

Sermon: **“We are the Aroma of Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)**

Date: **April 7, 2019**

In ancient Rome, after a Roman military general won a battle, they would throw a parade to celebrate the victory. This was known as a triumphal procession. The military general would lead the procession, followed by his army, followed by the captives of war. Priests would burn incense as part of the celebration and Roman citizens would throw garlands of flowers along the parade path, creating a very distinct aroma in the air. To some the aroma was a sweet smell of victory, but to the captives of war, it was a reminder of their imminent execution. In this week’s passage, Paul uses this imagery as a metaphor for the Christian life and says that we as Christians are the aroma of Christ. God always leads us in triumphal procession and uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ wherever we go. To some, this knowledge is a sweet fragrance of life. To others, this knowledge is a horrid stench of death. But regardless of how others react to us, whenever we share the gospel and spread the knowledge of Christ, we are a pleasing aroma to God. He is our ultimate audience and that changes everything.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

**Individual Bible Study**

1. Please read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 and ensure that you’ve listened to Sunday’s sermon.
  - a. Paul’s plans to preach the gospel in Troas fell through (v. 12-13) and yet in verse 14 he gives thanks. Why?
  - b. What is a “triumphal procession” and how does Paul use this metaphor to symbolize the Christian life?
  - c. In verse 14, Paul uses the word “fragrance” to refer to the spreading of the knowledge of Christ. In verse 15, he uses the word “aroma”. What is the significance of him switching to the word “aroma”?
  - d. Why is it important to remember that God is our ultimate audience in evangelism?
  - e. Mark 10:17-22 is an example of Christ being an aroma of death to someone. Briefly summarize Jesus’ evangelistic approach in this passage. Was this evangelism encounter a failure on Jesus’ part? Why or why not?
  - f. Read Galatians 1:10. What does this verse teach us about the consequence of living to please man?

g. John 4:5-26 is an example of Christ being an aroma of life to someone. Briefly summarize Jesus' evangelistic approach in this passage.

h. What five truths do we see in verse 17 about what it means to be the aroma of Christ?

**Group Discussion Questions**

1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
2. In Christ, we always triumph. How might believing that truth encourage you in times of suffering? How might it embolden you in tough evangelism encounters?
3. Why is it important to remember that God is our ultimate audience in evangelism? How can we use this truth to give us greater confidence and zeal in evangelism?
4. Why are we often fearful of being an aroma of death to death to people? How can we fight against this fear?
5. Read Romans 9:1-3 and Romans 10:1. What was the disposition of Paul's heart toward the lost? How can we balance being burdened for the salvation of the lost and not becoming discouraged if we don't see them won to Christ?
6. As you think about living boldly for Jesus Christ, how does 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 encourage you and give you hope?