

## 11/14/04 THE FACE OF MINISTRY (Outline)

II Cor. 3: 3-6

### INTRODUCTION

As we continue on the theme of ministry let's review the meaning and method of the word. Ministry is primarily in *meaning*, servicing. Diakoneo in *method* is the following: 1) to be a servant, attendant, domestic, to serve, wait upon to minister to one, 2) to be served, ministered unto, (e.g. by collecting alms), 4) to provide take care of, distribute, the things necessary to sustain life, 5) to take care of th to wait at a table and offer food and drink to the guests, to minister, i.e. supply food and necessities of life, 3) to relieve one's necessities e poor and the sick, 6) to minister a thing to one, 7) to serve one or by supplying any thing. You see this whole scope of ministry is not related to visibility and job importance in our eyes. It is a service thing, which the scripture let's us know is applied to all who are really displaying Christ in their lives.

### THE DECLARATION

This word manifest we have learned is used to talk of Jesus appearances, it's used to describe the making known of things, the *coming forth* of glory, and a *declared* thing. Let's look a little closer now.

*2 Corinthians 3: 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for 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. NAS*

*2Co 3:3 It's clear that you are Christ's letter, written as a result of our ministry. You are a letter written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, a letter written not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. GW*

*2 Co. 3:3 being made known that you are the letter of Christ having been ministered [or, cared for] by us, having been written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tablets [made of] stone, but in fleshy tablets of hearts. ALT*

*2 Co. 3: 3 Forasmuch as ye are manifestly 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 fleshy tables of the heart. KJV*

1. CARING CREATES: Notice that the word "ministry" used here, that *waiting at the table thing*, has a result. The ministry of Paul's caring has produced a result. Due to Paul's involvement in their lives they are becoming epistles or living letters engraved by Jesus himself. One gets the idea they had something before. Something even *religious* it seems. I'm not sure however, they were *cared* about before. Something goes on that disturbs me. Rules are like Rabbits. They multiply like crazy. Once you start making them they seem to pop up everywhere. Now, rules can be important, and are very important, but Jesus had a real problem with rules that seemed to serve the rule-givers more than it did the receivers. There are rules that bring safety and freedom, and rules that bring bondage. Look at Jesus rule: "Love God with ALL you heart". Wow a rule that starts off with LOVE. Hey, "ABIDE in ME", what a rule. *See rules are there because we don't trust the heart*. All Christians go 70 mph in a 70 zone, and 30 mph in a 30,.. We know that! Some people though do it just because the rule is there and some really are concerned about safety, and some do it out of respect. (*I do it out of love for the highway patrol*). Wouldn't it be something if instead of religious rules, there was a CHRIST CARING going on in me that caused *others* to have something new created in their very hearts and lives by Him?

ILLUS: See Only Christ

*You are familiar, no doubt, with one of the most famous paintings ever done by any artist: The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci, that classic portrayal of Christ and the twelve apostles at the table. Many students of art history believe that the painting, when first created, was somewhat different from the version which we*

now see. There was initially, it is believed, an exquisite lace border on the tablecloth. When, immediately upon completion, da Vinci invited a group of art students to view his masterpiece, they were immensely impressed by the delicate design of that lacework. They studied it intensely and praised it highly. Upon seeing the reaction of these young men, the artist took up a brush, dipped it, and made a few long strokes across the canvas, obliterating the lace. Then, with uncontrollable feeling, he shouted, "Now, you fools, look at the face of Christ!"

(Source unknown). That brings us to the second half of VS 3. "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." NAS

2. **CARING CHANGES:** Those ministered to are becoming alive. It is so obvious to me that those engaged in religious practice, versus relational presence, are absolutely unhappy. No doubt about it. I'm concerned that at times we are really more intent on making sure that we make disciples of our beliefs, more than of Christ. Did you notice this is not an ink on paper thing? It's not I read the book and passed the test. It's a SPIRIT deal. It's not "I got dunked in the lake and got the certificate", it's a SPIRIT deal. This is **not** a paper and ink ACADEMICS, it's a HIM AND ME AFFAIR. You see, ink on paper can go on the exterior, but it takes the Spirit to get inside. Exteriors can get pretty hard, like stone you might say, but the heart, well that's where He, Jesus, really likes to work. People are uncomfortable a lot with that. We like the exterior because we can judge that better. Give me something I can see so I know you are measuring up to the rules. "Man looks on the outward appearances, God sees the heart." Are you ready to move from ACADEMIC facts to love AFFAIR With Him?

#### THE DRIVEN

What is it that drives us? Where in the world am I going to get this manifestation of Him going in my world, and how? Yes, I am an epistle of Christ, but how and who gets this manifestation going? Let's look at the original language again:

2 **Cor 3:3** "being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for 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." NASB

2Cor 3:3: *Forasmuch as ye are manifestly 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 fleshy tables of the heart.* KJV

2 Cor. 3:3 (MSG) Christ himself wrote it--not with ink, but with God's living Spirit; not chiseled into stone, but carved into human lives--and we publish it. Now the King James version really does a nice job here from the literal Greek. The phrase "manifestly declared", This is in the present passive/ middle participle. That means that this is an *ongoing continuous act* that is being done **TO YOU by Christ**, but also that in some way YOU are involved as a participant in the action that is occurring on or in you. The **declaration** drives this **manifestation** in you, and you are cooperating with Christ in this whole deal to allow the Spirit to *engrave* Himself on your heart. Truthfully, you can't contain what is being engraved on your heart, and so it spills out into all your world, creating and changing the very environment around you.

**ILLUS:** *Parents do you remember times of taking pictures of your children. You got that perfect background and the smile is just right!.. You tell them "don't move, hold that smile." You are trying to create an environment that will shine through. You are directing and arranging, and this is not set up by them. You are the active voice in this thing, taking the action. They have to respond, they have a part to play, it is "HOLD THAT SMILE".*

*Reflections and Application:*

1) If I were sharing with a best friend, and they asked me where I thought I had hardened over the years, what would I say?

2) What areas might I have softened in, that used to be hard?

3) Tomorrow I will be in a place where almost no one believes in a personal relationship with Christ, or even cares. How will I prepare for that?