Our Letter of Recommendation

2 Corinthians 3:1-3

1. Intro
   1. Happy Mothers Day!
   2. Nothing is more honoring to a mother than for her Child to receive instruction and walk with peace and confidence in Christ.
   3. A mother’s day message brings a challenge to Parents and Kids, but this year it also applies to all of us.
   4. We must show our LOVE for GOD with authenticity rather than just lip service
2. Text
   1. Recap: Paul is defending his ministry:
      1. Correction is a blessing
      2. Apostolic authority requires him to correct
      3. Apostolic authority requires a testimony
   2. Verse 3:1 hypothetical question, but one that is actually answered by action
   3. Verse 3:2
      1. The church has proven itself over the generations to be resilient
      2. After a challenge, we tend to spring back
      3. But its not a given that the resilience will be good, because without the Spirit we would spring back to our old ways
      4. The HEART of the believer will allow for correction and a life honoring to the Lord.
   4. Verse 3:3
      1. Paul believes in the ability and viability of the church
      2. Not because of the law, or written demands, but because of the Spirits work.
      3. The Spirit is at work in the lives of every believer, and the tablet is the heart.
         1. The tablets of stone brought off of the mountain gave the people a written guide to follow as God’s people
         2. The tablet is now the hot heart of the believer that is willing to be shaped into the image of Christ by the continued work of the Spirit.
3. Point
   1. Proof of Life
      1. Every good action adventure movie:
         1. Has large explosions
         2. Fast cars
         3. And a kidnapping that require the potential rescuer to demand a “proof of Life” phone call
      2. The proof of life in the Christian realm, is the ongoing testimony of God’s grace, mercy, and truth in the life of a believer.
      3. The authentic believer will have some evidence of LIFE, because that is what Christ brings.
      4. John 10:7 So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
      5. The GOSPEL brings life:
         1. Jesus is the only way to find peace, all other options will leave you empty
         2. Jesus is the only way to find hope, all other options will leave you in despair.
   2. The Heartbeat
      1. Early Ultrasounds show the heartbeat of a child in its mothers womb, as early as 6 weeks!
      2. That is the miracle of life! And that life is meant for great things.
      3. The heart will beat and pump blood throughout the body, continuing life that was given by God.
      4. Your HEART
         1. Your heart beats about 100,000 times in one day and
         2. about 35 million times in a year.
         3. During an average lifetime, the human heart will beat more than 2.5 billion times.
      5. The heartbeat is the sign of life that emergency responders look for.
      6. The heartbeat of a believer is demonstrated by actions
         1. These actions show the believers willingness to LOVE, STAND, and RESCUE
         2. These actions show what is in the heart
      7. Heart Scriptures:
         1. Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
         2. Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
         3. Proverbs 10:11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.
         4. Proverbs 21:2 All deeds are right in the sight of the doer, but the Lord weighs the heart.
         5. Psalms 14:1 Fools say in their hearts, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.
         6. Luke 6:45 The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.
      8. At the heart of a believers life, you find a testimony
   3. The Testimony
      1. The actions of a believer
      2. Your life is a letter of recommendation about God.
      3. You cannot allow the wickedness of a carnal heart to be the testimony that is seen by man, and then be confused as a testimony of God
         1. This can be seen in immorality
         2. This can also be seen in self righteousness
      4. Matthew 15:10 And he called the people to him and said to them, “Hear and understand: 11it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person.”
      5. James 3:5b How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! 6And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.b 7For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, 8but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. 10From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. 11Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? 12Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.
      6. LET YOUR LIFE BE A TESTIMONY OF GOD’S FAITHFULNESS
4. Close
   1. Stop pretending to be a part of a Christian Culture
   2. BE a part of this RELATIONAL community and leave a legacy of FAITH