

Matthew 26:28 _____

Hebrews 12:24 _____

Question: When we speak of the “letter of the law” compared to the “spirit of the law”, what do we mean? Is that what Paul means at the end of verse 6?

Question: What does the Apostle John have to say on this subject?

John 1:17 _____

Question: A person might look at Lutherans like us and ask, “Why do they make such a big deal about distinguishing between Law and Gospel?” From the end of verse 6, what’s Paul’s answer to this question?

Questions for Further Discussion:

In what ways do people try to “peddle” the Gospel in our day?

What are the methods of the “church growth movement”? What might the section about “peddlars” have to say about catering to peoples’ “felt needs” in order to gain new church members?

What role do *credentials* play in in the church in our day? In what way might they they work *for* the Gospel? *Against* the Gospel?

What are some of the ways in which Christian doctrine is bound to go wrong if Law and Gospel are not properly distinguished?

II CORINTHIANS
PAUL'S MOST PERSONAL EPISTLE

Part 5: Sincere Servants of the Gospel

Warm-up: What is your favorite smell or aroma? What was the worst thing you ever smelled? Is it possible for the same thing to smell good to one person and bad to another?

Question: Did Paul find any Gospel work to be done when he arrived in Troas?

2 Cor 2:12-13 _____

Question: Yet Paul was not able to seize this opportunity. What hindered him?

Question: Apparently Paul had commissioned Titus to go to Corinth, observe conditions there, and report back to Paul in Troas. but Titus hadn't arrived. What anxious questions might this have raised in Paul's mind?

Question: Despite his anxiety and uncertainty, Paul now states that one thing was *never* in doubt—the success of the Gospel! In what way are the preachers of the Gospel like those who take part in a “triumphal procession”?

2 Cor 2:14 _____

Isaiah 55:11 _____

Question: However, in verse 14 Paul makes clear that preachers will ONLY be triumphant when they remain...

Question: what is the “fragrance” that preachers of the Gospel spread abroad?

2 Cor 2:15-16

Question: Both believers and unbelievers are able to smell that fragrance, but how does their perception of it differ?

Question: Concerning the challenges of proclaiming the Gospel, Paul asks, “Who is sufficient for these things?” – Is this a real question or a rhetorical question?

Question: If it is a real question, what is the answer? (hint: look ahead to 3:5)

Question: How does Paul describe the dishonest way in which some people (perhaps the false apostles in Corinth) were handling the word of God?

2 Cor 2:17

Question: But, Paul says, he and his colleagues are not like that! In what four ways does *their* ministry differ from the peddlers’ ministry?

Question: At the time of Paul, ground mail was the only kind of communication there was. Consequently, “letters of commendation” (references) were routinely used by traders and businessmen to establish their credentials. Why did Paul feel that he did not need such references in connection with the Corinthians?

2 Cor 3:1

Question: By the way, what does this question imply about the “false apostles” – his adversaries in Corinth?

Question: In what way were the Corinthians themselves an “epistle written in our hearts,” that anyone could easily read?

2 Cor 3:2-3

Question: How might the effects of an “epistle in the heart” last even longer than a stone monument?

Question: Paul trusts that the Gospel is effective, and that his ministry will be “sufficient” to carry out God’s will for the salvation of souls. How does Paul describe this “sufficiency” both NEGATIVELY and POSITIVELY?

2 Cor 3:4-6

Question: What is the “new covenant” is Paul referring to?

Jeremiah 31:31-34
