

Lenten Devotional March 21, 2018

Scripture

2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

¹⁴But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. ¹⁵For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence. ^{3:1}Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; ³and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared 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. ⁴Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. ⁵Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, ⁶who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Devotional

Michelle Spomer, Donald G. Miller Librarian and Director of the Clifford E. Barbour Library

While updating your CV or resumé for a job search can be a good reminder of your experience and skills, it is often the letter of recommendation from a trusted colleague that reveals what makes you an outstanding candidate for the position. The best letters will effectively communicate your most significant accomplishments and how you might even transform an organization for the better.

While the letter Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 3:3 isn't exactly a letter of recommendation as we know it, it is a metaphorical letter of recommendation that included evidence of Paul's influence and the transformative power of the gospel of Christ in the lives of the Corinthian believers. The letters of their Christian lives were to be "read" by all those who encountered them—and were to inspire others to follow Jesus.

This passage is a beautiful and challenging one for the Lenten season. What do the letters of our lives say to others? Would they read Christ in our letters? Do they reflect the love and insight that other believers have poured into us?

Prayer

Lord, may we "show that we are letters of Christ" to all we meet. Thank you for all those throughout our lives who have shown us how to be Christian. Amen.