

"Not Good Enough"

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[0 : 00] We took a brief break from our study of 2 Corinthians last week to touch on the Reformation, which is a worthy thing to remember.

But this week we will be returning to our study of 2 Corinthians. I hope that if you've been going with us along the way that you have felt yourself gain a better knowledge of 2 Corinthians and the themes that Paul is teaching about.

The Bible is one whole story and the more of it we know, the more we can gain blessings and knowledge from different sections that we read.

So it is helpful for us to dig deep into this book and develop our understanding. I wonder, have you ever faced a challenge that seems overwhelming to you?

Have you ever looked out at your life and said to yourself, I can't do it. I'm not good enough. If you are being honest with yourself, you will likely have felt this way at some point in your life.

[1 : 14] We all should feel that way at some point. We all have limits. And not just a few limits. But we're limited in every area.

Lots of limits everywhere. This is the question that will be raised in the passage is a question of sufficiency.

To be sufficient means to be enough. And at the end of the day, we all need to look into the mirror and say to ourselves that we are not enough.

Some of you don't do this and you really should. And some of you already say it to yourselves, which is a good thing.

But we don't just stop there. And as we'll see through the sermon, we don't stop with saying we're not good enough. But we need an answer to the fact that we are not good enough.

[2 : 16] So I want you all to start at this point. The point of saying to yourself and recognizing within yourself that you are not good enough. And there you will be able to apply the truths of this passage to the fact that you are not good enough.

In verse 3, the last verse that I taught on, Paul ends by pointing out the incredible work that God has done. And that Paul gets to be a participant of, that he gets to be an instrument in that work. So if we look back to verse 3, Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God.

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. This is the great work that Paul gets to take part in. Work that changes lives.

Work that re-writes people's hearts. Work that changes people to the deep levels that exterior rules and laws could never transform.

[3 : 34] And so at the start of the passage we'll be studying today, Paul wants to make clear that this amazing work that he gets to be part of, The amazing trust he's been given is not because he is so good.

So he takes a look at the amazing work he's been called to be a part of, And he also freely admits that he himself is unqualified. So read with me, keeping that all in mind, in 2 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 4 through 6.

And we have such trust through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, But our sufficiency is from God, Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, Not of the letter, But of the spirit.

For the letter kills, But the spirit gives life. I want you to know, fair warning, That that last section about the letter and the spirit, We're going to save for next week.

There's a lot of truth there, And so I want to just sequester that off. We'll take a look at the sufficiency and the ministry of the new covenant today.

[4 : 59] So part one, The job. In verse 4, Paul writes, We have such trust through Christ. This could also be phrased, We have been trusted with a serious task through Jesus.

Paul is talking here about the ministry that he has. We see that explained more in verse 6, As Paul says, Who also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant.

This is Paul's serious task that he's been given. He has been made, by the grace of God, A minister, a worker, In the new covenant.

The new covenant is the gospel. And the gospel is the new covenant. These are different Bible words for talking about the same thing. The new covenant, the gospel, Is God's announcement that any who repent of their sins and come to him, Will have every last sin paid for by Christ on the cross.

This is God's new covenant or new agreement with man. The way by which man might be free from sin. The new covenant is God's amazing truce.

[6 : 27] That's God's amazing peace pact. Where his enemies now have opportunity to become his sons through his punishment of Christ.

The new covenant is a treaty between God and his enemies. Where we can go from being enemies to being treated like sons.

The new covenant is God's agreement with man. Where after they draw near to him. In forgiveness and through the gospel.

He will send his spirit into their hearts. To teach them. To reveal God to them. And to bring them blessing. This new covenant is incredible.

It does amazing things. It allows sinners to go free. And to become heirs. Inheritors. Children of the living God.

[7 : 27] And it allows us to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Capable of changing us from death to life. This is an amazing covenant.

And Paul gets to be a part of it. A minister. A worker. For the sake of that covenant. So I want you to know.

That Paul isn't the only one who's been given a great task. Here he's focused on himself being made a minister. But Paul isn't the only minister in this new and great covenant that brings people to life.

You are ministers of this new covenant. Every believer is to be a worker in this covenant. You are all given this great charge.

This serious task. And you must respond to it. You are tools in God's hands. And workers of his great gospel designs.

[8 : 30] Just to think about this a bit more. Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 4. You'll find it on page 1798.

Ephesians chapter 4. Just a little bit later in the Bible. Here it is clearly stated that every believer is to do ministry.

No one gets out of this. If you are a believer, this is part of your calling. You might be under the impression that the ministers are the people who get up and preach on a Sunday.

Or do other official work in the church. But the Bible here will clearly state that ministry is the work of every believer. Read with me starting in verse 11.

Why did he give these people that we often call ministers?

[9 : 38] He gave them for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry. For the edifying of the body of Christ. Here the Bible says that the purpose for apostles like Paul.

And pastors like me. Is not so much about us being the ones who do the ministry for you. But it is to train you. So that you can go out and do the ministry that you have been charged with.

You are saints. This passage refers to equipping the saints for the work of ministry. You are saints by the grace of God.

And you are called to be workers in God's new covenant. We all have this task and this great privilege. You have an amazing job to do.

And there is no Christian who does not do the Christian ministry. We are all assigned this task. So get out there.

[10 : 47] Study your Bibles. Preach the gospel to people. Encourage other believers. Live out the truth of this book.

And love people. You should ask yourself regularly. Because this is your task. Am I a faithful new covenant worker?

Do I do things to advance the job that I've been given? Am I a good employee of my father?

Or am I a slacker? Some of us are content to slack off at our jobs and skate through with the bare minimum.

But I tell you, if this is your attitude towards the gospel that has saved you. You should question whether or not you actually believe that this Christ has loved you like the Bible says he has.

[11 : 53] It must also be said that the greater the task that someone has been given, the more it changes their life. If you are called to take part in a great work, that is going to have a bigger impact in your life than if you're called to do something minor.

No one is surprised when a politician labors for long hours at his home to think about what the right thing to do is.

But I would be surprised to find someone working at McDonald's spending hours at home studying to be a good worker. The greater the job you're given, the more normal it is that that shapes every aspect of your life.

Police officers are often on call when they're off duty because their job is so serious that it shapes different aspects of their life.

Or consider some of the most amazing jobs out there, some of the most important tasks anyone might be given. Being married, being a parent.

[13 : 06] These are very important. These are very important jobs. And just how thoroughly do these jobs transform someone's life when they're given them?

In these tasks as husband or wife and as father or mother, you are given an opportunity to make an incredible difference in your life, in someone's life.

And what goes along with that is it changes everything for you. In the same way, we should consider how much the gospel job we've been given should change every aspect of our life.

We've been given the task of soul winning, of going out there and preaching to people about life and death. It should shape everything in your life because it is an incredible job you have been given.

So that's part one, the job, the incredible task of being ministers of a new covenant. Then there's part two, the qualifications.

[14 : 18] Every job has some form of qualifications that you must pass to be worthy of it. As we consider what the qualifications for this minister of the new covenant job is, please turn back to 2 Corinthians chapter 3 on page 1776.

It must be noted that the greater the task someone is given, the greater their qualifications must be. No one minds when a 12-year-old runs a lemonade stand.

But I'd be hesitant to let them do brain surgery. You don't walk up to the 12-year-old in their lemonade stand and ask to see their culinary arts degree.

No Starbucks requires a PhD for baristas. No one does. And ultimately, it's because the task isn't great enough to require high qualifications.

But no one would disagree. If I said, I don't want an art major to do spinal surgery for me. Certain things require high qualifications because they are important tasks.

[15 : 39] So the question should be asked. If Paul is trusted with such a great task, what are his qualifications? If he's a minister of the new covenant, this amazing role, what qualifies him to step into that role?

The Corinthian church were actually asking this question. What were Paul's qualifications? And they were right to ask it because it really matters who was teaching them.

But they went wrong in thinking that any earthly qualifications would be good enough for that job. They thought to toss Paul out because he didn't seem that impressive.

And they wanted someone who seemed impressive because they would be more qualified. But they failed to realize that these impressive men, despite their eloquence and maybe fancy degrees, maybe they carried themselves very confidently and had a lot of charm and charisma.

And they were, the Corinthian church were drawn in by these teachers and tempted to disregard Paul, who often seemed so weak.

[17 : 13] They failed to realize that all of those things that those people had weren't good enough qualifications for the task either.

That they could pile up all of these skills and these impressive things in worldly eyes. And they would still fall short of the qualifications necessary to be a minister of the gospel.

So let's look at what Paul says about his own qualifications. Read verse 5 with me.

Paul says, I am not good enough to do this. He says this to the Corinthians to point out that no one is sufficient for this task.

Not even him. That the only way someone is sufficient for this is by the grace of God. We must recognize that we are not enough for the tasks we have been given.

[18:46] The challenges you face in life. You will not be enough for. Especially the task and the challenge of being a gospel worker.

A minister of the new covenant. If you deceive yourself into thinking that you are qualified enough for the tasks you're given. And for the gospel work.

You will find yourself trusting in yourself. And when you trust in yourself you will be surely disappointed. Think about this.

By your own strength. Can you make a sinner repent from the heart? By your own wisdom.

Can you disprove any argument someone would lodge against the truth? By your own power. Can you bring dead sinful hearts to life?

[19:55] Has your word by itself ever been enough to change someone into a believer? To turn someone from their rebellion?

The answer should be no. I mean all the time I find myself in situations where I am trying to encourage people and comfort them in difficulty.

And I regularly feel entirely unqualified and unable to do it. If you still want to put confidence in your own qualifications.

Why don't you try by your own power to comfort some mother who has just lost their child? See what the results would be if you thought.

I can make it so this person isn't sad anymore. It's well within my power. It's arrogance. You should look at the challenges of this life.

[21:06] And you should feel overwhelmed. If you have any intention to take them on by your own skills. You cannot trust in yourself.

Jeremiah 7, 17 verses 5 and 6 say, Cursed is the man who trusts in man. Who makes flesh his strength.

Whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert. And shall not see good when it comes. But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness.

In a salt land which is not inhabited. Do not trust in yourself. You must realize that you are not enough.

Consider heaven. Consider what happens when we trust in ourselves to be good enough to get there. Will you be there by your own righteousness?

[22:07] Are you good enough to demand God's blessing? If you think that you are. I hope that the word of God will convict you and make you realize that none is righteous.

No, not one. And make you realize that God is so glorious. So perfect. That one drop of sin on you makes you unfit for his presence.

He is so perfect that our sin stained lives have no business before his throne. Think about the Pharisees in Jesus' day.

They were so confident that they were good enough. I did this and I did that. I tithed every last bit of things I own.

I fast all the time. So I'm good with God. They were so confident in themselves that when Jesus comes. They don't see their need for him.

[23:13] But they hate him and reject him. As long as you have a big view of yourself, you will have a small view of God.

So let's see what God does with our not good enough and our lack of qualifications. Let's look at why he would give such great tasks to a people who were so unqualified.

Part three. The one who is enough. We are not good enough. But there is one who is good enough. And I don't want us to think about our not being good enough so we can just be depressed. I want you to be aware of it so that you cry out and run to the one who is good enough.

To Jesus. Look at verse five again. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves. To think of anything as being from ourselves.

To Jesus. Look at verse five again. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves. To think of anything as being from ourselves.

[24 : 26] But our sufficiency is from God. Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant. Our sufficiency.

Our good enoughness. Is from God. He has made us good enough. Why?

Why? How? How? How can he make us good enough? It is because he is so big. So glorious.

So without limits. That he is more than enough to make up for all of our limitations. He is more than enough to overcome all of our weaknesses.

When I was teaching the youth group. I would give this analogy for why God uses weak things. It shows how powerful he is.

[25 : 27] If I go into the woods and I cut down a tree with a sponge. Does it mean a sponge is a really good tool to cut down trees?

No. It means that I'm just really good at chopping them. The weakness of the tool highlights my skill. Whereas someone with a chainsaw is going to have a much easier time.

And it doesn't show their skill quite as much. Usain Bolt can run really fast. But I beat him with my car every day.

The impressiveness is that he's doing it with weak things. Where my use of a car does nothing. No credit to me.

God gets glory by using a people who will never be enough. And this is captured so, so prominently in the gospel.

[26 : 31] When we look to the cross and we see that we would never be enough to pay for the sins there. We could do nothing to cancel out that debt.

We could work for a thousand years and never pay for our sins. But he is there paying for them.

Could my zeal, no respite, no.

Could my tears forever flow. Not for sin, could atone. You must save and you alone. The new covenant starts with the one who is enough.

With the one who pays the debt that we could never pay. So that we looking to him can cry out. My debt is paid. It is paid in full.

By the precious blood that Jesus spilled. Now the curse of sin has no hold on me. Whom the son sets free is free indeed. So will you cry out to him in your sin?

[27 : 37] When you see how much you are not enough, will you run to the one who is? Will you run to the one who is enough to answer your every flaw, your every shortcoming, your every weakness?

Repent and receive him. If God has shown you your weakness, do not let that be a tool of Satan that tears you down.

But let it be a tool of God to drive you to run to him. Like the prodigal son who spends all of the inheritance that he gets. And then he remembers the goodness of his father and runs back to him.

Let your not enoughness be enough to make you run to him. True comfort is to be able to look out at all of your not good enoughs.

And say he is. He is good enough. And I have him. And that will be enough. More than that, if you have believed in him, he will make you good enough.

[28 : 57] He will make your not good enough enough to be ministers of the gospel. I think we all at some point, if we've looked to preach the gospel to someone, have felt not good enough.

I don't know what to say. I can't convince them to do this. I'm too anxious. I'm too weak. I don't feel good enough to do this.

He makes us sufficient. Verse 6. Who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant. Even in this great task of gospel work.

Even in this grandest of tasks that no human being is qualified for. He can make us people, even here at Christ Baptist Church, good enough, sufficient to preach the gospel.

Don't let the fact that you feel not good enough keep you from preaching the gospel. It's good to get smarter about the Bible and about these things.

[30 : 14] But intelligence hasn't saved a single sinner. God is the one who saves. So know that the reason why you are qualified to do this Christian work that you've been given.

You are qualified because God is with you. Remember the passage that Vicki read for us earlier? Exodus.

Then Moses said to the Lord, I'm not good enough. Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent. Neither before nor since you have spoken to me.

But I am slow of speech and slow of tongue. He's saying, God, I'm not good enough. Why would you make me go out and do this thing?

I'm not qualified. And what is God's answer? So the Lord said to him, who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing or the blind?

[31 : 18] Have not I, the Lord, made these things? Now, therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and I will teach you what to say.

He is with you and he will teach you what to say. Don't let your lack of qualifications keep you from doing your Christian work. Let's close in prayer.

Lord, I pray that you help us to remember these three things. First, how great the task is that we have all been called to.

Second, how unqualified we are to serve or even be in your presence. And third, how you answered our every weakness on the cross and are with us even unto the end of the age.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.