

Different Fragrance, Different People

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I. 2Cor. 2:14 Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

- ◆ We probably have difficulty coming to the realization that even in situations where we witness to people and they reject our message – the message of God about reconciliation – that we have gained a victory.
- ◆ To see such situations as a victory, we must see our gospel effort as it really is – it is a service to God and Christ
- ◆ To help us see this plainly, let's remember that when we witness to people, the ones that need the message about God's offer of salvation to any who will believe are people who cannot possibly appreciate the message in the condition they are in when we first bring the message
- ◆ We are preaching and witnessing to a blind and deaf world about a Savior who is a bringer of vision and hearing, but the blind and deaf cannot see or hear except we serve God by bringing the news
- ◆ Then there is the matter of the kind of witness work and preaching where we do our duty and our privilege and when we go away, none of our message is received. That obviously looks like a lost cause, a lost battle. But Paul says God causes us to triumph "always" in this.
- ◆ There is another important point made in this verse that relates to our faithfulness in the work of the gospel: Paul says that, as a result of their gospel work, Christ "maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place"
- ◆ This is a part of gospel outcomes that we usually don't give much thought to, but in fact, when we stand for the Lord and proclaim His message, that bit of knowledge that we broadcast has a divine "fragrance" to it and that fragrance lingers in the place where we dispense it.
- ◆ In the same way that incense leaves a fragrance in a room long after it has burned, we leave the fragrance of Christ in all places where we drop that name and His message.
 - Bees and butterflies find flower plots through the help of flower fragrance. I think this same rule applies in regard to long term effects of our faithful messages.
 - We told a young man about salvation in Christ at our home one night and it was months and months later that he wrote us to tell us that the Lord had saved him and that it began when we planted the gospel of Christ in his heart that night at our home.

II. There is a reason that Paul draws our attention to the savor of Christ that results from the spread of the gospel. He states that in the next verse. Let's look at it: **2Cor. 2:15** For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

- ◆ Note here that Paul brings home what I just said about how we need to look at our gospel work in order to recognize the results as triumph - "we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ"
- ◆ Whatever outcomes we THINK take place when we witness and preach, we should remember that work like that done faithfully is a sweet spiritual smell to God.
- ◆ Also, notice that the savor is not limited to the message, but rather, the sweet savour is US (WE are)
- ◆ Think of the honor given to the people of God in that He views us as a sweet fragrance of Jesus Christ as we do gospel work
- ◆ Think of the privilege of serving as a sweet smell to the Lord
- ◆ Now, the most startling thing about our pleasantness to God is found in that last phrase: "a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."
- ◆ We find it hard to comprehend the fact that Christ is a sweet smell to God both in those that are saved and in those that perish, but that is scripture.

- ◆ Christ is Lord both of the dead and the living (**Rom. 14:9**).
- ◆ God is honored as merciful and just, when the gospel is preached even to those who reject it a perish
- ◆ The message of the gospel (which I preached this morning from **John 3**) is an offer of God for men to escape condemnation.
- ◆ One thing I did not read this morning from **John 3** (found in **v. 19**) was the fact that the condemnation that falls upon people is because light has come into the world, but people love darkness more than light because their deeds are evil.
- ◆ Regardless of this fact, God through presentation of the gospel, shows them a contrast between what He offers and what they choose. When we take that message to men, we are a sweet smell to God even though those rejecters perish.

III.2Cor. 2:16 To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things?

- ◆ I want us, in this verse to come to a realization and accept a fact that will sustain us when all around us, our fellow humans reject the gospel we bring. That is, our gospel work is going to have the fragrance of death to it for some we witness to.
- ◆ But for others, it will have the fragrance of life.
- ◆ If we could absolutely identify this last group we would probably be tempted to avoid witnessing to that other group. But this is not God's way. It is merciful and fair to preach the gospel to every person who will listen. We must let God make the message to be what it is supposed to be to the hearer.