

## 2 Corinthians 2:5-3:6

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know what price you put on peace of mind. It's a very precious commodity isn't it, peace of mind! And it's very interesting, Paul talks about it there in verses 12 and 13 of chapter 2.

You can be very busy doing all sorts of activities. You can be very busy in gospel work, in church work. You can even see a lot of success in church work, in gospel work, and still in the midst of it not have peace of mind.

And that's what Paul is talking about there in verses 12 and 13 of chapter 2. Can you see it? When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was open for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest.

Because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. He's restless, he just can't have his mind. Chapter 7 of 2 Corinthians, Paul talks about sleepless nights and disturbed thoughts.

Now we all know, don't we, and what it's like to wait for something. Maybe it's going to a new school, and sleepless nights and all that. Maybe it's exam results. Maybe you've been to the doctors for a biopsy, and you're waiting for the results.

[ 1 : 11 ] It's an anxious time. And you can't settle. And you can't concentrate on what you're supposed to be concentrating on. And that is how it is for Paul. That is what Paul is going through here.

Paul is waiting for news. Through Titus, about the church he's planted in Corinth. Do you remember, he talks in another place in this letter, about carrying around with him the care of all the churches.

He was beaten up. Thrown in prison, shipwrecked. He knew all sorts of things happened to him. But on top of that, everywhere he went, he carried with him the care of all the churches.

And he is anxious about this church in Corinth. He is in agony. He is in suspense. Waiting to hear how they're getting on. And then of course Titus turns up in Macedonia, and it's great news.

It's great news. It's good news about the triumph of the gospel. First of all, in the church, verses 9-11. And then around the Mediterranean world, 14-16.

[ 2 : 16 ] And then in the lives of these individual Corinthians. The triumph of the gospel. The triumph of the gospel in the church, in the world, in men and women and boys and girls.

The triumph of the gospel in the church, verses 9-11 of chapter 2. Now if you've read the first chapter, if you were here with us for the last couple of weeks, you'll know Paul has postponed a visit to Corinth. And that is one of the things that they've been criticising him about.

His enemies in the church are using that to undermine Paul's authority in his ministry. How can you believe a man like that? How can you believe in a man that drops and changes his mind all the time?

But we saw last week, there's a reason why Paul changed his mind. And he tells us in chapter 1, instead of visiting them, he decides to write them a letter. Can you see that, chapter 2, verse 4? And it is a painful letter. There was a problem, a serious problem in the church of Corinth. And it threatened the very future of the church. The very future of the church hang in the balance.

[ 3 : 19 ] Until this problem was dealt with. And instead of visiting them, he sent them a letter. And now he's waiting to hear, what have they done about it? What have they done with that letter? He's on tenterhooks.

And he's got no peace of mind until he hears from Titus what has happened. That is the background. And it's a very delicate and painful situation. In verses 5 to 11 of chapter 2, it's a case of church discipline.

Now we don't like that term nowadays, do we? The modern church in the UK knows absolutely next to nothing about church discipline. But the reformers said you couldn't have a proper church without discipline.

There's three marks of a true church. It's quite important if you're looking for a church. The reformers said there's three things. There's three marks of a true church. The first thing is the pure preaching of the word of God.

So if you go to a place and they don't open the Bible and they don't preach what is in it, that is not a church. No matter what they put on the notice board.

[ 4 : 25 ] The first mark of the church, a faithful church, is that the Bible is preached. The second mark is that the sacraments are properly administered. So baptism and Lord's Supper are administered, are held out to the congregation.

And the third mark of the reformers said of a true church is discipline. And discipline has broken down in today's church, of course. So if somebody is dealt with in one church, they cause issues, there's a problem, and they are disciplined, but what are they going to do?

All they're going to do actually is go to the church down the road, and the next congregation welcomes them with open arms. And there are no questions asked, normally. And nobody wants to take a church discipline seriously.

Now that is understandable in a way, isn't it? Discipline is what the potential will tear a church apart. So people take sides, leaders are criticized.

They're criticized for being too harsh. They're criticized for being too soft. And there is a real danger, isn't it? If you try to exercise discipline, it will tear a church apart.

[ 5 : 30 ] The danger of getting sued for definition of character, it's that. And people don't like this idea of discipline. It seems so uncharitable, doesn't it? It seems so politically incorrect.

It smacks of censorship and judgmentalism. And we don't want to be that kind of church, do we?

And yet, when you think about it, we actually insist on disciplining every part of life, don't we?

In almost every part of life. So think of the football. Think of football. Think of Luis Suarez, you know? Conceived by jewelry. What happens when somebody commits a terrible foul on the football pitch?

Well, what happens is, in a couple of weeks' time, there's a disciplinary hearing, isn't there? You've seen them on the TV. They're there in their shirts and ties. And they look so uncomfortable, aren't they, the footballers? They get on the taxi. And they're straining at their neck.

And they wear their shirts and ties. Why? Well, because they're being disciplined. And they're being disciplined according to their code of conduct. And they get fined. Or they get banned.

[ 6 : 37 ] Or they get warned. And why do they get disciplined? Why do the footballers get disciplined? All, of course, for the greatest good of the game. That's why. Every business has a department called quality control.

Because the reputation of the firm depends on it. So let me ask you, why shouldn't Jesus be concerned about quality control in this church? We could call it that, couldn't we?

We're rewriting the book of church order. Wouldn't that be a good thing? To say, having a church discipline is actually having quality control. And you see this, Jesus is more concerned about the quality of his church.

The quality of his people than he is about the quantity. And so it's Paul and social media. And that's what it's all about. We're not absolutely sure of the Jesus.

So verses 5 to 11. It's quite possible. Let me give you the two verses. The older commentators view. You have the man who's referred to in verses 5 to 11. They would want to say that he is the same man as 1 Corinthians 5.

[ 7 : 37 ] The man who's sleeping with his father's wife. Probably his stepmother. Could possibly be his mother. And it was scandalous. And Paul said, Brothers and sisters in Corinth, Are you going to deal with this?

Don't sleep in under the carpet. Do not make a deal. Don't pretend that it's not happening. You put this man out. You hand him over to Satan. What on earth does that mean? But what that means is this.

In church, it just means there are only two kingdoms. And you are either tonight in God's kingdom by grace through believing the gospel. Or you are in Satan's kingdom. Because he is the prince of this world.

And Paul says to the church, You've got to deal with this. If this man will not repent, If this man will not come to his senses, And refuses to deal with it, You push him out of the church.

And yet now if you read these verses, This man is now repenting. And so he pleads, So Paul pleads with them, To bring him back into the fellowship. Look at chapter 2 verses 7 and 8. So you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, Or you may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

[ 8 : 45 ] So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. Bring him back in. Welcome him back warmly. Don't leave him out in the cold. 1 Corinthians 5 says, Push him out.

Hand him over. 2 Corinthians 11 says, Bring him back. Don't let Satan out with us. There it is. Verse 11.

So that we would not be outwitted by Satan, For we are not ignorant of his designs, Of his schemes. Now that's possibly the situation. And if it is that, It's a very, very powerful example, isn't it? Of the triumph of the gospel in the church. It's a wonderful demonstration of that. The gospel triumphing over the more sordid situation.

When sin is faced up to, And sin is called sin, And sin is dealt with in the church. And the offender is evangelised, The gospel wins. And forgiveness has the last word.

[ 9 : 44 ] Not Satan. Not condemnation. Now the more modern comities, They want to say the situation is a little bit different to that. They suggest that it's not the same man as 1 Corinthians 5.

But it's more likely to be one of Paul's detractors, One of the people who are criticising Paul, One of Paul's rivals, The super apostles we call them. Who've come in and they are trying to undermine Paul's ministry in Christ.

Look at verse 5. Verse 5. Now if anyone has caused pain, He has caused it, Not to me, But in some measure, Not to put it too severely, To all of me.

Now it sounds like he's having a go at Paul. But Paul is saying, I'm not taking it personally. It's not that he's harmed me, But he's harmed the whole church. And then verse 10. Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive.

Indeed, what I have been forgiven, I have forgiven, Indeed, What I have forgiven, If I have forgiven anything, Has been for your sake, In the presence of Christ. It's quite possible that it's not sexual immorality.

[ 10 : 49 ] But there's a troublemaker in the church. And there's a rabble-router. Somebody who's causing factions, Party spirits, Talking in corners. And I want to say to you this, It doesn't really matter which interpretation you go with.

Because both are as bad as each other. Now we tend to think that sexual misconduct is more serious than anything else.

But that isn't the case biblically. Jerry Bridges has written a really wonderful little book, It's only a little book, Called Respectable Sins. It's a wonderful book.

And it points out that so many of the things in our lives, We don't really recognise a sin, Are sins. And so when you take your frustrations out with your wife, Or your children, Or someone else, That is sin.

Every bit as bad as sexual misconduct. And when you assassinate someone's character, Behind their back, That is sin.

[ 11 : 58 ] Every bit as bad as sleeping with your mother-in-law. Impatience, Vanity, Pride, It is sin. And sin is serious.

And it needs to be dealt with. And the way to deal with it, Is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel of grace. That is the way to deal with it.

Let's just flick around a little bit. Go to Romans chapter 16, On page 951. Romans chapter 16, In verse 17. So right at the end, There's a glorious letter of Romans.

Romans chapter 16, Verse 17. I appeal to you brothers, Watch out for those who cause divisions. And create obstacles contrary to the doctrine, That you've been taught.

Avoid them. Take seriously, The question of troublemakers in the church. Don't put up with it. My peers and brothers, Watch out.

[ 12 : 58 ] Watch out for those who cause divisions, And create obstacles contrary to the doctrine, That you've been taught. Avoid them. For such persons do not save our Lord Jesus Christ, But their own appetites, And by smooth talk and flattery, They deceive the hearts and the naive.

For your obedience is known to all, So that I rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise, As to what is good and innocent, As to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan, Under your feet.

Don't miss that. Don't miss that. Ultimately Satan is going to be crushed, Under your feet. So don't give him a foothold in the church.

It's the same context. Context here. 2 Corinthians 1 and 2. Welcome the brother back. Whether he's a sexual deviant, Or he's a troublemaker.

Whatever the sin is, If you've disciplined him, And he's repenting, Bring him back. Welcoming back, In order that Satan might not have the witness. Discipline, Properly administered.

[13:59] When sin is seen for what it is, And brought to the gospel, What happens? Well, Satan is defeated. He is crushed. And the gospel wins.

So let me ask you, What is happening amongst us? Is there any kind of equality, Control in this congregation? Who is winning in this fellowship?

Is it God, Or is it the devil? In our lives, In our struggles with sin, In our relationships with one another, Is the gospel tripping? Does the gospel have the last word, In our church, Or is it some rule or rule?

Are we allowing Satan, In amongst us? Let's not be unaware. That is what Paul says, You shouldn't be unaware of his schemes. Don't be unaware. And Satan will go in both directions, Won't he?

Those who claim to be Christians, And live, Inconsistently. Satan will say, Don't judge. Doesn't matter. Let's not bother.

[15:03] Let's sweep it under the carpet. Let's do a deed. I will mention it, And you will mention it. But everybody knows. Everybody knows. On the other hand, There will be those who want to carry it too far.

So it becomes this horrible, Ugly, Legalistic, Kind of witch hunt thing. Churches get like the Spanish Inquisition. And you go in, And you have this unexpected, Barrage of questions.

Satan doesn't mind which way we go. He doesn't mind whether we go too lax, And soft. Or whether we go too hard, And too rigid. And Paul says in verse 11, Let's not give Satan the satisfaction.

It is not his church. Let us not allow him to outwit it. Let us not be ignorant of his schemes. Let us understand how he operates. The triumph of the gospel in the church.

The church needs to be gospel centred. And it needs to be at the centre, The hub of all our plans, And all our dreams for the future. The triumph of the gospel in the church.

[16:06] The triumph of the gospel in the world. And the apostle is thinking particularly here, Of the world in which he lived, The Mediterranean world. And he's been in Ephesus.

And then in verse 12, In Troas. And there in Troas, The Lord has opened this door. There's been lots of gospel opportunities. And God has opened a door there. But he couldn't settle there, Because he was so concerned, About what was happening in Corinth.

So he goes on to Macedonia, Doesn't he? And wherever God is leading him, Around the Mediterranean. That was Paul's life. Led by the providence of God, From one city to another, To another, To another.

And he says, Wherever God has led me, Whether it's Macedonia, Or Troas, He says, He has led me, In triumphant procession, In Christ. Now if you've seen the film, Gladiator, You'll be able to picture that, Will you?

The new emperor, Comes into Rome. Or some, Great city, Comes into Rome, That's saying, It's the ancient equivalent, Of a ticketed parade. Listen, It's there in verses 14 to 16, Isn't it?

[17:15] Chapter 2, But thanks be to God, Who in Christ, Always leads us in triumphal procession, And through us, Spreads the fragrance, Of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma, Of Christ to God, Among those, Who are being saved, And among those, Who are perishing.

To one, A fragrance from death, To death, To the other, A fragrance from life, To life. And who is sufficient, For these things. And so when the emperor, Enters Rome, He's at the head, Of a procession.

And he is the conquering hero, And he comes into Rome, With his generals, And his military staff, At the head of the procession. But at the end of the procession, Being dragged along, Faster than they can walk, Bound in chains, Are the slaves.

Are those who've been taken captive. They are the prisoners. And where does Paul put himself, In that procession, In that long line? Is it at the head, Of the procession?

That's why the super apostles, Wanted to be in Corinth. And there's a lot of that, Thinking in the church. There's a lot of, Fake triumphalism. Where is Paul? He's right at the back.

[ 18 : 26 ] He's the prisoner of the Lord. When Paul writes his letters, Have you noticed that? The opening versions of the letters. How does Paul always, Always speak about himself? It's not Saint Paul, Is it?

It's not how he describes himself, But it's slave Paul. Not as some, Conquering hero, Who's come to town, The greatest personality, On the evangelical circuit.

Who's a dynamic speaker. Who's come to implant vision. But it's not how he saw himself at all.

That's not how he saw himself at all.

I'm a prisoner in chains, The bond slave of Christ. We've come to reclaim the city, He said the devil.

I'm a bond slave. We've come to redeem the culture. No. I'm a bond slave of Christ. And as God uses him, He is dragged faster than he can walk.

[ 19 : 25 ] He's beaten the year, He gets his head kicked in there, He's flogged, He's thrown into prison. His reputation is in tatters. And the super apostles, Do you know what they're saying? They are saying, Loser.

Loser. Loser. What do you want a man like that in church for? Paul says, In those circumstances, God is leading us in a triumphal procession, And wherever we go, People are being converted.

Through our chains. Through our imprisonment. And we are persecuted. And we stink. And some people smell life, And others smell death.

And that is what gospel ministry is like. And that is what the Christian life is like. Some smell life, Some smell death. How do you smell tonight?

Notice in verses 15 and 16, It's actually the same smell, But it just has different meanings for different people. We are to God, The aroma of Christ. It's not a lovely picture. What does God smell?

[ 20 : 30 ] What do you smell of God? The smell of Jesus. That is what is coming off Paul. Whatever circumstances he finds himself in, There is a Christ-likeness about him. That is what God is doing in his life.

Through his chains, Through his imprisonments, Through his disappointments, Through his humiliations. God is changing him into the likeness of Christ. He is the aroma of Christ. Wherever he goes, Wherever he is.

Verse 15, For we are the aroma of Christ of God. Among those who are being saved, And among those who are perishing. To one a fragrance from death to death, To the other a fragrance from life to life, Who is sufficient for these things?

It's the same smell, With two different meanings. It's the same word, It's the same gospel message, Preached by the same man, To the same congregation, On the same day. To some, They hear the gospel, And it is the aroma of life.

This message, About a silly, Unimpressive, Stupid, Scandalous message, About a man who died on a cross.

[ 21 : 31 ] And some people will hear that, And they will smell life, And others will hear it, And they will get angry. How dare you preach about the atonement?

Why are you preaching about Butcher shop theology? And those folks will smell life. But others will hear the stench of death, And it made them angry.

So think of the two thieves on the cross, On either side of Jesus, Both saw him, The same event, They heard the same things, It's the same place, It's the same time, They heard, The same talks, From the same crowd, Isn't it?

If you are the son of God, Save yourself, He saved others, But he cannot save himself, They heard it, Both saw the placard, On the cross, This is the king of the Jews, They heard it, They saw the same thing, And yet one said, Lord remember me, And the other hurled insults, And curses and blasphemies, To the one, It was the savor of life, And Jesus said, Today you will be with me in paradise, And to the other, Died cursing God, Do you see?

When the son, I'm really trying to say, When I was where I, You don't know so much in London, I don't know, The roads are made differently, But you would grow its place, But falls, And the streets, And if it was really, Really hot, The tar would melt, Do you remember that?

[ 23 : 02 ] The tar would melt, The same kind of hot, Kind of that steamy, Streets, The tar would melt, But then you go to the pavement, And the mud would be baked, Baked hard, And the sun is the same sun, But there's two effects, It melts the tar, And it bakes the mud, And the same with the gospel, Isn't it?

The same gospel is heard, By the same people, In the same congregation, It will either soften some hearts, Or will harden hearts, That is the nature, Of gospel ministry, That is what it's like, There is nothing, Triumphant, About Christian ministry, The victory is not ours, It is the Lord's, He has won the victory on the cross, It is not about us, It is about him, It is about making him known, Isn't it? And that means, That I need to ask myself, And you need to ask yourself, Where do you put yourself, In the triumphant procession, Where do you put yourself? Because sometimes, I want to put myself, Where I don't belong, Jesus is the head, Of the procession, He is the conquering hero, He has won the victory, Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory, Through our Lord Jesus Christ, He is on the head, Of the procession, And we need to put ourselves, Don't we? Right at the back, Where Paul puts himself, Come with me to 1 Corinthians 4, Paul uses sarcasm, I don't often, Use sarcasm in sermons, When I do, I get lots of complaints, But the apostles, Paul uses it quite a lot, And these people, Are being influenced, By a false triumphalism, By these super apostles, Who come into the church, So in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 4, And verse 8, 1 Corinthians, Chapter 4, And verse 8, He says, Already you have, All you want, Already Corinthians, You've become rich, Without us, You've become kings, And would that you did reign, So that we might share, The rule with you, For I think, That God, Has exhibited us, As apostles, As last of all, Like men, Sentenced to death, Do you see, Where he puts himself, We've been made, As factual, And we to this world, To angels, To man, We are fools, For Christ, But you, So wise Corinthians, We are weak, But you, Are so wise, Isn't that what, The apostles were saying, The super apostles, Were saying, Trying to undermine him, Trying to displace him, In their affections, They were saying, He is weak, He is foolish, Of course, You are so wise, Aren't you? [ 25 : 51 ] We are weak, And you are strong, You are honoured, But we are dishonoured, Just look, Chapter 4, And we are 13, What are we like, Well we hunger, And we thirst, We're poorly dressed, And we're buffeted, And homeless, We labour, Working with our own hands, When reviled, We bless, When persecuted, We endure, When slandered, We entreat, We become, And are still, Like the scum of the world, The refuse of all things, That's what we are, Who is even going, With such a task?

The super apostles, Thought they were, Didn't they? And there are, There are lots of ministers, Lots of elders, Lots of church leaders, Who have got a false confidence, In gospel ministry, You know, You know, There's no challenge, To be impressed, There ain't no mountain, There ain't no mountain high enough, Look what he says, In 2 Corinthians chapter 3, In verse 4 and 5, Such is the confidence, That we have, In Christ towards God, Not that, Not that we are sufficient, In ourselves, To claim anything, That's coming from us, But our sufficiency, Is from God, Who has made us, Sufficient, Confident, To be ministers, Of the new covenant, Let me show you, How subtle this is, It's not about us, It's not about our methods, It's not about our programs, It's not about our powers, Of persuasion, It's not about the personality, Of the preacher, It's not about any of that, Let me, Let me show you, Why this is such a subtle temptation, Have you ever invited someone, To come to church? You invite someone, To come to church, And then, To your simultaneous joy, And moral, They say, Yes, I'm coming, Walk us through your mind, You've invited someone, It's a very big thing, Particularly if they've never, Ever been to church before, And so, Invite a friend, Or relative, And you think to yourself, Let me tell you what you think, You think, I hope the music is good, I hope it's good, And people sing, I hope the preacher is good, In fact, I hope the preacher is funny, The preacher doesn't get away, With murder, As long as they tell, Some funny stories, And I hope the refreshments, Afterwards are good, That's what we think about, We put our confidence, In ourselves, In our methods, And we're putting our confidence, Anywhere else, Apart from the message,

But the only thing, That is going to do it, Do it, Is this silly message, About a crucified saviour, And we are not sure, Whether that's quite good enough, And so we think, We've got to improve it, And that is why, Paul goes on to say, In chapter 2, In verse 17, Do you see that?

For we are not like so many, Peddlers of God's word, The word pedal, There, Means literally, To water down the wine, In order to dilute it, And so the word pedal, Means there literally, Diluting the wine with water, And Paul is saying, That is always a temptation, Isn't it?

[ 29 : 06 ] When you've got a message, About crucified Jesus, That you want to make it, A bit more impressive, You want to make it, More attractive, So you downplay repentance, And you downplay sin, And you water down the gospel, Because we've got confidence, In the gospel, We've got more confidence, In the sound system, Or the music, Or the lighting, Or whatever it is, Or the dynamic

personality, Or the inspirational speaker, That's a false franticism, And it is rampant, It is rampant in London, Our confidence, Is not in ourselves, We are not, Confident, But it's in the message, It's in the message, And so can I beg with you, Can I plead with you, Pray for me, Pray for the others, Who preach as we prepare, To preach, That we will do what Paul says, And through his Sam Dean, But as man of sincerity, As commissioned by God, In the sight of God, We speak in Christ, And then let us expect, Gospel success, So Paul limps around us, From one disaster to another, He's led about, From one humiliation to another, Kind of lowered out of city walls, In a bread basket, He's persecuted, He's run out of time, He's beaten up, He's flogged, He's thrown into prison, He's shipwrecked, And in the end, In every place he goes, Christ is proclaimed, And God spreads the fragrance, Of the knowledge of him, Even in Paul's suffering, And humiliation, Let me give you an example of that, Let's go to Philippians, Philippians chapter 1, Sorry for dashing around, Let me just keep you awake, Philippians chapter 1, Verses 12 and 13, Philippians chapter 1, Verses 12 and 13, And Paul says this, He says, Page 980, He said, I want you to know, Brothers and sisters, That what has happened to me, Has really served to advance the gospel, So that it has become known, Throughout the whole imperial guard, And all the rest, That my imprisonment, Is for Christ, And then when you go to the end of Philippians, Chapter 4, Verses 21 and 22, He says this, He says, Greet every saint in Christ Jesus, The brothers who are with me greet you, All the saints greet you, Especially those who are of Caesar's household, Who are they? Well that is not Caesar's grandma, Caesar's aunt, Caesar's cousin, No, That's not Caesar's household, It is, Let me tell you what it is, It is, Chapter 1 and verse 13, The imperial guard, The bodyguards, It's the elite of the Roman army, The crack troops, The future Roman generals, Of the Roman empire, And so if you want to evangelise the Roman empire, What kind of strategy are you going to come up with?

If you are going to evangelise the Roman empire, What strategy are you going to come up with? If you are going to evangelise the SAS, You are going to evangelise men like this, Well I will tell you what God does, God does this, God makes Nero, The convener of the world missions committee, He makes Nero, The Roman empire, The chairman of the committee for world mission, And Nero starts throwing his weight around, And starts throwing Christians into prison, And Paul is put in prison, And what do they do?

[ 32 : 28 ] They chain in, To the praetorium guard in shifts, Can you imagine that? Eight hours, Stuck with the apostle Paul, Literally a captive audience, Boom boom, And imagine they chain to the apostle Paul, In shifts, After they listen to the apostle, And it sets off, I chain the attributes, Just get to the empire, All over the empire, So you can say, All saints greet you, But especially those of Caesar's household, There are converts there, Wherever, Wherever I find myself, And who knows where you will find yourself, Whatever circumstance, God leads you into this week, It might not be prison, Like the apostle Paul, It may well be a hospital bed, It may be a cancer clinic, In the next few months, Wherever God leads you this month, Don't forget, You're in the triumphal procession, Let me give you a more contemporary example, Jolie Erikson, The more I read Jolie Erikson, The more I,

I think she is, She is, Just had a remarkable ministry, If you haven't read her, Let's read some of them, She had a diving accident, When she was 17, And she, She's, She's totally paralyzed, She had her whole life ahead of her, She's been in a wheelchair, For 60 years, She's in the most amazing ministry, In the early years, As you read about, These nutty charismatics, Came to her and said, Now claim your healing sister, I remember being at meeting my brother once, And the speaker said, I don't believe, Any of God's people should be sick, And I'll believe that till my dying day, People say to her, Jolie, God doesn't want you in a wheelchair, Claim your healing, That's triumphalism, That is the kind of nonsense, That the super apostles were saying, Listen to what Johnny says, About her wheelchair, Just listen to this, In a way, I wish I could take to heaven, My old,

Tattered, Everest and Jennings wheelchair, I would point to the empty seat, And say, Lord Jesus, For decades, I was paralysed in that chair, But it showed me, How paralysed you must have felt, To be nailed to your cross, My limitations, My limitations told me something, About the limitations, You endured, When you laid aside, Your robes of state, And put on the indignity, Of human flesh, And then she says, Remember she's in heaven, At this point, She said, At that point, With my strong and glorified body, I might sit in it, And rub the armrest, Looking up at Jesus, And say, The weaker I felt in this chair, The harder I leaned on you, And the harder I leaned, The more I discovered, How

strong you are, Thank you Jesus, For learning obedience, In your suffering, You gave me grace, To learn in mine, She goes on to say this, Even though I've had, Rough moments in my wheelchair, For the most part, I consider my paralysis, A gift, Just as Jesus exchanged, The meaning of the cross, From a symbol of torture, To one of hope, And salvation, He gives me the grace, To do the same with my chair, If a cross can become a blessing, So can a wheelchair, The wheelchair in a sense, Is behind me now, The chair is over there, And now other crosses to bear, Other wheelchairs in my life, To be exchanged into gifts, That is what the apostle Paul, Is talking about, He always, Always, Always leads us everywhere, In triumphal procession, In Christ, And if we are Christians, If we know Jesus, Is our Lord, And our Saviour, He does not matter, What happens to us, Where God leads us, What he allows to happen, He is always leading, In triumphal procession, And there will be those, That see it, And those, That sniff, The aroma of life, And be converted, And there will be others, That will turn away, In distress, In the triumphal process, In the church, In the world, In the people's lives, I'll do this quickly, Chapter 3, Verse 1 to 6, Jesus never wrote anything,

Jesus never wrote anything, People say that's really, Simply not true, In fact, Jesus is the most prolific writer, This world has ever known, And he's still doing it, Look at verse 3, Chapter 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, I am always, It drives me mad, Being asked to write references, For you lot, And, When you get a reference, You learn to read, Between the lines, When you get a reference, Don't you?

[ 37 : 11 ] You have to learn, To interpret letters, Of reference, So for example, Here's someone, Here's one, Someone received once, Said this, You will be very fortunate, If you can get this man, To work for you, Is that good?

One from the army, Here is a man, People will follow, Mostly out of curiosity, Super apostles, They got their CVs, They got a CV, It seems that these, Super apostles, They had their references, And they wrote their own CVs, And there's a bit of sarcasm, Isn't there, In verse 1 of chapter 3, Are we beginning, To commend ourselves again?

What do we need, As some do letters, Of recommendation, To you, Or from you? These super apostles, They had their letters, Of recommendation, Their CVs, Letters, About what other people, Had written about them, Blurbs on the back, Of their books, And that is how, They wormed their way, Into churches, And Paul said, Do we need to do that?

Surely not, Go to St. Paul's, In Theod, You will find there, The Shoebos, Of St. Christopher Wren, You know, He's the architect, Of St. Paul's, Some amazing church buildings, In London, And he rebuilt, St. Paul's, After the fire of London, And his tomb is there, There's one sentence, On the tomb, Says this, Read it, If you seek his monument, Look around, That's what Paul is saying, Says, His ministry is being undermined, There are false teachers, There are super apostles, Triumphalistic con men, Are trying to alienate Paul, In the affection of the Corinthians, And Paul says, I don't, I don't need to compete with them, Do you want a letter of commendation?

Do I need to commend, Do I need to commend myself? Look around, Look around, Look around, Turn with me lastly, To 1 Corinthians, Chapter 6, What was the church in Corinth like?

[ 39 : 15 ] What is he talking about, When he says, Look around you? 1 Corinthians, Chapter 6, Verses 9-11, He says this, Or do you not know, That the righteous, Unrighteous, Will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Do not be deceived, Neither the sexually immoral, Nor idolaters, Nor adulterers, No men who practice homosexuality, Thieves, Nor the greedy, Nor drunkards, Nor revilers, Nor swindlers, Will inherit the kingdom of God, And such for some of you, But you were washed, And you were sanctified, And you were justified, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, By the spirit of God, Look around you, Look around you, Look around you, What Christ has done, And you don't eat ink on paper, Christ is writing his spirit, On your heart, And he's changing you, He's transforming you, Into his likeness, What further proof, Do you need of my ministry?

And as we come, To the Lord's table tonight, One of the commands, Of the Lord's table, Is that you recognise the body, You recognise the body, What does that mean, Does it mean you look at the bread, This represents Christ's body, You look at the bread, So how this represents Christ's body, It doesn't mean that, It means you look around you, Look around you, Look around you, It's not a retarded question, Recognise the body, See the triumph of the gospel, In the church, In the world, Ademansi challenge,