



God's Answer to Our Inadequacies!  
2 Cor 2:14-3:18 March 26, 2017

I. Introduction:

- A. We just finished a series on the mission and vision that Jesus gave to His people! We learned why we exist and why we were saved - that is to bring people to Jesus and become more like Him so Jesus would be treasured! At times I felt God gave me great boldness and delight to preach these messages like a roaring lion within the walls of this church!
- B. Pause – A moment of truth! Key words in this opening statement were “within the walls!” Because I need to be honest with you that while I can feel like a bold roaring lion from the pulpit of this church and raising my hands to the sky in unashamed worship of Jesus, I am more like a frightened kitten outside these walls as I walk back into a world where Satan is the god of this world, and the philosophies of this world system are so anti-Christ, and where many people live who hate, literally hate the things we stand for and believe in, and on top of that I have a flesh that tends towards self-pleasure and self-protection!
  - 1. And as long as I am being honest here, you would be amazed at how deeply, this guy who went to college for 13 years, 3 of those to Bible college and 5 years to seminary, how deeply inadequate I feel not only on the streets but also to be the leader this church needs and to come up here and preach sermons week by week!
  - 2. So now that we are being honest, let me ask you – is there anybody else that can relate to my feeling of fear and inadequacy when it comes to doing what God has called us to do both inside and outside the walls of this church or is your pastor the only who struggles with this?
- C. The truth is if you are not aware of your inadequacy when it comes to doing what God has called us to do, you are either underestimating the task God is asking us to do in bringing people to Jesus or what He is asking us to be in becoming more like Jesus” or you are overestimating your own capabilities?”

1. The task is a world-wide task and we are seeking to bring people to Jesus who are incapable of understanding and responding to the message of Jesus Christ unless God does a miracle within them the size of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!
  2. And becoming more like Jesus is not a matter of imitating what Jesus did and said, but it is a matter of having the very life and heart of Jesus formed within us all the way from what we do down to the hidden thoughts and motives of our hearts!
- D. Starting to feel the inadequacy yet? Turn to 2 Cor 2:14
1. Now we are going to see that God even wants to manifest through you and me the sweet aroma of Jesus everywhere; everywhere, everywhere we go! Both outside and inside our homes and our church!
  2. Read 2 Cor 2:14-16 emphasizing the end of v16.
  3. If the great Apostle Paul did not feel adequate, then how can you and I feel adequate?
- E. Then Paul even piles on a bit more and says that what they are doing is something that is not external that man can pull off but rather something that is internal, something that only God can pull off. Read v 3
- F. But as the passage goes on there is a shift as Paul speaks of confidence – look at the start of v4 and later in verse 12 says they speak with great boldness!
1. Where did this confidence come from to overcome their sense of inadequacy? Where did this boldness come from to overcome their fears? How can you and I live out our calling with a sense of confidence and boldness rather than paralyzed by inadequacy and fear?
  2. The answer is right here in the very next verse.
    - a) Read vv4-5
    - b) Our confidence and boldness comes from God.
  3. And look back at Acts 1:8
    - a) Read
    - b) Our confidence and boldness comes from God – in particular the 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit of God!
- G. This morning I am excited to begin a 10-week series on the Holy Spirit called Empowered! I am excited because:

1. The Holy Spirit is God's gift, God's provision to empower us not only for ministry but also for life!
  2. Whether it is talking to people about Jesus or becoming more like Jesus, whether it is raising your children in the ways of the Lord, whether it is responding to your mate the way God instructs us to, whether it is being content in our circumstances or whether it is walking through hard times with gratitude and peace!
  3. Someone once said, "If you think the Christian life is hard, then you do not understand the Christian life and you will just try a bit harder. But if you understand the Christian life is impossible, then you will fall on your face before God and rely upon His Holy Spirit to make the impossible possible in and through us!"
- As we read on in 2 Cor 3 we are going to see that our ministry of telling others about Jesus is called a ministry of the Spirit and that our being changed more into the image of Jesus is also a work of the Spirit.

## II. A Ministry of the Spirit to Others – Bringing People to Jesus

- A. We are servants of the New Covenant! And the Spirit of God empowers us for that! Bringing the message of life and of the righteousness of Jesus is the heart of the message that we bring to people who do not know Jesus, which in this passage is called a "ministry of the Spirit!"
  1. The New Covenant and the ministry of the Holy Spirit are so closely related to one another that the terms are used synonymously and interchangeably in this passage. We will see this next week when we take a closer look at the New Covenant!
  2. So we are not only empowered to do God's work by the Spirit, but the very work we do is called a "ministry of the Spirit"!
- B. In this portion of the passage, he is comparing the ministry of the Old Covenant, that which Moses proclaimed, with the ministry of the New Covenant, that which God has entrusted to us to proclaim! As I read watch for a few things:
  1. Note how the Old Covenant is characterized by the letter, death and condemnation, while the New Covenant is characterized by the Spirit 2 times.
  2. Note also of the contrast of glory between these two covenants where the glory of the old not only fades but is surpassed by the glory of the new, a glory that remains!
  3. Read v 6-11

4. Note – New Covenant not of the letter but of (source) the Spirit v6 and in v8 it is called a “ministry of the Spirit”.
- Now when we hit verse 12 he steps it up from confidence to hope and great boldness. Read v12

### III. A Ministry of the Spirit to us – Becoming More Like Jesus

- A. He sets up this section by telling them the story of Moses who used to go into the presence of God, and as a result of God meeting with Moses his face would shine and radiate with the glory of God (Son tan), so whenever he came out from meeting with God he would put a veil over his face so the sons of Israel could not look intently at the glory of God on his face that was fading away!
- B. Now as I read this I want you to note that God is making a contrast between Moses and us in relation to the glory of God. You see verses 6-11 were talking about the ministry; now v12-18 are speaking of the minister! Read.
- C. While the glory of God on Moses’ face was fading, the glory of God on our face is being reflected in ever increasing degrees from one degree of glory to the next, and all of this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
  1. Reread v18
  2. Listen to the way the NLT says it: “So all of us who have had the veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord – who is the Spirit – makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into his glorious image!”
- D. Just a brief side note here – note that the Lord Jesus is equated with the Holy Spirit here! Read v17.
  1. Simply stated, the Holy Spirit is God! Not one mode that God takes, but rather a separate person than the Father and Jesus but equally God with them. The Trinity – 3 Persons, One God
  2. Remember in Acts when Ananias lied to the Spirit. Listen:
    - a) Acts 5:3-4
    - b) Simply when he lied to the Spirit, he was lying to God!
- E. This is the One who is working deep down within us to transform us more and more into the image of Jesus who is the glory of God! A work that should be showing up on our face!
  1. Question – What does your face say and reflect to others?

- So I want to leave you 3 big takeaways this morning as we start this series on the Holy Spirit!

#### IV. Takeaways

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> We can have confidence, we can have hope, we can even have great boldness in the mission that Jesus left for us of bringing people to Jesus and becoming more like Him because:
  1. The Holy Spirit now empowers us and makes us adequate to carry out this mission!
  2. We are to bring people to Jesus through a message that is so identified with the Holy Spirit that it is called a ministry of the Spirit.
  3. We become more like Jesus as ministers of this mission because the Holy Spirit lives in us and is mightily at work within us to make us more like Jesus!
- B. 2<sup>nd</sup> You may have to sit on this one for a while, but this passage teaches us that:
  1. You have a more glorious ministry than Moses did
  2. You are a more glorious minister than Moses was
  3. This is true not because of who we are but because of the One who lives in us, the One whose ministry we are carrying out – the Holy Spirit!
- C. And finally if that is not enough, meditate on this – If you are a believer, God lives in you! Therefore, you are adequate to be “ministers of the New Covenant!”