

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 8

TITLE: TRIUMPH IN CHRIST

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 2:12-17

INTRODUCTION: (1) THE APOSTLE PAUL WAS A GRATEFUL MAN. HIS HEART OVERFLOWED WITH THANKSGIVING. WE SEE THAT CLEARLY THROUGH HIS N.T. EPISTLES.

* HENCE, HE MAY HAVE BEEN THE MOST THANKFUL HUMAN BEING THAT HAS EVER LIVED, ALTHOUGH HE MAY HAVE SUFFERED MORE FOR HIS FAITH THAN ANYONE WHO HAS EVER LIVED.

** AND ONE REASON FOR THAT WAS HE WAS FILLED, LED AND CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH LEADS TO THANKFULNESS IN EPHESIANS 5:18-20.

*** BUT NO. 2, PAUL HAD A LASER SPIRITUAL FOCUS ON JESUS CHRIST AND ETERNITY.

(2) AND WE SEE THAT CLEARLY IN OUR TEXT TODAY.

* FOR IN THE MIDST OF BEING OVERWROUGHT AND BURDENED FOR THE CHURCH IN CORINTH AND HIS DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST TITUS.

** HE SAYS IN V. 14, "BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO ALWAYS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST."

*** AND THIS JOYOUS PICTURE IN V. 14 OF OUR TEXT IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH THE DISCOURAGEMENT PAUL EXPRESSED IN VERSE 13 OF OUR TEXT.

(3) HE WENT FROM THE PIT TO THE PINNACLE, FROM THE PIT OF DESPAIR TO THE EXHILARATION OF MARCHING IN A TRIUMPHAL PARADE.

* AND PAUL HAS A PICTURE IN HIS MIND SEEING JESUS CHRIST MARCHING IN TRIUMPH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AND HIMSELF IN THAT CONQUERING TRAIN AND TRIUMPH BECAUSE OF WHAT HIS GENERAL JESUS CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED IN HIS LIFE, DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION.

** AND PAUL HAS THE GREAT ROMAN EVENT IN HIS MIND CALLED THE TRIUMPH.

*** AND THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, THE ROMAN TRIUMPHAS, REFERRED TO THE ROMAN INSTITUTION OF THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION, WHICH IS IMPORTANT TO

UNDERSTAND TO UNLOCK THE MEANING OF VV. 14-16 OF OUR TEXT.

**** AND THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION ACCORDING TO SCOTT HAFEMAN WAS A LAVISH PARADE CONDUCTED IN ROME TO CELEBRATE GREAT VICTORIES IN SIGNIFICANT MILITARY CAMPAIGNS.

(4) AND LIKE A ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE IN CHICAGO, THESE WERE MAJOR CULTURAL AND CIVIL EVENTS IN ROMAN LIFE.

* BASICALLY, EVERYONE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE KNEW ABOUT THESE PARADES, WHICH WERE REPRESENTED ON ROMAN ARCHES, COINS, STATUES, MEDALLIONS, PAINTINGS AND CAMEOS, NOT TO MENTION ACCORDING TO A MAN NAMED SCOTT, THE APPROXIMATELY 350 TRIUMPHS THAT ARE RECORDED IN ANCIENT LITERATURE.

** AND THESE TRIUMPHS WERE GREAT IMPRESSIVE DISPLAYS AND CELEBRATIONS OF ROMAN POWER AND MIGHT, FILLED WITH VALIANT SOLDIERS, THE SPOILS OF WAR, AND THE MOST THEATRICAL POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE ROME COULD MUSTER.

*** NOW SPECIFICALLY, ACCORDING TO THE LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE COMMENTARY ON 1&2 CORINTHIANS, IN A ROMAN TRIUMPHAS PROCESSION, A ROMAN GENERAL WOULD DRIVE HIS CAPTIVES AND THE SPOILS OF WAR BEFORE HIM DOWN THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE OF ROME.

**** HE WOULD BE GREETED BY THE LOUD CHEERS OF ROMAN CITIZENS, AND A CLOUD OF INCENSE WOULD BE BURNED FOR THE GODS AS THEY PARADED TO THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER.

(5) TO THE ROMANS, THE AROMA WAS THE SWEET SMELL OF VICTORY. TO THE CAPTIVES IN THE PARADE, IT WAS THE SMELL OF ABJECT SLAVERY AND TO OTHERS THE SMELL OF DEATH AS THEY WOULD BE EXECUTED AT THE END.

* WELL, II CORINTHIANS 2:14-16 ALLUDES TO THIS ROMAN PRACTICE, THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, AND PAUL WILL USE THIS ANALOGY AND APPLY TO CHRIST WHERE HE SAYS IN II CORINTHIANS 2:14, "BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO ALWAYS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST."

** SO PAUL IS MAKING REFERENCE TO THE ROMAN TRIUMPH AND APPLYING IT TO CHRIST AND HIS MINISTRY.

*** THEREFORE I'VE TITLED OUR SERMON FOR TODAY, "TRIUMPH IN CHRIST."

**** AND UNDER THAT TITLE, WE'LL LOOK AT 3 MAIN POINTS AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH II CORINTHIANS 2:12-17.

(6) NO. 1, THE ANXIOUSNESS OF PAUL, VV. 12&13; NO. 2 THE AROMA OF CHRIST'S TRIUMPH, VV. 14-16; AND NO. 3 THE ADULTERATORS OF THE WORD OF GOD, SPEAKING OF PAUL'S ENEMIES, THE FALSE TEACHERS, V. 17.

* SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE ANXIOUSNESS, THE AROMA, AND THE ADULTERATORS UNDER THE TITLE OF TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

** AND WITH THOSE POINTS AS A SPIRITUAL MAP TO FOLLOW, PLEASE LOOK AT V. 12 WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE ANXIOUSNESS OF PAUL.

I. THE ANXIOUSNESS, (READ V. 12)

A. NOW WE'VE SEEN UP TO THIS POINT IN OUR STUDY OF II CORINTHIANS THAT PAUL'S ENEMIES ACCUSED PAUL

OF VACILLATING, CHANGING HIS TRAVEL PLANS AND THAT HE OUTRIGHT LIED ABOUT HIS SCHEDULED TRIPS TO CORINTH.

* SO PAUL BEGINS IN V. 12 TO TALK ABOUT HIS ITINERARY AND HOW GOD IN HIS PROVIDENCE LED HIM IN TRAVELING FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

** SO HE SAYS IN THE BEGINNING OF V. 12, "I CAME TO TROAS FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST."

*** NOW TROAS WAS A LARGE SEAPORT TOWN IN THAT DAY ON THE AEGEAN SEA LOCATED ABOUT 10 MILES SOUTH OF ANCIENT TROY IN THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF ASIA MINOR WHICH IS MODERN DAY TURKEY.

**** NOW WHY WAS PAUL AT TROAS AT THIS TIME, FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE?

1. WELL, IT APPEARS THAT PAUL CHOSE TROAS AS A PLACE TO MEET TITUS FOR TITUS TO GIVE PAUL A REPORT OF HOW THE CORINTHIAN'S RESPONDED TO PAUL'S TEARFUL LETTER, CALLED HIS SEVERE LETTER, THE 2'D LETTER HE WROTE TO THE CORINTHIANS, A NON-INSPIRED LETTER BEFORE THE WRITING OF II CORINTHIANS.

* FOR YOU SEE PAUL DISPATCHED TITUS, HIS DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST TO CORINTH TO DELIVER THIS

SEVERE TEARFUL LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS TO REBUKE THEM FOR SIN AND LISTENING TO SOME FALSE TEACHERS.

** WELL, WHILE PAUL IS AT TROAS WAITING TO MEET WITH TITUS FOR A REPORT, A DOOR WAS OPENED FOR PAUL, V. 12B SAYS: "WHEN A DOOR WAS OPENED FOR ME IN THE LORD."

*** NOW PAUL USED THE EXPRESSION, AN OPEN DOOR IN HIS INSPIRED WRITING TO TALK ABOUT MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES, DIVINELY PREPARED OPPORTUNITIES TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.

**** IT IS TO SAY, GOD OPENED THE DOOR TO FURTHERING THE CAUSE OF CHRIST BY PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL.

2. AND PAUL LIVED FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES AND PRAYED FOR THESE OPPORTUNITIES, AND BEYOND MEETING TITUS THERE, WAS ONE OF THE REASONS ACCORDING TO V. 12, HE WENT TO TROAS.

* HE CAME TO TROAS FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

** NOW, YOU WOULD THINK, ALL IS WELL FOR PAUL, THIS GREAT APOSTLE IS ON A HIGH, SAILING ALONG WITH THIS DIVINE OPPORTUNITY, SO RAY, WHERE IS THE ANXIOUSNESS YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT?

*** WELL, LOOK AT V. 13 PLEASE, WE'LL SEE IT THERE.

B. READ V. 13. NOW PAUL COMES TO TROAS FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND TO MEET TITUS AND GOD GIVES HIM AN OPEN DOOR. GREAT – RIGHT?

*WELL, PAUL SAYS IN THE BEGINNING OF V. 13, “I HAD NO REST FOR MY SPIRIT.” NOW WHY? BECAUSE TITUS HIS BROTHER IN CHRIST WAS NOT THERE.

** AND BECAUSE TITUS WAS NOT THERE, PAUL HAD NO PEACE, HE WAS OVERWROUGHT AND BURDENED, HE HAD NO REST FROM WITHIN, FOR HE WAS ANXIOUS TO HEAR HOW THE CORINTHIAN'S RESPONDED TO HIS TEARFUL AND SEVERE LETTER AND SOMETHING WAS WRONG THAT TITUS WAS NOT THERE. AND OF COURSE TRAVELING IN THAT DAY WAS BOTH DANGEROUS AND TIME CONSUMING. WHY WAS TITUS NOT THERE, DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO HIM?

*** AND WHAT I AM CALLING PAUL'S ANXIOUSNESS MAY NOT HAVE BEEN THE SINFUL ANXIOUSNESS OF WORRYING OVER THINGS WE HAVE NO CONTROL OVER, BUT THE BURDEN OF A PASTOR FOR THE CHURCH HE LOVED AND SPENT 18 MONTHS WITH AND HIS INTENSE CONCERN FOR A BROTHER WHO WAS A SPECIAL CO-LABORER FOR THE LORD.

**** OR IT MAY BE THAT WHAT PAUL SAYS HERE IS HE IN HIS GREAT TRANSPARENCY AND REALNESS, HIS HUMANNESS IS SHOWING HIS ANXIETY FOR THE CHURCH AND TITUS.

1. FOR CERTAINLY PAUL IS SO CONSUMED WITH HIS NO REST IN HIS SPIRIT, HE LEAVES TROAS AND GOES TO MACEDONIA.

* AND IT MAY HAVE BEEN THIS WAS A SECONDARY MEETING PLACE TO MEET UP WITH TITUS AS TRAVEL PLANS COULD CHANGE EASILY BECAUSE OF WEATHER AND HOW HE WOULD TRAVEL, BY SEA, ETC.

** BUT MY POINT IS, PAUL IS SO BURDENED FOR THE CORINTHIANS SPIRITUALLY AND IF THEY REPENTED AND HOW HIS 2'D LETTER WAS RECEIVED AND WHY WASN'T TITUS IN TROAS.

*** PAUL HAS A HUGE HEART FOR THE CHURCH AND HIS BROTHER IN CHRIST. PAUL WAS A TRUE PASTOR, A TRUE SHEPHERD OF CHRIST'S SHEEP.

2. AS PAUL SAID IN II CORINTHIANS 11:28 – “APART FROM SUCH EXTERNAL THINGS, THERE IS THE DAILY PRESSURE ON ME OF CONCERN FOR ALL THE CHURCHES.”

* AND WHAT WE HAVE HERE IS THE DAILY PRESSURE OF CONCERN, PASTORAL ANXIETY, OR PASTORAL

RESTLESSNESS OVER SHEEP THAT ARE DRIFTING, THAT ARE BEING DISOBEDIENT, WHO ARE NOT SERVING OR EVEN COMING OR PARTICIPATING OR SINNING.

** AND YOU CAN GET SO CONCERNED YOU CAN SIN AND WORRY RATHER THAN PRAYING, FOR IF YOU ARE PRAYING, YOU WILL NOT BE WORRYING, BUT IF YOU ARE WORRYING YOU ARE SHOWING THAT YOU ARE NOT PRAYING AS YOU OUGHT.

*** AND ALL OF US NEED TO TURN CARES INTO PRAYERS. THE MOMENT ANXIETY STARTS TO REAR ITS UGLY HEAD AND STEAL OUR JOY AND PEACE, WE NEED TO PRAY. IT SHOULD BE LIKE AN ALARM CLOCK THAT WAKES US UP AND LEADS US TO PRAY. QUOTE PHILIPPIANS 4:6&7, I PETER 5:7, PSALM 55:22 AND PSALM 37:5.

**** WELL, AS WE GO BACK TO PAUL, HE WAS BURDENED, HE WAS CONSUMED BY THE CHURCH AND TITUS. THIS WAS A DARK HOUR IN PAUL'S LIFE.

3. AND I KNOW THAT BECAUSE HE LEAVES AN OPEN DOOR TO PURSUE THE CORINTHIANS AND TITUS AND HE GOES TO MACEDONIA. BUT THIS DOWN DISCOURAGING TIME WAS SHORT LIVED FOR WE SEE THE SWEET AROMA OF TRIUMPH IN CHRIST. PAUL RE-FOCUSES QUICKLY.

LOOK AT V. 14 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE AROMA.

II. THE AROMA, (READ V. 14)

A. NOW THE TONE OF PAUL CHANGES HERE IN V. 14. THERE IS AN EXPLOSION OF GRATITUDE, A DRASTIC CHANGE OF TONE, FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE, AN ABRUPT CHANGE.

* AND IT APPEARS TO ME, THAT FOR A MOMENT, A VERY SHORT TIME, PAUL IS DISCOURAGED, HE IS DOWN AND LEAVES AN OPEN DOOR, BUT QUICKLY HE REFOCUSES.

** AND HE TAKES HIS EYES OFF OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES AND PLACES THEM ON THE SOVEREIGN GOD WHO IS IN CONTROL OF HIS CIRCUMSTANCES.

*** PAUL TOOK HIS FOCUS OFF OF HIS DIFFICULTIES AND PUT THEM BACK ONTO HIS GREAT GOD.

**** SO HE BEGINS IN V. 14 BY SAYING, "BUT THANKS BE TO GOD," AND AS PAUL FOCUSES ON THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF HIS FAITH, GRATITUDE IS FLOWING FROM HIS HEART.

1. NOW WHY? THE ANSWER, GOD ALWAYS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST, THE NEXT PHRASE IN V. 14.

* AND THE WORD “ALWAYS” JUMPS OFF THE PAGE TO ME HERE, WHICH LIT. MEANS, AT ALL TIMES, EVER, EVERMORE.

** AND THE TRUTH OF GOD’S SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF HIS LIFE, LEADING US IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST WAS SO COMFORTING AND ENCOURAGING TO PAUL. IT IS A KEY TO JOY, FOR ANXIETY IS A THIEF, IT IS LIVING LIKE GOD IS NOT IN CONTROL, IT ROBS US OF PEACE.

*** AND THE TRUTH THAT GOD ALWAYS LEADS BELIEVERS THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE OF LIFE, NO MATTER WHAT TRIALS AND TROUBLES WE GO THROUGH BRINGS PEACE, REJOICING, THANKSGIVING AND JOY. PAUL REJOICED THAT GOD WAS IN CONTROL.

**** AND CONTEMPLATING, FOCUSING, THINKING, MEDITATING THAT GOD IS IN CONTROL INSTEAD OF FRETTING LED TO PAUL’S DRAMATIC TURN AROUND BEGINNING IN V. 14.

2. FURTHERMORE AND SPECIFICALLY, IN KEEPING WITH THE IMAGERY OF THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, PAUL COMMUNICATES HERE IN V. 14 THAT GOD LEADS BELIEVERS IN TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

* AND USING THAT AS AN ANALOGY WHICH EVERYONE IN ROMAN CULTURE WAS AWARE OF, TRUE BELIEVERS FOLLOW OUR GENERAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE VICTORY PARADE, RECIPIENTS OF THE CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER SIN, DEATH AND HELL.

** AS PAUL WROTE TO THE ROMANS IN ROMANS 8:37 (QUOTE IT).

*** AND BELOVED WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH CHRIST WHO LOVED US AND GAVE HIMSELF FOR US.

**** THEREFORE WE FOLLOW BEHIND OUR GENERAL JESUS CHRIST IN HIS TRIUMPH BRINGING THE SPOILS OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE, THE SOULS OF MEN AND WOMEN RESCUED FROM THE DOMAIN OF DARKNESS AND ARE TRANSFORMED TO THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT, TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON, COLOSSIANS 1:13, ROMANS 8:18-35.

3. BELOVED THERE IS VICTORY IN JESUS, THE TRIUMPH IS IN CHRIST AND SO WE ARE THANKFUL AS WE FOCUS ON HIS SOVEREIGNTY IN LIFE AND HIS SOVEREIGNTY IN HIS SALVATION OF US, HIS ELECT, I CORINTHIANS 15:57.

* COLOSSIANS 1:12-14 –

V. 12 – “GIVING THANKS TO THE FATHER, WHO HAS QUALIFIED US TO SHARE IN THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT.

V. 13 – FOR HE RESCUED US FROM THE DOMAIN OF DARKNESS, AND TRANSFERRED US TO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON,

V. 14 – IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.”

** AND DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, THOUGH WE SUFFER SETBACKS AND TRIALS AND TIMES OF DISCOURAGEMENT, OUR ULTIMATE TRIUMPH IS CERTAIN AND WE WILL MARCH VICTORIOUSLY IN OUR LORD’S TRIUMPH ON THAT WONDERFUL GLORIOUS DAY WHEN THE HEAVENLY CHORUS SCREAMS, “THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD HAS BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND CHRIST AND HE WILL REIGN FOREVER AND EVER IN REVELATION 11:15.

*** AND I SAY HALLELUJAH!

**** BUT THAT’S NOT IT IN V. 14, THERE’S MORE, THE LORD MANIFESTS THROUGH US (PAUL & OTHERS, US) THE SWEET AROMA OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM IN EVERY PLACE.

4. AND UNDERSTAND THE SWEET AROMA IN THE ROMAN TRIUMPH AROSE FROM THE INCENSE-FILLED CENSERS CARRIED BY THE PRIESTS WALKING IN THE TRIUMPH PARADE AND FROM THE FLOWERS THAT WERE THROWN INTO THE STREETS DURING THE TRIUMPH PARADE BY THOSE WATCHING IT.

* AND PAUL USES THESE SMELLS, THE AROMA OF THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, AS METAPHORS THAT DEPICT PREACHING THE GOSPEL AS THE FRAGRANCE OF THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD AND THE AROMA OF CHRIST.

** AND PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL EMITS A FRAGRANCE THAT PEOPLE CANNOT HELP BUT NOTICE. AND WHENEVER WE PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS, ITS SWEET-SMELLING SAVOR BECOMES EVIDENT. IT PERMEATES THE PLACE WHERE IT IS PROCLAIMED.

*** GOD USED PAUL AND HIS ASSOCIATES AND GOD WILL USE US TO GIVE OFF THE SWEET AROMA OF THE GOSPEL, TO INFLUENCE PEOPLE WITH THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

**** AND PAUL CONTINUES TO USE THIS ANALOGY OF AROMA OF FRAGRANCE SMELLED FROM THE ROMAN TRIUMPH IN VV. 15&16. LOOK AT V. 15 TO BEGIN WITH PLEASE.

B. READ V. 15. NOW IN THE ROMAN TRIUMPH PARADE, THE EMPEROR SEATED ON HIS THRONE AT THE CAPITOL SMELLED THE FRAGRANCE, THE AROMA OF THE INCENSE AND FLOWERS WHEN IT REACHED HIM AT THE END OF THE PARADE ROUTE.

* WELL, PAUL AGAIN USES THAT FACT AND APPLIES IT TO HIMSELF AND OTHERS AND US, AND ALTHOUGH WHEN WE PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST TO OTHERS, TO MEN AND WOMEN, IT IS IN REALITY GOD WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE.

** IT IS TO SAY, FAITHFUL GOSPEL PROCLAMATION CAUSES THE SWEET AROMA TO BE MADE MANIFEST TO PEOPLE, BUT THE AROMA OF GOSPEL PROCLAMATION ASCENDS TO THE VERY THRONE OF GOD.

*** AND THAT REMINDS ME, WE PROCLAIM CHRIST IN WITNESSING AND EVANGELISM NOT ONLY OUT OF OBEDIENCE, PRIVILEGE AND BURDEN FOR THE LOST, BUT FOR THE GLORY OF GOD, FOR PROCLAIMING IT FAITHFULLY AND PROPERLY AND BIBLICALLY IS A SWEET AROMA IN THE NOSTRILS OF GOD WHO SITS ON HIS GREAT THRONE!

**** SO WE MUST DO IT, PROCLAIM IT, BUT ALSO WE MUST DO IT ACCORDING TO THE TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD HIS WAY, NOT WATERING IT DOWN WHICH TAKES AWAY FROM THE BEAUTIFUL AROMA OF TRUTH.

1. NOW NOTE THAT FAITHFUL PROCLAMATION IS NOT ONLY ESSENTIAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD BUT IS USED TO SAVE GOD'S ELECT, FOR V. 15 SAYS, NOT ONLY ARE WE A FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST TO GOD, BUT THAT AROMA HAS A TWO-FOLD EFFECT.

* TO THOSE THAT ARE BEING SAVED AND TO THOSE WHO ARE PERISHING.

** AND THAT TWO-FOLD EFFECT IS TALKED ABOUT IN V. 16. LOOK AT V. 16 PLEASE.

C. READ V. 16. NOW KEEP IN MIND, IN THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, THE AROMA OF INCENSE AND FLOWERS WAS THE SWEET SMELL OF VICTORY. BUT IN CONTRAST, TO THE CAPTIVES, THE PRISONERS, IT WAS THE SMELL OF DEATH AS SOME PRISONERS WERE KILLED AT THE END OF THE PARADE AND SOME WERE SPARED TO BECOME SLAVES OF ROME.

* WELL IN PAUL'S APPLICATION AND ANALOGY OF THE ROMAN TRIUMPH, TO CAPTIVES OF SIN, SLAVES OF SIN

WHO WILL NOT REPENT, THE AROMA WAS THE SMELL OF DEATH, ETERNAL DAMNATION AND JUDGMENT IN HELL.

** BUT TO THOSE BEING SAVED, TO THOSE WHO WILL BE SAVED OR HAVE BEEN SAVED, IT IS THE SWEET SMELL, THE SWEET AROMA OF ETERNAL LIFE, LIFE TO LIFE.

*** AND PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL HAS TWO EFFECTS. GOD OPENS HEARTS BY HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE AND PEOPLE ARE SAVED FROM GOD'S WRATH AND ETERNAL LIFE IS GIVEN. WHAT A SWEET AROMA.

**** BUT TO THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE, WHO DO NOT REPENT, THE AROMA IS A DEATH SENTENCE.

1. AND THAT REALITY REMINDS ME OF JOHN 3:36 WHICH SAYS: (QUOTE IT).

* AND BELOVED THE PROCLAMATION OF THE SWEET AROMA OF THE GOSPEL IS TO THOSE WHO BECOME CHRISTIANS A SWEET SMELL OF VICTORY – LIFE, AND TO THOSE WHO DO NOT, THE SMELL OF DEATH.

** AND THEN PAUL CLOSES V. 16 BY ASKING THE QUESTION, AND WHO IS ADEQUATE, WHO IS SUFFICIENT, WHO IS EQUAL TO SUCH A TASK?

*** AND THE ANSWER IS NO ONE ON THEIR OWN!

**** I MEAN, WE COMMUNICATE A MESSAGE OF LIFE AND DEATH. THE TWO-FOLD EFFECT IS LIFE AND PEOPLE REMAIN IN DEATH, THE EFFECT OF PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IS EITHER SALVATION OR DAMNATION, SO WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?

2. AND NONE OF US ARE ON OUR OWN. WE ARE INADEQUATE IN OURSELVES. WE MUST BE VOICES FOR CHRIST AND SPEAK FOR CHRIST, WITH SINCERITY EXALTING THE WORD AND CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL BEING DEPENDENT AND LED BY THE SPIRIT.

* AND PAUL IS LEADING US INTO V. 17 WITH WHO IS ADEQUATE AND WHO IS NOT? FOR HE WILL COMMUNICATE THE INADEQUACY OF THOSE WHO DO IT FOR WRONG MOTIVES IN COMPARISON TO THOSE WHO BECOME ADEQUATE BY HAVING THE RIGHT MOTIVES.

** SO LOOK AT V. 17 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE ADULTERATORS OF THE GOSPEL, OF THE SWEET AROMA OF THE GOSPEL.

III. THE ADULTERATORS, (READ V. 17)

A. NOW PAUL AGAIN WILL CONTRAST HIMSELF AND HIS ASSOCIATES, THE WE OF V. 17, TO THE MANY IN V. 17 WHO PEDDLE THE WORD OF GOD, THE GOSPEL.

* AND THE “MANY” MAKES REFERENCE TO THE MANY FALSE TEACHERS AT CORINTH WHO OPERATE IN THEIR OWN ADEQUACY AND FOR PERSONAL GAIN.

** AND THESE “MANY” PEDDLE THE WORD OF GOD.

*** AND THE WORD PEDDLING IN THE GREEK HAS TO DO WITH RETAILERS, TO THOSE WHO MAKE MONEY IN SELLING THINGS, A HUCKSTER, A CON ARTIST WHO CLEVERLY DECEIVES UNDISCERNING BUYERS INTO PURCHASING CHEAP IMITATIONS OF THE REAL THING.

**** THEIR MOTIVE IS BASE GAIN. SO THEY DECEIVE, THEY ADULTERATE THEIR COMMODITIES FOR BASE GAIN, TO MAKE A BUCK.

1. AND SPECIFICALLY HERE PAUL IS APPLYING THIS WORD TO THOSE WHO WERE ADULTERATORS OF THE WORD OF GOD AND THE GOSPEL.

* THEIR HEART WAS NOT BURDENED FOR THE SHEEP, BUT TO FLEECE THE SHEEP. THEIR MOTIVE WAS GAIN, GOLD, NOT GOD!

** THESE FALSE TEACHERS WERE IN IT FOR THEMSELVES, THEY WERE RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS, SPIRITUAL CON MEN.

*** THEY WERE NOT ADEQUATE TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, FOR WHAT THEY DID THEY DID FOR SELF.

**** BUT IN CONTRAST, UNLIKE THOSE SPIRITUAL CON MEN WHO THOUGHT THEY WERE ADEQUATE IN THEIR DECEPTIONS, PAUL AND HIS ASSOCIATES SPOKE FROM SINCERITY IN THE NEXT PHRASE IN V. 17, THEY WERE VOICES FOR GOD, WE SPEAK IN CHRIST IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

2. AND IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IS MOST LIKELY MAKING REFERENCE TO, GOD SEES OUR MOTIVES, GOD KNOWS OUR MOTIVES, WE SPEAK FOR GOD IN SINCERITY AND HE IS OUR ADEQUACY.

* AND THE WORD SINCERITY HERE IS FROM TWO GREEK WORDS WHICH MAKE REFERENCE TO SUNLIGHT AND TO JUDGE. AND CONNECTED TOGETHER THIS WORD PICTURES SOMETHING HELD UP TO THE LIGHT FOR INSPECTION.

** AND PAUL'S LIFE AND UNADULTERATED MESSAGE WOULD STAND UP TO THE CLOSEST SCRUTINY BY THE CORINTHIANS UNLIKE THE FALSE TEACHERS, THE HUCKSTERS, THE ADULTERATORS OF GOD'S WORD.

IN WRAP UP AND IN APPLICATION: (1) BELIEVERS, OUR HEARTS SHOULD BE FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING AS WE THINK OF TRIUMPH IN CHRIST.

* AND AS WE REFOCUS AND ZOOM IN ON OUR LORD AND WHO IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE AND WILL DO FOR US IN THE FUTURE, WE CAN BE ENCOURAGED, AND MOVE FROM THE PIT TO THE PINNACLE, FROM DISCOURAGEMENT TO JOY.

** WE MUST FOCUS ON THE BLESSINGS IN CHRIST, OUR PRIVILEGES IN CHRIST OVER OUR PROBLEMS.

*** BUT ALSO BELIEVER, I REMIND YOU OF THE PRIVILEGE WE HAVE IN PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IN WITNESSING AND TESTIFYING OF THE GOSPEL.

**** WE ARE A SWEET AROMA FOR GOD AND WE COMMUNICATE THE SWEET AND PRECIOUS GOSPEL OF CHRIST. MAY WE REACH OUT WITH THAT MESSAGE.

(2) AND MAY 2012 BE A YEAR OF THE GREATEST OUTREACH FOR THIS CHURCH, AS WE ARE THE CHURCH. MAY WE FAITHFULLY GATHER FOR EQUIPPING AND BEING ESTABLISHED AND MAY WE SCATTER FOR EVANGELISM.

* MAY WE REACH OUT WITH THE SWEET AROMA OF THE GOSPEL AS WE NEVER HAVE BEFORE. AND I WOULD PRACTICALLY CHALLENGE YOU AS ONE MEANS TO DO THAT TO PRAY FOR THE OPEN DOOR TO DO A RED BOOK, OUR 10 WEEK BIBLE STUDY IN THE GOSPEL WITH A

NEIGHBOR, FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBERS, CO-WORKERS, OR
SOMEONE YOU GO TO SCHOOL WITH THIS YEAR.

** WE TRULY SHOULD BE A FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST TO
GOD AMONG THOSE WHO ARE BEING SAVED, AN AROMA
OF LIFE. (LET'S PRAY)