

2 Corinthians 2:14–17

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?

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.

Thanks Be to God 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

INTRO:

At Thanksgiving time we think of many reasons to be thankful. Paul, on the other hand was in the midst of great struggle and hard work when he burst out in this note of Thanksgiving to God. Paul had gone through much and endured reminding himself that the Lord Jesus Christ would triumph and God the Father would declare His victory.

I. We can be frustrated God can't

II. God Uses Us to Show Who He is

I. We can be frustrated God can't

2 Corinthians 2:14 *“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.”*

A. It was not always fun being the Apostle Paul. Thus far in **2 Corinthians** we learned how frustrated and troubled Paul was in ministry. We read in chapter 1 of the difficulties Paul faced in the time he was absent from Corinth. Then he talked about how his plans for travel had changed. In chapter two he continued reciting his fears about coming to them and then instructed them about the man who had repented of his sin. Finally, in **verses 12-13**, he wrote how he hoped to meet Titus whom he sent ahead to Corinth to learn of their attitude toward him. Titus was not there in Troas, and even though there were open doors for ministry, he could not carry on there because he was too troubled about the Corinthians. Against this background of uncertainty and distress, Paul sounds a strong note of certainty and assurance.

B. v.14 “Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ”

Paul wanted to understand clearly that although Paul did not know what God was doing at every point in his life, he knew God knew what He was doing. We have a term for how God always works for His children. It is providence. We find believers of all ages have clung to this assurance.

1. Do you remember Joseph?

Genesis 50:19–20 *“Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”*

2. Paul, himself gave us one of the greatest promises concerning God’s providence.

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.”*

C. God is always leading us in a parade of triumph. His plan and purpose for us and His eternal plan are never frustrated.

II. God Uses Us to Show Who He is

2 Corinthians 2:15-16 *“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 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?”*

A. How does God always lead us in triumph in Christ? He uses us to disclose Who He is and what He has done in Christ Jesus. Using his word picture, Paul described our revealing Christ as the aroma of the sacrifices to God. We are to be living sacrifices and what does our lives given in service to God do?

v.15 *“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.”*

We show Christ to everyone we meet and in every spiritual condition.

1. v.16 *“To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death.”*

Paul mentions those who reject Christ first. This is probably because he knows the temptation to feel that when we witness to those who will not receive, we feel like we have wasted our effort. This is not true. If God wanted us to share the Gospel just with those who would be saved, He would have shown us who they are. God is glorified and His will is somehow accomplished when we put out effort to reach those who will not ever come to Christ.

2. Here is the fun part. ***“And to the other the aroma of life leading to life.”***
We also are used of God to show Who He is and what Christ has done and become the conduit of salvation to many who will here and ultimately believe. To many we are the savor of life to life long before they believe. Do you remember the Lord Jesus talking to His disciples in **John 4:36-38**?

“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

B. He then asks an important question, ***“And who is sufficient for these things?”***
No one is in themselves. We are sufficient only as God works in us and through us.

C. How does this happen?

v.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 is a negative and a positive here.

1. Paul did not peddle the Bible for his own purposes. He ministered out of sincerity. Paul’s objectives and motives were pure. He did what He did to please God.

2. He recognized all his ministry to unbelievers were conducted in the sight of God. God watched what he did and why he did it. And He desired to speak what God gave him to speak.

What Do We Take From This?

1. God is never frustrated or defeated. His plan is never off the rails. God always had a plan and is carrying that plan through to the end of the age.

Matthew 10:29–31 ***“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.”***

2. The Lord is using us even when it may seem that our efforts are in vain.

1 Corinthians 3:6–7 ***“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.”***

The second verse we need to consider is the application Paul draws for us because someday the Lord will return and call us home. He wrote:

1 Corinthians 15:58 *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*

3. Who is sufficient for these things? Not you or me in ourselves, only as Christ works in and through us. For God is working in us the willing and the doing of His good pleasure.

4. If you do not know Christ as Savior, what will you do with the Gospel today? The word you hear is either a revelation of Christ through whom you can find life everlasting or death eternally. What will you do with Jesus?

My Savior (insert)