

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 The Fragrance of Christ

Intro: Question: What is your favorite Fragrance?

A) Lady – *Certain perfume – love to wear makes you feel Beautiful*

Favorite Flower: A Rose / **Smell of a Clean house** - / Hubbies Colonge

B) The way to a Guys.....Stomach - **Smell of Steaks that have been marinated in teriyaki sauce grilling on the Barbecue** /

1) Fresh baked **Chocolate chip cookies/ Brownie**

C) True we all have our Favorite Fragrances : But we also have those Fragrances that we don't care for at all

1) **Garlic Breath / Messy diapers / Rotten eggs**

D) We all have those fragrances that we **really enjoy** – and then there are the ones that we don't enjoy at all!!!!

But have you ever thought about this: **You are a Fragrance: True Physically – You have a specific Body Odor**

A) A Blind person's sense of smell can be so sharp – that they can distinguish people by their Body Odor if around them enough

B) You can walk in the room & they smell you – *Oh Rob is here today*

It is True Physically we all have an odor that emanates from your life

A) But Spiritually you have a Smell as well / a spiritual Fragrance that is going to **emanate** from your life

B) We have all experienced Bad B.O. body odor

1) – but there is also such a thing as Bad S.O. – spiritual order

C) How you smell Spiritually will depend upon your closeness to Christ – fellowship w/ Christ

Now here in 2 Corinthians Ch's 1-2 Paul is responding to accusations made about him by some in Corinth who were against Paul and his ministry.

A) Paul had delayed in his coming back to them.

B) So these men who didn't like Paul were saying – Look Paul is not a man of his word

1) Paul doesn't keep his promises – Paul doesn't keep his word

C) So if Paul's personal word cannot be trusted

1) How can we trust his message about Jesus.

D) Plus they were also accusing Paul of being **heavy handed** in his dealings with pp.

So Paul has been responding to these accusations.

A) I find that interesting – This was a personal attack on Paul –

B) It is interesting to me that **Paul responds to it.**

C) See others in the Bible like David who had false accusations made about them- they didn't respond.

D) David is a great example of trusting the Lord / letting God be his defense –

1) Letting the **true colors of Saul** his accuser be revealed over time.

Paul on the other hand addresses the accusations head on.

Proverbs 26:4, “**Do not** answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. **But then he** says in the very next verse **Answer a fool** according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.”

This tells me **different circumstances** dictate **different biblical responses!**

Paul responds to the accusations I believe NOT to protect his own image and integrity.

A) But to protect the message of the gospel.

B) He responds to the accusations because the integrity of the message that He preached was at stake and that was worth fighting for.

So this is how we have seen Paul so far answer these accusations.

A) Ch. 1 Paul calls their attention to his past behavior with them saying:

12 For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

B) He hadn't changed his tune – He was still doing ministry the way that He always had.

C) Ch. 2 He calls their attention to His love for them.

1) He really didn't want to make another painful visit

D) He already had to rebuke them and challenge them to deal with sin in the Church

1) He was anxiously waiting for Titus to return with hopefully a good report – from his last letter.

E) He was somewhat relieved when God opened a door for ministry in Troas – that further delayed him

Now despite all of Paul's Struggles & challenges he faced in ministry Paul saw in the midst of it all the Faithfulness of God

A) Notice how he describes it in v. 14-16 *thanks be to God who ALWAYS leads us in triumph in Christ,*

B) This is a great truth to grab a hold of today: You set your mind to follow Christ – Yield to Christ

1) He ALWAYS leads us in triumph –

C)Not sometimes / not occasionally / not when he feels like it – **ALWAYSTRIUMPH**

D) **“We are more than Conquerors through Him who loves us.”** Romans 8:37

E)In the Christian life – we are not fighting for victory but from a position of victory

1)Jesus has one – He is leading us to Victory

Romans 8:28

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

F)It might take **SOME** time but eventually we find ourselves seeing the good – seeing the Victory.

So Paul declares: **14 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?**

Now Paul is using a word Picture here that comes straight out of Roman life

A)Roman Victory Parade – Triumphal entry.

B)It was a custom in the Roman Empire, when a conquering general **returned Victoriously** from a campaign over one of the enemies of Rome

C)That if he had conquered an enemy of **5,000 or more**

1)the **Roman Senate** would meet and grant him a Triumph. **A VICTORY PARADE**

E)It was quite a Processional { Read about

First, there came the state officials and the Senate—(always the politicians first.)

A)Then there came **the trumpeters**, who were heralding what was coming.

B)Then came **the spoils** taken from the conquered land, carted along

1)Then there followed the **white bull**, which was gonna be offered as a sacrifice to the gods.

C)Then there came **the Conquered** , the enemy princes, leaders, and generals in chains

And then there came the musicians.

And then there came the priests swinging their censors with the sweet-smelling incense burning.

A)And then came the **general himself** in a chariot drawn by four horses.

B) he was clad in a **purple tunic embroidered with gold and palm leaves**,

1) over it a purple toga marked out with golden stars.

C)In his hand he had an ivory scepter with a Roman eagle on the top of it, and over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. **And after him rode his family.**

D) And finally, at the very end, came **the army** wearing all their decorations and shouting, "Triumph! Triumph! Triumph!" I mean, it's a pretty impressive scene.

E) The Streets would be lined w/ **flowers so that when the army stepped on them** – their scent would fill the air. **So The wonderful smell was everywhere.**

Now To those conquering soldiers who had been in the field so long

Aa) that sweet aroma in the air would be the fragrance of life & Victory signaling a **great triumphant feast was about to begin!!!**

A) But to the Conquered – Aroma of death and defeat
Humiliation – **Execution awaited many of them.**

Now Paul had this scene in mind as he talked about the fragrance of Christ being manifested in his life & ministry

A) Paul definitely has in mind **his preaching** the message of the Knowledge of Christ.

B) But He is also thinking about more than that.

C) To those whom God is drawing – The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ – is life

1) It is like a **breath of fresh** air after trying so many things that leave a person panting for more

D) Message of Jesus – Filled with Life –

1) Know God and be forgiven – cleansed –

But to the person who doesn't want to hear that message – rejects that message – aroma of death

A) Because it condemns them – reminds them they are sinners and there is no answer in themselves

B) Give your heart to Jesus and be saved

1) reject him and suffer the consequences – they don't want to hear it.

C) Hell is a real place and real pp end up there for rejecting God's love and Gift – Jesus

C) But To those who hear & believe, it is a life unto life aroma. **{Same Sun melts wax – hardens the clay**

But Paul isn't just referring to his preaching – He is referring to his life – the way He lived

A) The phrase **among you** in v.15 is key – Speaks of lifestyle – this is how we conducted ourselves

B) This has been his argument – His life and conduct among them.

1) The Manner of His ministry: Among them

C) The character of Christ emanating from his life

1) The more Paul was **pressed and crushed** – the greater the fragrance – like those flowers

D) The same holds true for us - We all have the potential to be the fragrance of Christ to those we come in contact w/

1) To those who were believers – **Aroma of Life / Unbelievers the aroma of Death**

Now why this distinction & Contrast: Why would we be the aroma of death to the Unbeliever

A) I think the simple answer is **CONVICTION** – in the gospel of John – Jesus says a similar thing – using illustration of light & darkness

B) John 3:18-21 Jesus says There: the light has come into the world & men loved darkness rather than light – they hate the light because deeds were evil –

1) **the light exposes their evil deeds**

C) When an unbeliever or a backslidden Christian comes in contact – with a genuine believer

1) It is uncomfortable – it is convicting

D) The Light of Jesus in your life shines on their sin –

1) Exposes them

So to the Unbeliever living in Sin the Fragrance of Christ in your life is the aroma of death to them –

A) They are living in the Cow Pasture / **smelling the manure pile** / they have become content w/ the smell there – they don't notice it anymore:

B) Like People who live in Bakersfield – How do you handle that smell? – **WHAT ?**

1) You have to get them out of the cow pasture for them to start appreciating fresh air.

C) The person who is all dirty sweaty and stinky doesn't need perfume – **He needs a shower**

When I was in Jr. high / Playing Basketball – game one day : sweated Profusely – Stunk of B.O.

A) After the game I had to be some where so I was in a hurry & I decided I wasn't going to Shower / I'll *just put on some cologne*

B) Street Clothes / Old Spice neck & Body – a little extra { Didn't work

1) It made it worse { Aroma of Death was present in me

That is what a lot of pp are doing today. They have the stench of sin on them. – foul

A) They are trying to clean up their acts – do good things – to make them smell better.

B) They might look better – new look – clean clothes

1) New smell - Fragrance of the Flesh –

C) Fragrance of pride – Their good deeds – I am a good person – now –

1) Problem is they have never dealt with the stink of sin – Foul odor to God

Listen when someone needs a Shower all the perfume or Cologne in the world is only going to make matters worse

A) Jesus invites us to come to Him and be cleansed

B) Washed in his blood – sin stench is removed
Cleansed – forgiven – forgotten

C) When someone gives their heart to Christ – allows Him to cleanse it and make it new – **It is SWEET**

1) When they get around others who have been washed & cleansed – It is the Fragrance or Life –

D) Reminder of What Christ **has done / & Can do** in the life of a Sinner saved by Grace

1) { Reminder of How great HE IS!!!

That is what Paul was about – Helping pp get clean get saved – get set free. V.17 takes us full circle his conduct and approach to ministry:

17 For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

There were those in Paul's day as there are in our day using the word – to get rich off of it

A) Using ministry to pad their pockets or to promote their agendas - - Manipulating pp.

B) That is the most despicable thing – that a Pastor can ever do in my opinion- They used be removed

C) Using God's pp rather than serving – horrible

Those who peddle the word – often tell pp what they want to hear – instead of what they need to hear!

A) I think that Paul definitely has that in mind here because the word he uses for Peddler is interesting

B) It's from a Greek verb **kapeleu** which means to corrupt.

It came to refer to a con man, a street hustler selling a knock off a cheap imitation of the real thing.

C) The most common ones were those who sold watered-down wine.

1) Today those who sell a water down gospel - Feel good - **Not Paul – TRUTH - aroma life... death...**

Once we have been saved- how do we maintain the Fragrance of Christ in our Lives? 3 ways

#1 **Through WORSHIP** John 12 – Mary

A) **Jesus is w/ his disciples in Bethany home of Mary.... Laz / Sitting around the table after supper – Mary does something there that is incredible : Jn12:3**

Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. John 12:3

B) **Very Costly act of Worship: Broke a Vase / Very humble wiped feet w/ her hair: The Fragrance that was on Jesus was on Mary**

C) **Every where that Mary went she smelled like the Lord / She took w/ her the Fragrance of Christ**

1) **True heart felt worship does that –**

D)Worship has a way of getting us to focus on the right things.

Yesterday: Wife needed me to run by Walmart

A)The worst place to go on a Sat. is Costco - Walmart has to be 2nd –

B)Make matters worse – I was in a hurry – company coming over from out of town

1)Only had to grab a few things – Speedy checkout...

C)Called that for a reason: checker – slow motion

1)Guy in front – 3 things – taking his time card out of the wallet – Puts back – see card ID

D)The Fragrance of Christ was not emanating from my life at that moment.

Life can be like that – Worship helps bring us back

Worship gets our minds in the right place

A)Sometime we get Frustrated focused what God is not doing John the Baptist in prison

B)Worship helps us to focus instead of what He has done and is doing

C)So the first thing that is going to cause our lives to maintain the Fragrance of Christ is the degree that we are drawing near in worship

D)Mary's good example – the Fragrance that was on Jesus was now on her!

#2 Through the Word: We bear the Fragrance of Christ as we dig into the Lord's Word.

Jesus said *you are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.* John 15:3

A)The life of the Lord is – transfused to us thru his word

B)) Every smell a baby's head after a bath – Baby Shampoo - comes out smelling fresh & clean smelling like that Shampoo

1) When we bathe in the Word of God – We come forth from that time smelling like the Lord

C)) **Disciples had been w/ Jesus !!!!!** { Where have you been ? Who have you been with

Listen I can get so fired up listening to Rush/ Hannity/ Beck/ Tell been with fox news - than Jesus

A)We need to watch that we are not known for what we are against instead of what we are for.

B)Jesus His glory – Pp saved – lives changed

C)**I am for Pro life**{ Express that in two different ways –

1) I can go picket in front of a place where they are performing abortions – yell and scream

D) Everyone will Know I am against abortion

Or I can go volunteer at Birth Choice or PRC

A) Because I am for life – includes the life and heart of the mother - I want her know God loves her

B) He loves that baby – He has a plan for both of them.

C) The 2nd approach is far more like Jesus

1) Only happens / becomes a part of who we are as we spend time with Him in the Word.

D) His fragrance becomes my fragrance – His heart my heart – see pp the way that He does.

3 Through obedience: Called to walk in Love Ephesians 5:1

5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

A) Walk in Love: 2nd greatest command: Love one another as I have loved you.

B) Jesus laid down His life for others!

1) Sought to serve others. Came not to be served but to serve Ransom for many!

C) One of the most predominant fragrances in the world today – is the fragrance of self – Me

D) How can this benefit me – how can this promote me – what will this do for me.

E) When we are walking in the Love of Christ – the opposite is true – How can I serve you – bless you

1) Build you up!

Some of you here today: Being pressed feel like one of those flowers – being crushed –

A) Remember Him who was crushed for you – Jesus

B) Press into Him in worship today

1) Draw near to Him in the word – this week

C) He is faithful as you are crushed – His fragrance is going to be defused from you. – Life to others

1) Always leads us in Victory

D) Walk in His Love – Pray His eyes and heart!