

2 Corinthians 2:12-17 – The Fragrance Of Christ.

I. 1. (12-13) A door was open.

It is extremely frustrating when a door we're expecting to open closes but it's exciting when God opens one beyond our expectations. However, Paul with much effort/restlessly looked for Titus. They must've had a tight brotherly bond, Paul wasn't a loner.

1Corinthians 16:9 - *For a great and effective **door** has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*

Revelation 3:8 - *"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open **door**, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name.*

II. (14-17) The fragrance of Christ

As God opens doors, as He leads us past our frustrations and disappointments, He always grants us victory and diffuses/spreads His knowledge through us.

"The idea is borrowed from an ancient Roman triumph, which to the eyes of the world of that day was the most glorious spectacle which the imagination could conceive." (Meyer)

"In a Triumph the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome to the Capitol... First came the state officials and the senate. Then came the trumpeters. Then were carried the spoils taken from the conquered land... Then came the pictures of the conquered land and models of conquered citadels and ships. There followed the white bull for sacrifice which would be made. Then there walked the captive princes, leaders and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and in all probability almost immediately to be executed. Then came the lictors bearing their rods, followed by the musicians with their lyres; then the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. After that came the general himself... finally came the army wearing all their decorations and shouting *Io triumphe!* Their cry of triumph. As the procession moved through the streets, all decorated and garlanded, amid the cheering crowds, it made a tremendous day which might happen only once in a lifetime." (Barclay)

Paul sees himself and us as walking in the triumph of Jesus, the Captain of the Lord's Army, and Paul is one of the Lord's chief officers!

The fragrance of His knowledge: Fragrance, in the form of incense, was common at the Roman triumphal parade. In Paul's mind, this **fragrance** is like the **knowledge** of God, which people can smell as the triumphal parade comes by.

"A sweet fragrance/aroma of Christ!...as in an indefinable sweetness, tenderness, courtesy, selflessness...It is the breath and fragrance of a life hidden with Christ in God, and deriving its aroma from fellowship with Him. Wrap the habits of your soul in the sweet lavender of your Lord's character." (Meyer)

Fragrance of life and death; "The scent of incense burnt to the gods in a Roman triumphal parade smelled wonderful to a Roman. The same aroma was a bad smell to a captive prisoner of war in the parade, who would soon be executed or sold into slavery."

In the same way, the message of the gospel is a message of life to some and a message of condemnation to others.

John 3:17-18 - *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

The OT Tabernacle/Temple burnt sacrifices (animals, birds and grain) and spices (symbolic of worship and prayer) were for a sweet smelling aroma to God; and such is our life in Christ.

Psalms 66:15 - *I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals, with the sweet **aroma** of rams; I will offer bulls with goats.*

We're called to spread the sweet fragrance of His Word and character; we should have a scent of life for others to sense Christ.

Purposes of scents; prevents body odor, enhances mood, boosts confidence, makes one attractive, boosts health, triggers memories and prevents insomnia.

Ephesians 5:2 - *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**.*

Philippians 4:18 - *Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, **a sweet-smelling aroma**, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.*