Does it get tough? Sure it does. Does it get tiresome? Sure it does. Do you sometimes get discouraged? Absolutely. Do you feel like you can't go on anymore? Oh, sure. But I never want to go back to that place. I got saved and turned my stuff back in. I've never been sad that I met Jesus. I've never regretted that I've gotten saved. I've never gone, "I think I made a mistake. I'd rather go to hell." No. I'm glad I got saved. I'm glad I've got the Holy Ghost of God. I'm glad I'm going to heaven. I don't want to go back.

The blessedness of liberty in a person. Now I can see Jesus clearly. Through that person, I get privileges to behold the glory. Moses had a veil, Jesus removed it and now I get access into his presence. Listen, you don't need me to give you permission to talk to God. You can talk to him anytime you want to. When I'm not there and church is not going on, he's there. Privileges.

The blessedness of liberty and the becoming of his likeness. I'm done. When we look at him through a glass, the glass is a mirror. James 1, the mirror is the word of God. The best way to see Jesus is through this book and not only do you see him, you see you. What happens when I see him? There is the becoming of his likeness. Look at the passage, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Yes, he's a seen person that produces in us a sure product, there is consistent progress in our life. Every day I'm becoming more like him because I'm standing looking at him, and the more I look at him, the more I want to be like him, and the more I want to be like him, the more he changes me into him. Do you understand? There is a continuous progress and there's a culminating prospect. John says, "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." For we shall see, look, I'm becoming like Jesus today. I'm going to be just like him

some day, and since I know where I'm headed and since I know where I'm going to end up, since you know where you're going to end up as a Christian one day, don't you think it's pretty wise to start heading there today?

"Hey, Paul, they're talking about you down there in Corinth where they say you ain't the real deal. We had a guest speaker come through here last week and he told us we had to keep the law in order to get saved, we had to talk in a tongue to go to heaven, and then he said that guy that's been preaching that old fashioned Gospel to you, he ain't legitimate. What you got to say, Paul? You coming over here to fight? You going to defend your name?" For what? You can't reason with a fool. Some of the most time you waste in a week is arguing with somebody that isn't going to change or somebody down at the corner that's lacking information and is waiting to hear it. Tell that fool that hollers at you to go and talk to somebody that would really listen.

Paul said, "I'm not going to defend myself." Why? "Because my enoughness, my competency doesn't lie in my man-made credentials or the opinion of the brethren. My sufficiency is of God." Our Father, thank you. In whose worthiness do we stand and what qualifies us for spiritual work? Our talent? Our training? Or our God? God help us. God help us. God is looking for some people who trust him. Who trust him.

Heads bowed, eyes closed, no one looking around. How many of you say, "Preacher, I know if I died today I'd go to heaven. I'm saved and I know it." Would you raise your hand? Would you raise your hand all over the building. God bless you. Let me ask you one more question. Put your hand down. "Pastor, I'm saved. I have been reminded and duly reminded today that my credibility, my sufficiency is not in me, it's God. I ask God forgiveness for leaning on myself and getting discouraged in myself, trusting in myself. I make a commitment by God's grace to lean on his sufficiency." All over the building, would you raise your hand? Folks are full on the altar already and I hope you'll come and join them either on this altar or where you are. One more question, "Pastor, I'm not sure if I died today I'd go to heaven but I don't want to go to hell. Pray for me. I'm not sure if I died today I'd go to heaven but I don't want to go to hell." If that's you, would you raise your hand? "I'm not sure I'm going to heaven but I am positive I don't want to go to hell." God bless you. There's a child raising his hand. Someone else? Just long enough for me to see it. "Pastor, I don't want to go to hell." God bless you, ma'am. Thank you for being honest. Jesus came looking for you. Don't you ever let anybody tell you any differently. He loves you. Anyone else? "Pastor, I'm not sure I'm going to heaven but I am positive I don't want to go to hell." Anyone else who would raise your hand long enough for me to see it. Just long enough for me to see it. Thank you. Is there another hand there? God bless you, ma'am. Thank you. Thank you for being honest. I see your hand. God bless you. You can put it down. Anyone else? Join these three.

God help us. God help us when you can go to a church that dances all around the Gospel but never shows you how to accept it. Help us, Lord. Stand together all over the building.

*God, would you bless this invitation and move in our midst, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*