

Home Group Helps

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Paul's Travail – God's Triumph

I. Paul's Travail (v. 12-13) – ¹² Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, ¹³ I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

II. God's Triumph (v.14-17) – ¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ¹⁵ For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; ¹⁶ to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? ¹⁷ For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

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1. Launching Question(s):

- Have you ever felt like Paul when he “had no rest for my spirit?”

2. Observation Question(s):

- The first two verses of this passage speak of Paul's overwhelming discouragement in ministry. The rest of the passage speaks of God's triumph with the transition between these two sections at verse 14 where Paul says, “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph . . .”
- How is it that being thankful can help shake us out of our discouragement?

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- To Paul, the imagery of the Roman triumphant parade provided a perfect description of the Christian life.
- The image described of our participation in the triumph as been variously interpreted as:
 1. We are the captured slaves heading off to death.
 2. We are the victorious soldiers in the train of the general.
 3. We are the incense bearers.
- How might each of these be a good description of the Christian life?
- Do you have a preference of interpretation?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- How is it that the same Gospel can be, to the unbeliever, an aroma “from death to death,” and to the believer, “an aroma from life to life” (v.15-16)?

5. Application Question(s):

- How might you be “a fragrance of Christ to God” (v.15) this week?