**The Fragrance of Christ**

*2 Corinthians 2:12-17*

**Introduction**

1. As Christians we must wield God’s word. We must preach it to others.
2. Paul, by inspiration, describes the knowledge of Christ as fragrance.
3. That fragrance is diffused through us, and we become the fragrance of Christ.
4. We are God’s means of spreading the word!
5. Opportunities to preach (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:12-13).

Door – opportunity.

1. *“Opened to me by the Lord”* (Providence)

* The Lord had a hand in the opportunity at Troas.
* As Paul’s purpose is to preach the gospel, God continued to make opportunities available – (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9)
  + This requires diligence, and vigilance! Paul looked for, and prayed for, these opportunities (cf. Colossians 4:2-4).
  + We must view these opportunities as potential success 🡪

1. Leads to success even in hard times (cf. v. 13).

* Paul’s ministry – reality of suffering (cf. 1:3-7); trouble in Asia (cf. 1:8-11); difficulty in Corinth (cf. 2:3-4).
  + Recognition of positive changes (repentance) in the Corinthians (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:9-10; 7:8-11).
* 2:13 – Paul was anxious to hear about the Corinthians from Titus. He had a *“deep concern for all the churches”* (11:28).
  + His anxiety was not settled because he didn’t find Titus.
  + But the opportunity to preach in Troas was presented by God!
    - Acts 16:8 – No specific record of any conversions…
    - Acts 20:6-7 – When Paul returns we find there is a church! (Success! Why? He took advantage of the opportunity.)

1. We are *The Fragrance of Christ* (cf. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17).

Shift from “I,” and “me,” to “Us,” and “We.”

* Referring to the apostles. God is diffusing His knowledge through them. Apostolic message.
* Look to 1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3 and other places. We are included in this responsibility of communicating, or diffusing, the knowledge of God.
* This text illustrates a very important point as to our own importance in this effort – God’s means of spreading His word.

1. We ARE the Fragrance. (cf. 2:14-15)

* Paul could have had in mind a Roman Triumph (cf. 2:14).
  + Highest honor for a Roman General. General marched through with his army following and ahead of them were the captives.
* In preaching the Gospel the apostles (and us) are triumphant in Christ.
* The fragrance is God’s word – His knowledge, but when we spread it, we become the fragrance (2:15). – We are God’s means of spreading the Gospel! His message does the saving, but we must first spread it!.
  + *“You Are the Only Bible”* – Not suggesting God’s word is insufficient without us. However, God’s way of spreading it are those who have been saved by it!
  + Jonah to Nineveh – They repented because of the message of God they heard from the prophet – Jonah 3:4-5
  + God gives the increase, but we must plant and water – 1 Corinthians 3:5-8

1. The Smell is different to some than others.

* Roman triumph
  + An abundance of sweet odors and perfumes were used.
    - Victory march for the conquerors. The smell meant victory.
    - Death march for the defeated. The smell meant defeat, and likely death.
* Not how it smells. Rather, what the smell means!
* Death to death – Still fragrance of Christ.
  + Those who reject it
* Life to life – Still fragrance of Christ.
* What is different?
  + 1 Corinthians 1:18, 21-25
    - The content is the same either way. The perception is the difference.
    - The message is not foolish at all! Those who hear it, and reject it, perceive it to be foolish. What they think is foolish (God’s wisdom) is actually the opposite!

1. Who is sufficient for these things?

* There were some who brought a corrupt message for the purpose of personal gain.
* The apostles were not those kind of people.
  + They were appointed by God!
  + They preached from sincerity to please God! (cf. 2:17).
* We must have the same attitude in spreading the message.
  + Philippians 1:15-18 – Some preached the gospel in spite of Paul. Not for God. We must preach out of love.
  + 2 Peter 2:3 – They preach by covetousness. (False teachers.)
  + We must preach because: 1) God commands us to. 2) We want to save souls and glorify God – Matthew 28:18-20

**Conclusion**

1. We must seek opportunities to spread God’s word!
2. We must recognize our responsibility, our purpose!
3. We must preach out of love for God, and love for man.