2 Corinthians 3:1-6

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 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. 4 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The false apostles = a legalistic, Jewish cult of Christianity (Christ + the Law = salvation)
Peddlers of God's word- ch. 2
Servants of Satan- ch. 11
Dogs- Phil. 3
They were leading people away from the truth of the Gospel

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?
Paul says the transformation of the Corinthian believers themselves is the only letter he needs—a letter from Christ, written by the Holy Spirit on their hearts.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul says the Corinthians' changed lives are an open letter, "known and read by everyone". They were Living Letters!

We too are Living Letters!

There is no greater testimony to the gospel of Jesus Christ than when the unbelieving world looks upon the lives of Christians and find God's Spirit working in us and through us.

There is no greater handicap to the gospel than when the world looks upon professing Christians in whom Christ has made no real change.
You may be the only gospel that some people ever read!
God's not looking for perfect people. He simply asks us to be humble and willing.

4 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

When God calls us to represent Him as 'Living Letters', He will also supply the grace and power we need to accomplish this task.

Galatians 2:20- It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me
Philippians 4:13- I can do all things through Him who strengthens me
Colossians 1:29- with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me

Observation 3

1 Corinthians 2:1-5
1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

Observation 4
6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that his ministry and their changed lives were based upon a New Covenant between God and man.

The nature of the Old Covenant is that WE try our best in OUR OWN power to do what God wants, but we always fall short.

Following the Law can never save us. God gave us the Law to reveal to us our sin and our inadequacy apart from Him.

The Good News = God has given us a new arrangement for living, a New Covenant that is based not on our work, but on the work of Christ.

Romans 8:1-4

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
Because Jesus kept the Law to the fullest extent of its demands; He accomplished our salvation to the fullest extent of our need.

Jesus + anything else = NOT the biblical Gospel!
Salvation is found in Christ alone

God desires the same experience for us today
He only needs a willing heart who will say, "Here I am Lord... I will follow."