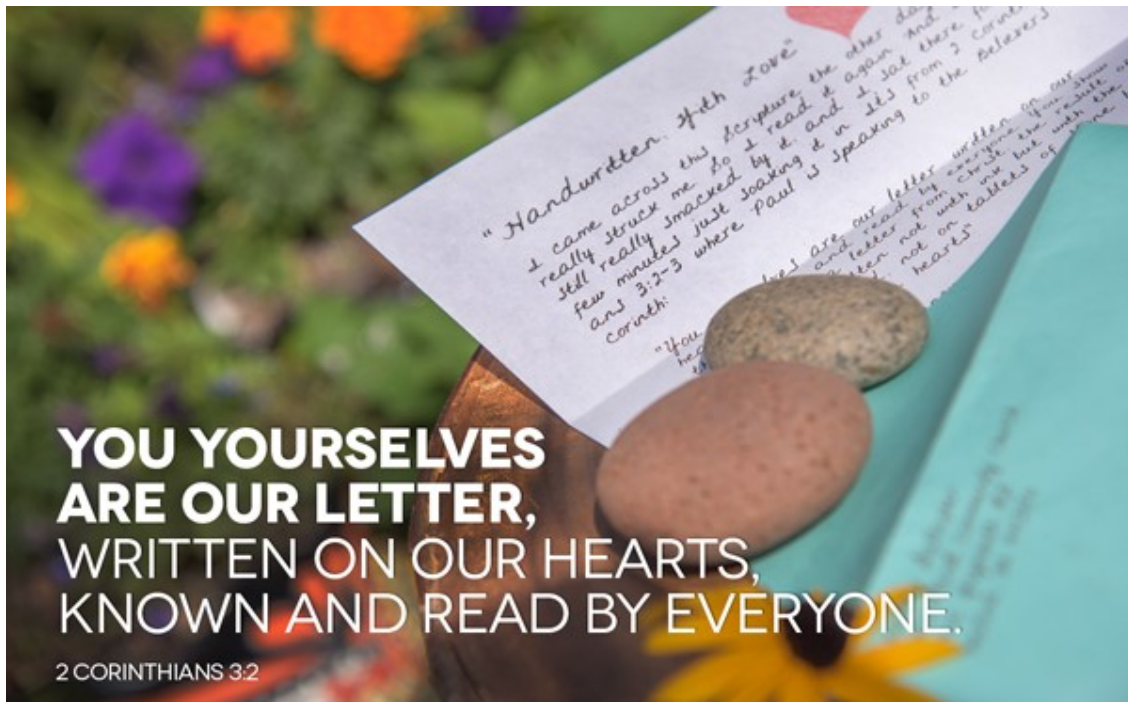




August 30, 2017

Handwritten With Love



I came across this Scripture the other day and it really struck me. So I read it again. And I was still really smacked by it, and I sat there for a few minutes just soaking it in. It's from 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 where Paul is speaking to the Believers in Corinth:

"You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."

I know I'm a sinner saved by grace, a believer in Jesus, a worshipper, and a disciple trying to walk the path God has set for me, but I never thought of myself as a love letter from Christ!

Have you ever received a love letter? Have you ever written one? So much of our communication is in text abbreviations, message apps, or emails peppered with emojis. If you can, cast your mind back to receiving a handwritten letter in the mail: there's the

excitement of noticing it being personally addressed to you and checking the upper left-hand corner to see who sent it. There's something special about the feel of the envelope in your hands and the postmark over the stamp. You open it by hand or with that slender metal letter opener that feels so cool to the touch — and you open it very carefully, so as not to harm the irreplaceable contents inside. Like a luxurious gift waiting to be opened, you unfold the letter and begin to read the special words the sender wrote just for you — from one heart to another, each word and phrase carefully chosen to express the deepest encouragement and love.

Isn't that a beautiful picture in your mind? And yet, through the inspired words of God, Paul tells us that we are the walking, breathing, living love letters of Jesus Christ to each person that we interact with. The depth of our spiritual transformation and the authenticity of our faith is "known and read by everybody" (verse 2) — meaning it should be completely obvious to everybody that we come into contact with.

We represent a letter of Christ that is written "not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God" (verse 3). Ink can smear or fade, and paper can be torn, lost or deteriorate over time, but the Spirit of the Living God is everlasting. The testimony of God's work in our lives is a permanent witness of the transforming work of Jesus Christ, "written on human hearts" by His saving work on the cross.

We are more than a "representative of Jesus" or a "spokesperson for the faith." Greater than that special letter handwritten to us, or that beautiful gift waiting to be opened, we are literally an embodiment of Christ's transforming love, sent out as an example of His deepest love, grace, and mercy.

Realizing this, I felt compelled to examine what my presence — my personal love letter — looks like in the world. Am I reaching out with love? Are the words that I say carefully chosen? Am I compassionate and forgiving? Do I point people to Jesus?

Some days I'm like the letter that got ripped up in the machine at the post office, or the one that got stepped on, chewed up by the dog, or drenched in rain so that the ink is smudged but the intent is still there.

That's okay. God can take the love letter that is my life — and your life — and use it for good, for His purposes, and far beyond anything that can be expected or imagined. And really, I'm filled with a lot of awe when I think about that, because I don't deserve to be used at all.

What about you? What does your life as Christ's love letter look like to the world around you?

Meeting Jesus on the Water,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly".

Kimberly Gallagher

Worship Leader



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