

## 2 Corinthians 3

Sunday 4/29/2012

Last week, we again began to build on principles as we come through this book. Last week, we built on what we learned the following week, and we are going to build on last week this week and continue on through that. Hopefully, you are beginning to understand the theme of this great chapter and the theme of the great book of 2 Corinthians. Chapter 3 really relates to you and me as God's priests, ministering in God's tabernacle, the ministry that God has given us.

Last week, and probably the week before, as we got down here, if you would be setting this chapter up, so to speak, or dividing it up, we have talked about eight great principles that we have learned in chapter 3. Maybe you do not have them exactly this way, but I will give them to you how I have them in my Bible because this is how I remember it. This is not necessarily what you need to put in the back of your Bible. The last couple of weeks, we have been talking about how to lay out the book of 2 Corinthians. Remember, we have two studies going here: we are going to learn biblical principles that you use in dealing with people, but then I also want you to understand the book of 2 Corinthians, not only for yourself because it is going to be what motivates you in the ministry, but to help others and be able to explain it as you work through it.

In chapter 3 so far, we have eight great principles that we have learned, and we are going to add to it today. But so far, we know now that:

1. The first principle you should understand is this chapter shows us that the only real proof we have that we are saved is our ministry. We can talk about being saved and all the things that we say, but we are very clear from chapter 3 that God saved you to serve. If somebody is not ministering the Word of God, then they are not doing what God wants them to do. Paul has made it very clear that that really is the only proof of our salvation: the ministry that we have, fulfilling what God has called you to do.
2. The second principle is the fact that God has called us to be totally sufficient in Him. That is so vital in your Christian life. Get into the place where your sufficiency is in the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. The third principle is that by that sufficiency in Him, then we become able ministers. We talked about your ability. God does not care about your ability; God cares about your availability. God will make you everything that He wants you to be. It is not how much... At one time, D.L. Moody, who was a great preacher, was preaching in a great revival cycle, and he was an incredible preacher. He was really stirring up the churches where he went. He went to this one church, and a great revival broke out. But you know as well as I do, and it is true of any church, that not everybody is happy that it was revival. They had a meeting afterwards of the deacons to try to kind of catch up on all that had happened and to kind of debrief and to plan for another great revival. They all unanimously, except one guy, wanted D.L. Moody to come back. It was obvious that this guy was not too happy with the great revival. Obviously, he was a Christian, if he was a Christian, that was way out in left field and was not happy about all the change, as many of God's people get that way when they are out of fellowship with God. He snarled out why they had to have Moody back. He made the comment, "Does Moody have the corner on the Holy Spirit of God? Like there is nobody else

out there?" One of the deacons looked back and said, "You know, pal, I do not think the issue is that Moody has a corner on the Holy Spirit of God. I think the issue is that the Holy Spirit has the corner on Moody." That is the key, you see, the ability to be an able minister.

4. The fourth principle we saw was the tremendous aspect of our life as an open book, an epistle written on our hearts that all men read. You are today what people see and read in your life by the things that you do, the way you conduct yourself, and the way that you display the Lord Jesus Christ. You are an open book that people read on your heart.
5. Last week, we saw the fact that the New Testament was better than the Old Testament. We now have a better appreciation of that. The Old Testament was the letter of the law, and it brought forth death. The New Testament was the Spirit of God, and it brought forth life.
6. The sixth principle we saw was the thing that makes the New Testament better than the Old Testament: the Old Testament was temporary, was it not? Done away with. The New Testament is better because of the fact that it is eternal. The Old Testament law could not save you, but the New Testament life and spirit can give you eternal life.
7. The seventh principle we learned was how important it is in all this to have the right spirit. It is our spirit that really is the, when it lines up with God's spirit, that God takes and lets everybody read what is written on our heart, written by the Spirit. We talked about the witness of the Spirit in Romans 8 last week.
8. The eighth principle was that our ministry is to give life to dead things. That is the only reason God saves you: to give life to dead things. Of course, we know that dead things in the Bible are pictures of unsaved people. Every example in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, whether it is Lazarus or whether it is Jairus's daughter, or the 12-year-old girl, or the young man that Jesus stopped the funeral procession and laid His hand and said, "Young man, arise," and he came out. Every example in the Bible where somebody is dead and then God raises them up and gives them life back, there is a picture of an unsaved man getting saved. You can just mark that down in your Bible.

## I. Moses: The Exemplar of Ministry

Today, I want to talk to you about the next aspect of this. I want to take an Old Testament passage that we briefly saw last week, and I want to add to it today. I want to add the rest of the verses in this chapter that really show you how an Old Testament story illustrates everything that we have studied so far in chapter 3. What I am about to do today not only has great information for you of where you are at in your own personal relationship with the Lord, but this is something that you want to learn to do in your Bible. This is something that you, in time, want to have the ability to recognize: that the stories in the Old Testament actually illustrate the principles of the New Testament. When you get the principles and the story, you get completely everything you need to know and understand on how everything works. When you learn to do this in your Bible and you learn to do it well, it is when I tell you that you have what I call a working knowledge in the Bible.

Paul certainly understood everything I am about to say to you today, and I will tell you why he did. I know that he did because he is the one who makes this reference, and hopefully, once you see how this thing lays out and how it ties in, you will be able to see it and better use it and better

understand it yourself. I know standing here this morning, many of you and I have a great relationship, and we have talked in many different aspects on many different levels. I want to say to you this morning that I totally believe what I am about to say to you. I believe and I know that many of you really want to do right. I really believe that. I believe many of you here this morning, you really do love God. I do not doubt it at all. I think many of you want to really sincerely learn ministry. I believe that. I watch you. I believe that many of you take every one of these sermons to heart and you do something with that. I believe that. I really do. I believe that many of you have in your heart and in your mind set yourself apart to learn ministry. I truly believe that, and I believe that you have committed in your heart to minister with me. You have bought into what we are trying to do at Old Paths Baptist Church. You believe it is the real deal. You believe that this is where God is at, and this is where God would have you to be, and I believe that you are dialing yourself in to help me fulfill in this church what God has called this church to do. I really believe that, and I say that to you because of this: it is lessons like the one we are going to look at today that really help you. Not that everything in the Bible does not help you; I am not suggesting that, but there are certain things that you study the way you study them that will impact you in different areas of your life and that will help you. It will give you a little more insight into what you are trying to do. It will get you a little more closer to God where you need to be. It will give you more knowledge about God, which we all need, and it will show you how God works through the Bible and through the Bible principles, which is invaluable.

You young kids here today, I am always glad when it is Kid Sunday that you get to come in because many of you down the line, you have already stepped into the aspect of ministry. We have our two little gals that are running their prayer groups, and everybody is involved in that, and all the little girls that take part of that. We have our guys group, and every Sunday when the adults are meeting, they are meeting and teaching. I mean, these kids are teaching the Bible principles. That is what I am talking about, and many of you are already so into this thing. So I am glad that you are here today. I know that I am speaking to adults this morning, and some of it may be over your heads, but let me tell you something, guys and gals, grasp everything I am saying that you can today and use it in what God has called you to do. I am so thankful for you having the spirit of ministry. It speaks well of not only the parents but it speaks well of where this church is going, and its plan is filtering all the way down through the young kids, and I am excited about that. A study like this, what we are going to do, is taking an Old Testament story and then running the New Testament verses on it, showing you how the thing develops itself and leaves you with a great understanding of where you should be and I should be in our life. It is invaluable.

We talked last week about the common man having a common Bible and doing a common ministry, and that is really what this church is all about. It is what every church should be about: common men and women. Nobody is any better than anybody else. The pastor does not live any better or is not any better than the people in it. We are all in the same boat. We are all in the same situation, and we are all trying to do one thing, and that is to fulfill what God has saved us to do and be faithful in it until Jesus comes back.

Now, I am going to read a verse that Paul gave us last week, kind of refresh your memory, and then I am going to add to it the verses that were here in this chapter that we are going to look at, and then I am going to take this thing and show you one of the greatest stories in the Old Testament and line it up to the principles in the New Testament. If you are going to get into the counseling side of this, this is what you are going to learn to do. When we get into our times together, this is what I am going to show you. I am going to show you over a hundred scenarios where you actually can see the story, get the principles, match them together, and get exactly how you handle every situation you need to deal with, and that is Bible-based, based on the Word of God.

I want to pick it up in 2 Corinthians 3:7. We read this last week, but I want to add to it again, and I want to start here, and then we will come on back through it and add some things, but this will kind of set the context.

*But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away:*

Now, this is what I want to focus on today: "so the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away." Then he goes on in that verse, and he begins to tell us how the New Testament is better and all that, but it is the face of Moses that I want to talk about today. I want you to see something about this face, and I want you to learn the Old Testament story and the principles. I guarantee you, when you leave here today, I am not saying you will be better off, but you will be better informed of where you are at. Your "better off" situation will depend on what you do with it.

Now, look down here in 2 Corinthians 3:13. Let us add the verses this week. We already know this is about the face of Moses. Here is what he says:

*And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:*

*But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.*

*But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*

*Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.*

I know of no other man in the Bible that would be better to study when we begin to study the aspect of ministry. You need to know this: there are men's lives in the Bible that God has put in there for you and me to study. You do not learn ministry just by going to a church and listening to somebody teach you about ministry. That is good, but what you need is the fundamentals of ministry that are laid out for you in these Old Testament stories. I do not know of a better man in the Bible that, if you want to learn how to minister and you truly want to be God's man or God's woman and ministering to other people, I would be hard-pressed to find somebody else that would be better for you than the life of Moses. There is more written in the Bible about Moses

than any other man in the Bible outside the Lord Jesus Christ. No other man in the Bible has four books devoted to his life. No other man in the Bible writes the first five books of the Bible and then writes many of the Psalms. I do not know of another man in the Bible that, in the New Testament, you realize that in the New Testament, long after the Old Testament, there are 98 references to Moses. He is an important character. He truly is. He truly is. When you want to study ministry, when you want to understand ministry, he is where you go.

His life and his ministry span 120 years, according to Deuteronomy 34:7. The Bible says that at 120 years old, his natural strength had not abated, and he still was as strong and as fervent in his mind as he could ever be. That right there is a great key. That right there is why if you are a man of God and God has called you to preach, when you hit 65 or 66 or 67 and everybody else around you is retiring, when you hit 65, if you are a man of God preaching the Word of God, you do not retire, you re-fire. Then you realize that God has called you to do what you are doing for as long as God gives you the strength to do it. How many times and how many examples have I seen where a man who had got to the point where he was in his 60s or even in his 70s and he still had the natural strength? Hey, when you get into your 60s or your 70s, you are probably really, as far as understanding life and the ministry, and you have got 40 years behind you now, in some cases 50 years behind you. You have seen it all. If you have paid attention, you should have learned it all. You are at the most valuable place in your life, but that is what we do because we do not take ministry seriously when we get to that golden age where you buy the shoes with the Velcro strips on them, and you head down to the shuffleboard court. You suddenly think that now you are going to go play golf the rest of your life because you did your work for God. Let me tell you something, your work is never done for God, and men do not understand that today. Moses lived to be 120 years old, an incredible study of his life and his ministry.

A great key to his life and his success, I must tell you this, is the fact that he is one of only two men in the Bible whom God calls His friend. The other one would be Abraham. I think in itself that is quite remarkable, and he is called God's friend in Exodus 33:11. Now, I must stop and pause here for a minute and say this: that is a great study in itself because it brings up the concept that just because you are saved does not mean you are God's friend. You realize there are over 300,000 characters in the Bible, and out of 300,000 characters in the Bible, God only says about two of them that they are "My friend." Now, I believe that God was friends with many of them, but I believe the Holy Spirit of God is showing you how rare that is in God's people's lives today. Now, God has to love you. Do not confuse the two. God has to love you because Jesus Christ died for you. But sometimes we put God in a different place than we put ourselves, and I want to tell you something: you as a Christian have to love everybody. You have no reason to hate anybody this morning. Under the guidelines of the New Testament, you and I are to love everybody, but that does not mean that everybody you choose to be your friend. Well, God has to love everybody, but that does not mean you are His friend. You better think about that for about 30 years. Bubba's song last week, I love Bubba singing, I love Bubba's song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Bubba, next time you sing it, say it this way: "What kind of friend we could have in Jesus," because I do not believe for a moment that all God's people are His friend. I believe that God picks His friends based on some character qualities. You realize that there are only two men in the Bible that it says that He was His friend. There are only two men in the Bible that it

says "walked with God," and there is only one man in the Bible that God says He loved. Now, you take those four or five guys and study their lives and apply what they did in your world, and I guarantee you, you will come out walking with God, being God's friend, and God will look at you and say, "He is My friend, we are walking together, and I love him." That is quite a task to try to do. Been saved five years or more, should have had it done already.

Moses's life in ministry and the process of where and how he gets there is a four-point process. I want you to see this today. I want you to see it for a couple of reasons. I want you to see it because it is a key to understanding his life, but I want you to also see it because I see this in many of your lives today. I see the same process in many of your lives today. You know why? Because you and I are no different than Moses, and the same four-point process that worked for him, if you are going to learn to minister, will work for you. You see, the Bible has patterns in it, and I just believe, I have been taught all my life that when you do something, you do it by the pattern found in the Bible. When you do not do it by the pattern found in the Bible, you are going to wind up making a mess out of it. I have seen 40 years plus of men making messes out of everything in their lives because they will not submit to the patterns found in the Bible. You want to minister? Study Moses. You study Moses? Here is how you study him and apply yourself to it in four points.

➤ The Four-Point Process of Moses' Life

## II. The Glory of Moses' Face and the Veil

Now, let us go back to the Old Testament where Paul is making a reference to this in 2 Corinthians 3. What he is saying in 2 Corinthians 3:7, 13-16, let us look at the glory of God in the face of Moses and the veil that he puts on his face. For you that maybe are not familiar with the Bible, and that is certainly fine, we are going to go to Exodus 34. Yes, that is in the Old Testament. It is easy, it is the second book in, and I want to read for you one of the greatest stories anywhere in the Bible for ministry.

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.*

*And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.*

*And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.*

*And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.*

*And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them.*

*And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai.*

*And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face.*

*But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded.*

*And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the vail upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.*

### III. Understanding the Exodus 34 Passage

Now, I want you to get this passage down today. We are here, you might as well get everything done at one time. I have told you many, many times this is a tremendous chapter. It is a tremendous chapter historically, it is a tremendous chapter doctrinally, it is probably one of the greatest chapters inspirationally for your life and my life and where we are at contemplating ministering for the Lord or in some cases not contemplating it.

- Historically: Re-giving of the Law
- Doctrinally: The Veil and Blindness to Christ
- Inspirationally: The Glory of God Manifested