

2 Corinthians 2:15 to 3:10 (Conrad Bowman) (11-11-07)

Well, good morning. We're in 2nd Corinthians, chapter 3. Of all the churches that Paul worked in and wrote to and dealt with, the Church at Corinth is probably as representative of our Church because they had all the problems known to man in that church. They didn't miss any of them. So, we ought to pay particular attention to this. In 1st Corinthians, we finished in some detail, and I will bring you some completed outlines of 1st Corinthians if you didn't get one on the last pass through.

Now, in 2nd Corinthians I've got a set of notes that I've finished on that one and I can let you have those, then you can add the transcripts to them as we produce them each week. John is doing a super job on that, cranking out those transcripts. And, it's just turning into a monumental work. We looked at 1st Corinthians, and it's a total of 250 pages, altogether, counting the commentary. And the binder and everything. In other words, here's a completed copy of the way it comes out. It's on 1st Corinthians. There's 250 pages in there. And then also, there's a CD on each one of the lessons, just like it was taught. And then in each one of the chapters, there is a set of the notes (commentary), which I'm responsible for. And then a set of transcripts, which is the verbatim transcript of each lesson as it was taught.

Phil Richman. \$99 each (kidding). [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. Payable to John. [Laughter] There you go. Very soon, we're working on a system, Adam's volunteered – he has no idea what he volunteered for [laughter] – Adam has volunteered to help us with this project. What we hope to do, is crank these things out on little computer jump drives that just plug in your computer. Well, we can take a jump drive and put everything we've ever taught on it, and you can get the whole thing on a jump drive. Here, Jeff's got one right here. Here it is. [Conrad held up the small jump drive]. Everything we've ever done. And there's a little port on your computer, you just plug this in, you can have everything that we have in print, including the voice files, you can play right on your computer. So, that's going to be a marvelous addition. Technology is just ripping – Comstive has got her hand up and she doesn't do computer. I already know by that hand. When she's quiet, you got the \$99 version. May be cheaper for you to buy a computer. [Laughter]. Alright. Alright. We're going to crank up on this.

2nd Corinthians, chapter 3. This is a marvelous section of this book. It's been called a very difficult book to study. But I think if you pay attention to basics, you can sail through this thing without a lot of difficulty. Now, I'm going to end up taking these glasses off and on because without them I can't see the page, and with them, I can't see you. We'll see. That's what you get for Walgreens [laughter].

If you look at chapter 2, verse 15, you're going to see what Paul is spinning off of as he launches into this third segment of the letter, because chapter 2 ended with this.

For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that are perished; to the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

And what Paul is doing is this, and he does it often. He goes back into his Jewish background, and he picks an illustration that came from the worship practices that he followed as an Israelite. Now, it was very important to the Israelite – the temple worship and the tabernacle worship that they had followed since all the way back in Numbers 19. That sweet savor unto God, is the odor that rises to God of pure worship. God loves pure worship. He always has. That's why He loves savor of Him. Because when it's pure from the heart, and it's unadulterated by anything that you expect to get out of it, but it's just adoration for the sake of adoration. God loves that. The sweet savor is the aroma of worship. You remember when Aaron was consecrated as a priest? And Moses had to make up an anointing oil? And God gave him the prescription for that anointing oil. So many parts of olive oil, so many parts of myrrh, so many parts – and He gave him the formula for it. And he took that oil, and it had a distinctive odor to it. A nice sweet odor. And when it said he anointed him, he didn't just dip his thumb in and put it on his forehead. He said you pour it on his head. Pour it on his head until it runs down his beard, and down the clothing that he has on, and runs off on the ground. Now, can you imagine that? Ok? Very aromatic, this thing. To where when you got close to Aaron, when you approached Aaron, you knew he was in the neighborhood. I mean this aroma, this anointing oil just "woom" – and you can imagine. It runs off on the ground, and he walks around on it. He's tracking that stuff all over the place. And he anointed all of the furniture of the tabernacle. He anointed all of the bowls and the pots, and everything that was used in the tabernacle. You anointed the altar. You went inside the altar of incense, and you anointed that.

Hey, Jackie...

Jackie Parks. Hi.

Conrad Bowman. We saved you a seat right up front.

Mary Ann Jacobsen. [Who came in behind Jackie Parks]. Don't forget me. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. You see the pitfalls of this thing. I was caught up in the aroma and I missed Mary Ann.

Well you can imagine. As you approached that tabernacle site which was right in the middle of the camp, the aroma of that anointing oil just surrounded the place. And it's the aroma of worship. You could not miss it. Now that's the way God views you. That's the way He views His Church when it's gathered to worship and adore Him. That's exactly what happens when the Church gathers to celebrate the Lord's Table. Or just to gather and study, and just adore Him. That's the way our services ought to be viewed. Because when the Lord gathers two or three of us together, it's for the purpose of worship. It's not for the performance of the scene. It's not for the performance of the pastor or the teacher. It's for the hearts that are bound together, turned toward Him in adoration, with no other thought in mind. God loves that. He absolutely loves it. Now Paul goes all the way back to that imagery in chapter 2 and closes out this first segment. For we are unto God a sweet odor of Christ. The sweet savor. It doesn't have to – see, that's us. That's what we are. It's not Paul's ministry that he's calling attention to. He's saying you are a sweet savor that satisfies God. You're the savor of Christ on earth. You're the odor of Christ on earth. You're His Body. You're what's left after He ascended, and went back to be with the Father. He left His essence behind. And His odor behind. You smack of Christ to the world. Isn't that great? That's you. When the world starts looking for Christians, they're going to find you. You can't hide. Ok. Now that's important. You've got to remember that. Ok. You have a discernable presence in the world. And you can't hide from that presence. It will find you, and you will be found out. And you'll be called to testify to the Lord you serve. And by the world. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ. And them that are saved, we are a savor. And in them that perish, we are also a sweet savor.

Now, go to chapter 3. Do we begin again, do we start again to commend ourselves to you? Is that what we need to do? No. Or do we need, as some others, letters of recommendation to you? Is that what it takes, knowing that we are a sweet savor. Or letters of communication or commendation from you. No. We don't need that for one another, do we. We are bound together by the very nature of Christ. We don't need to be introduced to one another with a letter of recommendation from somebody else we know. We ought to be known to one another by the things that we hold in common. By the things we hold as true. By what we believe. Is what you believe important? IT'S EVERYTHING. CONTENT IS EVERYTHING. It's not enough just to gather together for the gathering. It's what you believe in common that binds you together as a body. It's not your presence that makes the difference. It's your brain, your mind, and what you hold in common with other people, that binds you together as a body. That's very important. That's why in this place, study of the Word, and taking it in, and understanding what it says, is all important. There's no higher purpose for our coming together. Because Paul says it in verse 2. You are our letter of commendation, written in our hearts, known and read by all men. So, there it is. My reputation in the world as a believer, is your reputation in the world. Because people will judge you by what I say I believe, knowing that we are in association with one another. That's why your reputation and what you believe is important to me. Because if I say, that guy's a friend of mine. And they're going to say, "Oh, and he believes this. What about you?" Well, we want to be on the same page at that point. Ok. Otherwise there are divisions among us. So we study together, in order to bring our minds and our understanding together about what the Word teaches. That's the glue that holds the Body together. Ok. The Spirit empowers that. But the glue that holds us together is what we believe – the content of it. It's all important. So, you are our letter of commendation, written in our hearts, known and read of all men. By all men. That's an interesting little play on words there. Because the "known" and "read" come from the same root word for "knowledge," *gnosis*. And it's formed for that same word, "known and read," by all men.

For as much as you are manifestly declared....

The word "manifest" is better translated in English as "read" or "revealed."

For as much as you are revealed, and clearly revealed, to be the letter of Christ, unfinished – for as much as you are manifestly declared to be the letter of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.

The word "ink" is black. It's *melas*, and the Greek comes from that, and it means not written with black, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. And here's this comparison that Paul has given to them. You are God's letter. And it's revealed to me, and I minister it to others. In other words, what Paul is saying is, my ministry is involved with displaying you to the world so that they can understand me. And through both of us, so that we present a clearer picture of the Lord Himself – of Jesus, and His work, and His finished work. And everything that He provides for mankind. That's the purpose of the Church. Ok. That's the purpose for which we've been drawn together. I personally believe, that everybody who's supposed to be here, will be here. I think God's that involved in our life. I don't think there's anybody who's supposed to be here – and I'm talking about right here, at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday morning, in these chairs – we've got about 60 of them. I mean, everybody that's supposed to be here will be here. I'm that much of a Presbyterian. [Laughter]. Not any doubt about it. If you weren't here, I'd come get you.

Jeff Little. Conrad, is there a relationship with Jeremiah 31:33,

"But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, " I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Conrad Bowman. Alright. The short crisp answer is no. This passage does not reflect on Jeremiah....

Phil Richman. Jeremiah 31:33, that's where he read from. I don't think they all heard him, that's why I [gave the Scripture reference]. So, repeat the question.

Jeff Little. Yes, Jeremiah 31:33.

Phil Richman. Written to Judah and the House of Israel. That's clear.

Conrad Bowman. Oh yes, it's clear. It's written to Judah and the House of Israel.

Jeff Little. So it's not the same because we have an expanded audience now that includes the Gentiles?

Conrad Bowman. Nope. Well, that's true. It's talking about Judah and the House of Israel. Jeremiah 31 is talking about the time when God takes Israel and Judah, draws them to Himself, and reveals specifically under Judah and Israel, who He is and what He's done, and what He's doing in them and for them. That's not what this is talking about. What this is saying, it borrows some of the same language, which, is Paul's propensity for using OT Jewish practices, in terms of his teaching. So, because it's connected to Paul, he's using some of the same iteration.

Jeff Little. Because he's so familiar with the OT.

Conrad Bowman. Yes. He is. He's full of it. He knows it chapter and verse. [Someone's hand went up] – Be right there – So, he's using some of the same language. But, in Jeremiah 31, he's talking about God being with Israel. Here, Paul is saying to the Church, your our letter, and he's talking about what's happening in the Church. Now, God is doing the same thing within these believers in the Church that He's going to do with Israel when He draws them to Himself. And in fact, if the Jew, who knows this, wants to gain that position today, all he's got to do is turn toward the ascended Christ, the Savior, and accept Him as Savior, and he moves into that position immediately.

Jeff Little. So Christ living within. Identifying with Christ.

Conrad Bowman. Yes sir. Yes sir. Absolutely. So there's a connection there. But we see part of the fulfillment is here in the Church today. To Gentiles and whoever will accept Christ as the ascended Savior. Eventually, that's going to be imposed on Israel and Judah down here, when God turns His attention to them, after the Bride has been taken out. So, you see that other fulfillment down here. [Pointing to Board]. Now, Mr. Walsh.

Dan Walsh. My view is pretty simple. It looks like to me that he's setting the stage here as a contrast between the Law, that was written on the tablets, and the new law that's written on the heart, because it seems like he's getting down the road here to distinguish....

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. He absolutely is. You've read ahead. [Laughter]. That's good. It reminds me, I better know what's coming.

Alright. Now. Good point. Jeff has made a good point. See you need to distinguish the times in the seasons. When you read 2nd Corinthians, and the reason I'm making clear that distinction, is somebody who's not listening carefully, would say, Ok, if Jeremiah 31 said the same thing that this said, then I ought to be able to go back to Jeremiah to learn more how to live as a Christian. Jeremiah 31 did not offer to them in their day the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit as the *sine qua non* of every believer today. Everybody in this room has the Spirit of God within.

Jeff Little. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That was not true of Jeremiah 31.

Jeff Little. You see Paul making these contrasts on a regular basis.

Conrad Bowman. He does it all the time. He does it all the time. His heart, his heart was on fire for his Jewish brethren. He never lost that. Even though God said, I'm going to appoint you a Gospel to the Gentiles, and that's going to be your particular field to work in. And I've got 11 other guys over here that I'm sending to the House of Israel, but I'm sending you to the Gentiles. The first thing he did when he hit town, he went down to the synagogue. He wants to go down there and argue with his brothers for a while. You know, you're missing something here, you need to get on board, and he'd spend time down there arguing with his Jewish brothers, because he loved them. He was being driven by his heart, wasn't he. Because in his head and in his spirit, God had told him, you are being sent to the Gentiles. But Paul after all was a man to his heart. He was a man just like we are. And, he was subject to being driven by his heart. Ok. So, he'd push that back a little bit, and he'd got to work, and it wasn't until they ran him out. They'd beat him, they'd throw him out of the place, they'd run him out to the city limits, or something like that. Well, that didn't work so good. So, he's back again working with the Gentiles again. And he'd go to a new place and he'd go to the synagogue and start all over again. He got the dog beat out of him – there's all kinds of words I could have chosen there [laughter] – but he got just whipped over and over again because of his hardheadedness. Now that doesn't bother any of us, does it. No, we're not bothered by that.

Jeff Little. Even though his theology kind of remained the same ... [inaudible] ..., but it seems like living his life as a Pharisee was much more like ... [inaudible] ... on a Jew and you're not. And then his whole mission became the exact opposite.

Conrad Bowman. Exactly the opposite. Exactly the opposite. Didn't God pick the most unlikely person to take the Gospel to the whole world? He just

Jeff Little. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Of course. Of course. His whole background had him prepared for it. Just like everyone of us. Just like everyone of us. You look back at your life – I can't tell you how many times, and in what detail, God has poured into my life what I needed in order to carry on my ministry to people. And everyone of you can make the same statement. And it's true in all kinds of areas. I went to work for a pace maker company. I spent three years with them, to where I understood the technology, and understood those things completely. I got my first one in 1991. There's nothing I've ever faced medically that I haven't been involved in the study of – detailed study of – in my medical career. There's some things I don't want to use that I've sold [laughter] – so, want to know what my prayers are full of [laughter], and give a catalogue page for, you know, that's the way it is. God doesn't just dangle us out there, and put us in situations See, first He gives us the information, then He gives us the test. And then when we pass the test and be sure we got it, He starts giving us the opportunity to use that and unfold Him to a world that doesn't even know that He's involved. And that's the way life is. That's the life of the believer. So we come to 2nd Thessalonians 4:11, and it says,

Make it your ambition to - [what?]. Live a quiet life. Work with your own hands [so you won't be in any need]. Tend to your own business [it says, Ok]. Make it your ambition to live a quiet life. Tend to your own business. Work with your own hands, so you won't be in need, and might live at peace with all men.

That's the marching orders of the Church. There is no big proclamation that you're supposed to go out and do great things for God. You won't find that. It doesn't say that. It says,

Tend to your own business. Live a quiet life.

Why? Because that's the only mode we can live in where when we see something happen, God gets the credit. Because if we're running, and we're working hard, and we see something happen – you've seen me do it before ... [Conrad pats himself on the back] ... that's right. You'll get a cramp trying to reach your back. [Laughter]. Patting yourself on the back. You know. That's human nature.

Dan Walsh. Saved by grace.

Conrad Bowman. Saved by grace. That's it. Don't you like it. When the local band cranks up on that one – yes sir – it'll bring the house down. Alright.

For as much as you are clearly 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 the fleshly tables in the heart....

And Jeff has pointed it out. What he's done is he's written a – he's delivered a clear comparison between the tables that Moses received on the mountain and which came down and were put in that Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. [Conrad drawing depiction on Board]. You've got those Tables of Law, right here, and there're in that great Ark of the Covenant, on top of which is the raised Mercy Seat. And the word for Mercy Seat is "propitiation," and "propitiation" simply means, the satisfaction of God. God is expiated by the propitiation. The "propitiation" is also translated, "sin offering." Christ was our propitiation. He was our sin offering, because on the day of atonement, the high priest took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it here. [Conrad pointing to the depiction on Board]. So that great angel on this side, and that great angel on this side, with folded wings, looking down into that box, saw the blood first on the Mercy Seat, and the angels were propitiated. They were satisfied. And that satisfaction was God's satisfaction. And here's Aaron's rod that budded, and here's that bowl of manna that was in there. What do those three things represent? Failure. Failure. They were the three occasions of Israel's greatest failure and sin. They were total abject sin, is what was represented in the Ark of the Covenant. Now I want you to think about that. God had Israel take the symbols of their sinfulness, bring them inside the Holy of Holies, take the lid off the Ark of the Covenant, and put them inside. [Conrad points to depiction on Board]. And that was there. And the blood of the sacrifice, on Yom Kippur, on the Day of Atonement, went right on top of that Mercy Seat. And when the justness and righteousness and character of God judged the sins of Israel, God was satisfied because the sacrifice was sufficient. You see that?

Evelyn Wamble. How was the manna a failure?

Conrad Bowman. Oh, were they happy with it?

Everybody. No.

Conrad Bowman. No. They weren't happy with it. "What are you trying to do? You brought us out here in this desert. Back there we had leeks, and onions, and garlic, and all kinds of good things, we had all kinds of stuff. Out here in the wilderness, what've we got? We got this white little cakes that show up on the ground in the morning. And we've got quails we've had to knock in the head and clean and get them ready to go. You know, and that's all we've got.

Dan Walsh. I guess if today's high tech were available then, it would be just like a CD of their murmuring. [Laughter].

Conrad Bowman. That's exactly right. You know what the word for murmuring is? *Gongusmos*. *Gongusmos*. You know, imagine 5 million people all *gongusmosing*. Just imagine the rumbling that that caused? Right? That's the sound – it's the sound of iteration, and the very word itself. That was their failure. They failed to appreciate God's provision, and accept it as His provision. That was gross sin in their life. Is that true today?

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. Paul said, I've learned to abound. I've learned to have plenty, and I've learned to have practically nothing. To do without. I've learned how to be a base? I've learned in all things to be content. Whether I have plenty, or whether I have just a little. I want to be content. Why? Because it's God's provision for me today. Ok. So we need to be happy with that. That's all it takes for the joy of the Lord to fill your life. You don't have to have health. You don't have to have wealth. You don't have to have position or power. Or authority, to be happy and satisfied in God. That's what's wrong with the prosperity gospel. They missed the whole point. You don't need those things, you know. When you die and you're in the box, nobody's going to say, where's all his stuff? Unless they want to go get it. {Laughter}. Right? You're not going to be measured by that. God doesn't reward you today based on that. You are a sweet savor to Him. He is doing His work. So, Ephesians 2:10 says,

We are His workmanship, *poema*, created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of good works that we should walk in those that He has prepared beforehand and finished.

There's your job. Your job is to look for those footprints in the sand that disappear on your horizon, and put your foot in them, one step at the time, watching for where the Spirit is at work. And if you do that consistently, you'll find yourself on site when the Spirit of God finishes His work in another person, and you can enjoy and worship God together with them, based on His work, not on yours. Now, how many times does Paul say that, and how many ways does he say that, in all his epistles. And we've gone through all of them except 2nd Corinthians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians. And we've done the rest of them. And he said that over, and over, and over, and over again. Walk in His work. Walk in His work. Now Paul died, he was martyred about 40 years before the Apostle John wrote the Revelation. This is a non-paid commercial for next week's class. [Laughter]. Because, in the beginning of the Revelation, are the letters to the Churches. And John wrote to the Churches, and he named them – Laodicea, and Smyrna, and Ephesus – he went down the list. He sent a letter to those Churches. And in everyone of those letters, it makes this point: The Spirit says to the Churches. I know your works. Boy, they were busy. There, those Churches were really busy. I know your works. And in one place he said, except you repent, and return to my work, I'm going to come and deal with you harshly. They had forgotten. Instead of walking in His footsteps, they're trying to make big footprints of their own. And they can label them. Ok. Man, we want to be careful we don't get caught doing that. See, because I believe God will put everybody here that He wants to be here, I don't believe we have to be concerned with growth except to make sure that we've got plenty of room. Because, what we need to be concerned with, is the core of what this book teaches. Because if we teach it, and we teach it right, God will comb out of the community around us, all those who need to hear what we're supporting here. And he'll bring them through that door. We don't have to worry about that. He'll bring them in here. Our job is to grow them up. Is to feed them. Is to make sure they come and make a living contact with the Word so that they can love it as much as we love it. And in the process, we can have fellowship that we can hardly even imagine, sweet as it can be. Because that sweet savor feeds us, as it pleases the Father. What could be more desirable to the Church than that? To know that our life is rising in a sweet savor to the Father we serve and provides all things for us.

So, that's where Paul is going in chapter 3. Now,

Much and such trust have we through Christ to Godward....

You notice that when he goes in his trust, and he references, he goes through Christ on to God. Now, we've seen that illustration before. I use it a lot, and the illustration is like this [Conrad points to Board]. Christ is here. And, when He went to the cross, what does 2nd Corinthians 5:21 say – we're going to get there one day – what does it say?

He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness that's of Him, in Him....

So, all that sin that was represented in the box [Ark of the Covenant] has now gone to the cross, as Christ was made to be the sin offering for you and for me. See what He's doing? He's drawing all that Israel ever believed and ever saw in front of them, together into a doctrinal statement – that Christ was made to be sin. He didn't just bear sin. HE WAS MADE TO BE SIN. And that's really important because the priest himself ate of the sin offering where the shed blood came from. And the priest, representative of all of Israel, took sin into himself, and the sin offering had become Christ who carried with it the righteousness that came from God. And now the priest, Aaron, has that righteousness within him as he becomes united to the sacrifice, though that was never promised to Israel. It was pictured through Israel. To you, and to me, Christ laid it out in unvarnished fashion. Our union with Christ, and that's Romans, chapter 6, our union with Christ means that we have taken the righteousness that's part of God's character, and taken it to ourselves, as we become joined to Christ in inseparable union. That does not mean that Christ clothed you in His righteousness. It means that the righteousness which is Christ has now become part of you, the new creation you. So, when you accept Christ as your personal Savior, He takes you to Himself, the Spirit of God joins you to Him in His death to sin. Now, sin didn't die. Sin is still there. But sin is left in the grave, alive. Sin didn't die. You died.

Why is that important? Because sin, and Satan, sin's master, can't make a claim on a dead man. The dead man is beyond it. It's important for you to know, that when Christ died and went into the grave, sin had no more claim on Christ, because He died just exactly like you're going to die. And, He was resurrected by the power of the Father just like you're going to be resurrected by the power of the Father. And when you were joined to Christ in His death, sin lost it's grip on you. It can't make a claim on you anymore. There's no room for guilt, because every claim has been paid. There's nothing that separates you from the Father except the life of Christ His Son, the Only Begotten Son. And so you can live in

freedom. That's the liberty of the believer. What the Israelites saw in shadow form over, and over, and over again, is real for you, and for me. Any questions on that? This is really, really important that you get that. Ok. You are one of the unique objects of the universe. A new creation being, that's reborn spiritually, and walking and talking on the earth, on which sin has no claim. Well why do believers sin? Yes sir, do you have an idea on that?

Jeff Little. I have a question. So this is the foreshadowing. [Inaudible]. Mercy Seat. Propitiation. And which is the satisfaction to God. And you have blood on top of that.

Conrad Bowman. Blood on top of it. Yes.

Jeff Little. You got the sacrifice. And so Christ becoming sin, represents what's in the box.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Jeff Little. But ... [inaudible] ... the blood sprinkles on top of the Mercy Seat.

Conrad Bowman. That's right.

Jeff Little. So He's also the propitiation and satisfaction to God?

Conrad Bowman. That's exactly right. The whole package. Everything is, everything is wrapped up in what Christ is. You see, if I stood here, and this was the barrier, and God the Father is on the other side, and I'm over here [Conrad points to Board], and He's all righteous and I have no righteousness. And on this barrier I have sin. Sin has to be taken care of. And the penalty for sin has to be taken care of. And the character of God has to be satisfied. And the birth in Adam has to be rectified. See. And righteousness has to be satisfied. Every major Christian doctrine deals with one of those major bricks in that wall. As far as sin goes, we have to be, we have to be redeemed from sin. So redemption falls in there. As far as the penalty goes, the penalty has to be paid for us. We have to be atoned for. So, the doctrine of atonement comes in there. If you go down to birth, we have to be reborn. That's what He told Nicodemus in John 3, so the doctrine of regeneration comes in there, because we have to be reborn into God's family. When the character of God is satisfied, that's the doctrine of propitiation, because God is satisfied with the price His Son paid. And He is expiated. So propitiation, expiation come in there. The character of God is fully satisfied. Now, the fact that

that whole barrier has been removed, is the doctrine of reconciliation. Which simply means, there's nothing that stands between me and my Father over there. And because I now have been made righteous, righteousness of God in Christ, I can have a relationship to my righteous Father. So, that way is open. Now, we have been given as a Church the ministry of reconciliation. The message we carry to the world is, the barrier has been removed. It no longer is there. You and God are close to one another. You have access. All you have to do is accept it. And people will say, naaah, too easy. It's got to be something I can do to earn this, you know. So, they'll set about doing their own work to impress God. He's hard to impress.

Jeff Little. The best we can do is just minimize our sin, and we can never accomplish any of those things without

Conrad Bowman. That's right. Nothing. Nothing. There's not one thing we could do that would come up to the standard that Christ holds out there. Lois?

Lois Stromberg. My thoughts. I know that he has no claim on use, but you asked the question, why do we sin. Ok, pick up there, would you?

Conrad Bowman. Ok. Ok. The reason we sin is because, when He left us here, we are still associated with this body of skin and bone, the flesh. Ok. What does 1st John say? First John tells us, if we say we have no sin, we lie, we don't do the truth. Because in our walk as human beings, we are associated with the flesh. Understand, there's the flesh in which you walk; and there's the new creation you which is untouchable. So, when we walk by means of the Spirit, the steps we take are the steps of the new creation man or woman. And, those are pure steps guided by the Spirit. When we get rebellious in our mind, and we decide, ahhh...I got something else I want to do – this is going to impress God in a big way. So I get my hammer and nails and go out there and start my construction project on something that's going to impress God. Well, what happens there is, there's the Spirit's footprints, right there, that we want to be walking in. And here's this set of footprints over here, and boy, the enemy can make them look good. And see, these footprints [of the Spirit] get smaller and smaller as they go away from us. These footprints [of the enemy] get bigger and bigger. And they get brighter and brighter. So we start walking that bigger and brighter path, because it makes us look good. And the first thing you know, we're over here, and God's path is over here. Here is where sin occurs. We walk in sin as a lie, because the sin cannot attach itself to us as new creations. Yet we walk as if it can. So we're lying, and Scripture says, doing not the truth. We're

misrepresenting what we are. We're giving a picture to the world that as a believer, I can walk in sin, and still God loves me, and cares for me – which He does – and bless me, and that's not true. Because what God wants to do is bless Himself. We're not here to be blessed. We're here to be God's blessing for Himself. This is not about us. It's about Him. It's His story. Right. Just what Jeff said just now. It's not about us. It's about Him. If we get our eyes on "us," we keep trying to make "us" look better. We're not better. Ok. We're only better when we lose our life in Him. You know what God said, for me to live is Christ. To die is gain. In order to gain, I have to die to self

Jeff Little. Philippians 1:21.

Conrad Bowman. Philippians 1:21, thank you. What did John say, very close to that?

[Comments back and forth]

Phil Richman. You've got three minutes.

Conrad Bowman. In verse 6. Who has made us able ministers of the New Covenant. Not of the letter, but of the spirit. The letter kills, but the spirit makes alive. If you think you can toy with the Law, that verse alone should be enough to put a stake in the heart of that idea. Ok. Because the letter only kills. What's the Law do? It condemns.

Evelyn Wamble. It convicts.

Conrad Bowman. It condemns. Only life in the Spirit offered life, resurrection life. But, if the ministration of death, which is what the Law was, written and engraved in stone was glorious – and you remember it was, and he goes through this discussion about Moses going up on the mountain and taking the Law, and getting the Law, and he's coming back down and he put a veil over his face. His face was just shining brilliant. And he's coming down the mountain and put a veil over it because he realized that that shining that was brilliant on top of the mountain was fading the farther down the mountain he came. And he didn't want the Israelites to see that the glory was fading away. So he put a veil over his face so that they would think he was as bright and shiny as he was on top of the mountain. See, that's what happens with sin. You let sin in your life and the first thing you know, you start covering up the effects of it. Well, that's what Paul is calling attention to that, for,

...if the ministration of death written and engraved in the stone was glorious [and it was, it was shining on Moses' face], so that the children of Israel could not – [I'm going to have to put those glasses on again] – could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of the countenance, which glory was fading away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious on a continuous basis. [Which is what you have there in the Greek]. For if the ministration of condemnation is glory [and that's what the Law was – condemnation] if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more does the ministration of righteousness exceed that glory. So walk in the righteousness that God has provided. For even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels.

And what Paul is saying is this. The Law produced that glory for a little while. But the glory that's yours by virtue of your walk and your relationship with Christ exceeds everything that the Law ever offered, and it endures forever. Why would the Church go back to law, when it could live in the freedom and liberty of life in Christ? And yet, we tend to love the law, and struggle to take it on ourselves. And it not that law, we start to write our own law. Boom! How many Christians do you know that insist on taking the 10 Commandments, in Jewish tradition, and adopting it as their own, believing that it offers a picture of Christ's grace. And God's glory. And it's not true.

Who's doing this next week?

Phil Richman. We've got to get him off the stage, you know. [Applause]. Alright, as I mentioned at the beginning, and I'll just mention it again, because some of you have come in since the beginning. And, I want to get it both ways, because some leave and some come. Conrad is going to continue the study in Revelation across the hall, between 8 and 9 o'clock, starting next week. And that'll run for whatever it takes – I'm thinking about four months. He will be the exclusive teacher there, with the exception of, if he can't show, or whatever, we may do a review. And if not, we'll either wait around and talk, you know, with each other. Or, you can – there's another class that meets in here at 8 o'clock, and they're doing 2nd Corinthians, and you can do that. I would encourage those of you who can to do both classes. I intend to be here for both classes. That's my intention. And, we will be sharing the teaching of 2nd Corinthians in this room, and one of us will, either Joe or myself, will do it next week, just so you're aware of that.

And, Paul Nelson is going to be teaching in here as well. We're all going to be sharing that. That's the way it's going to go, and we'll see how it goes. This will be a series, and then we'll make other decisions with regard to that 8 o'clock class. Sunday school, you should know, from what I heard just the other day, about 80% - now this is strictly numbers, and how those numbers are generated - there could be interpretation. But Sunday schools are attended by about 80% of the total population of the church that attends the services. And that's very high, as from what I am told. Usually in most churches, it's about 40%. So, the Sunday school attendance here at BridgePoint is very high. It says to me, there is a high level of growth and satisfaction in coming to Sunday school classes. And I think that's been the case here, and I want to thank Conrad for really helping us. It's been tremendous. So, any questions or comments? I'm going to close in prayer and yes sir? Bill?

Bill O'Fiel. A remark that Conrad made earlier, about our responsibility to make sure we had room. With this crowd we've got today, we don't have any vacant seats.

Phil Richman. Well, that's one of the reasons - it you want to blame somebody for what we're doing, and the times, I'm the one who pushed this, and I feel this will balance the classes somewhat. I think, frankly, in a big class, you're just going to continue to grow in the coming months. I know we're maxed out here. That's one of the reasons we're doing what we're doing, because we don't have, we can't accommodate. So we've got to slip it. And, I think it's going to work. I think, you know, I don't know where it's going to go. I just work week by week. But I saw that something needed to be done, and I feel like And Joe is on board. I don't operate in a vacuum. John Hopper is on board with this. Eddie Burge is in the other 8 o'clock class, along with Ken Rembert, are aware of this, as was anybody that was affected. And I'm going to be talking to Harold Tate - they come after it. But everybody that should be on board has been notified, and it's Ok. This is not anything that - we've been talking about this for several weeks. It was delayed by Conrad having an episode there, where he could not get here for a couple of weeks. We had to delay that. And we didn't really know how he was going to do. And right now, he is looking pretty strong, isn't he? [Applause].

Lady. So, we're not going to have this class?

Phil Richman. Oh no. This class is going to meet and

Lady. So we'll have two hours?

Phil Richman. It's total freedom. Ok. We would hope that you – just make a decision. You can go to that class, or this class, or both as, frankly, I'm going to do. I'm going to make both classes and the worship service. The idea is spiritual growth, and that's where we are going. Yes sir.

Jeff Little. I think the ... [inaudible] ... it was, 1st John chapter 2:24-25, says, let what you heard in the beginning abide in you. If what you heard in the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. And this is what He has promised us, eternal life. So that's when he referred to Philippians 1:21.

Phil Richman. I appreciate that. I'm going to go ahead and close us in prayer. Thank you. We maxed out today and praise the Lord.

Phil Richman. Closing Prayer: "Father we thank You, and we thank You for this day and these opportunities that we have, and we thank You for the lesson. And I pray Lord, that each and every one of us will walk in the Spirit. Exercise our spiritual gifts. Let the fruit of the Spirit that is in us, that You gave us, help us to be more patient, more loving, more full of grace, and all that we do. Yet, in setting a righteous standard. And we thank You that we have the power to do that Lord. That we have Your wonderful Word. We give You all the praise, in Jesus name, Amen. "