

Embracing Brokenness

Part 4: The Aroma of Christ

2 Corinthians 2:17-21

We often describe life as a journey, a story, or a race. In 2 Corinthians 2:12–17, Paul uses a different picture: a triumphal parade led by Christ, in which God spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Jesus through us. As we discuss this passage, we'll consider what it means to follow Christ, faithfully represent him in our everyday lives, and trust God with how others respond to the fragrance of his presence in us.

Thinking It Through

1. We often describe life as a journey, a story, or a race. Paul pictures it as a triumphal parade led by Christ. How does that image challenge or reshape the way you think about your life, your purpose, and your place in what God is doing?
2. Paul had an opportunity for ministry in Troas, yet his concern for the Corinthians weighed so heavily on him that he left to find Titus. Have you experienced a season when a relationship or unresolved conflict weighed on you even when other things in life were going well? How did you navigate it, and what might Paul's experience teach us?
3. Paul uses the imagery of a Roman triumph, in which Christ leads the procession and his people participate in his victory. What difference does it make to see yourself as someone in Jesus' parade rather than someone responsible for creating your own victory, status, or success?
4. Paul acknowledges that the aroma of Christ is received differently by different people. Some respond positively to the gospel; others reject it. How can remembering that our responsibility is faithfulness to Christ, rather than controlling people's responses, change the way we share our faith or serve others?
5. Think about the difference between enjoying a fragrance and keeping it bottled up. In what ways are we tempted to keep our faith private or contained? What would it look like for the knowledge of Jesus to permeate the ordinary spaces of your life?

6. Think about the people you interact with most frequently. What qualities of Christ—such as grace, truth, humility, patience, courage, or generosity—do you most want them to experience through you? Which of those qualities do you find most challenging to demonstrate consistently?

7. As you reflect on this passage, where is God inviting you to let the aroma of Christ permeate more of your life? Identify one specific relationship, setting, or situation in which you can intentionally represent Jesus this week. What would faithfulness look like there?

Prayer Prompts

- “Father, thank you for leading me and working through me even in difficult seasons.”
 - “Jesus, shape my life and character so that others encounter your grace and truth through me.”
 - “Holy Spirit, give me courage to represent Jesus sincerely in every area of life, leaving the results in other to you.”
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