The Sweet Smell of Victory in Christ

September 20th, 2020 — 2 Corinthians 2:14-17 — Tony Scialabba

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 English Standard Version (ESV)

> ***[14]*** *But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.* ***[15]*** *For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,* ***[16]*** *to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?* ***[17]*** *For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.*

BACKGROUND

Paul has come through a time of <u>hardship</u>

The Corinthian church was dealing with <u>difficulties</u>

Paul is <u>refocusing</u> the church on thanksgiving despite the challenges

THE ROMAN TRIUMPH

The highest honor given to generals

The general had to…

1. Completely <u>defeat</u> an adversary
2. Be the sole <u>commander</u> during the campaign
3. Drive the enemy towards complete submission to the Roman Empire

The Procession Order

1. The senators/statesmen
2. The trumpeters
3. The captives
4. The executioners
5. The priests
6. The general
7. The general's family
8. The army

AROMA OF CHRIST

The aroma of the triumphal procession was <u>strong</u>

Those who are being saved

--They hear the gospel and <u>receive</u> it

--They want more of it

Those who are perishing

--They hear the gospel and <u>reject</u> it

--They try to avoid it

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The gospel is sometimes interpreted as offensive, ridiculous, undesirable, make believe, irrelevant, threatening, etc.

To those in bondage, it is the fragrance of death

This is who we once were.

EPHESIANS 2:1-6
[1] And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **[2]** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **[3]** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. **[4]** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **[5]** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved— **[6]** and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

Our Past Position
--We were in bondage to sin
--We were the captives in the procession
--We were headed towards our death

Our Current Position
--We transform from being captives marching towards our death to victors in triumphal procession
--We move from a place of death and defeat to a place of victory!

How is this possible? It is through Christ!

Paul lists 3 characteristics of our lives as victors through Christ
--Not like so many peddlers of God's Word
--People of sincerity
--Commissioned

SELF-EXAMINATION
--Are we living our lives as Paul describes?
--Is our life an aroma to the world?