

THE AROMA OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- Have you ever had to make a decision that you knew would please one person but offend another? What went into your decision-making process and how did you finally decide what to do? What was the outcome?
- Are any of your memories (good or bad) triggered by smell? Why are those smells and memories associated?

When we long for others to embrace the gospel and receive salvation, waiting can be painful. As described in 2 Corinthians 2, Paul knows this feeling all too well. So we do our best to share the gospel message through our words and actions. Yet trying to please everyone is usually an exercise in futility. Paul compares our presentation of the gospel message to a smell, an aroma which will please some and offend others. By studying Paul's message we gain wisdom to guide our words and actions as we strive to live and witness for Christ.

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Who weighs on your heart and mind like the Corinthians weighed on Paul's heart and mind? How has God comforted you as you wait, like Paul did, for an answer?
- Reflect on host Scott Hoezee's observations in segment 3 about Paul's use of the phrase "in Christ." Are you *in Christ*? What is your understanding of what that means? How have your thoughts and actions changed as a result of being *in Christ*?
- Where do you find it easy to "exude the smell of Christ," as host Scott Hoezee described in segment 3, and where do you find it challenging? Why?
- How does it make you feel to know your faith and witness might "smell bad," might lead someone to reject the gospel? Describe a process you could use to evaluate whether your words/actions are sincere, "smelling" like Christ or if you need to change them?

Related Passages

- **2 Corinthians 7**
- **1 Peter 3:8-16**
- **1 Corinthians 10:23-11:1**

Conclusion

Spend time in prayer both for the people weighing on your heart and for yourself, that your witness will exude the smell of Christ. Incorporate scripture into your prayer.

Consider these scriptural examples of how you might pray for someone's salvation (from Pastoral Leadership Institute: Missional Leader conference):

- *Although _____ has been spiritually blind, please give him/her eyes to see Jesus (John 9:25).*
- *Jesus, I pray _____ will be pierced to the heart when he/she hears the good news about you (Acts 2:37).*
- *Awesome God, by your power, rescue _____ from the kingdom of darkness and move him/her to your Kingdom so that _____ can share in the inheritance that belongs to all your people who live in light (Colossians 1:12-14).*
- *As _____ begins to hear Your voice, may he/she not harden his/her heart (Psalm 95:7-8).*
- *Jesus, may you make your home in _____'s heart as he/she learns to trust in you. May his/her roots grow down into your love. Help _____ to have the power to understand, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep God's love is and be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from you (Ephesians 3:17-19).*

Consider these scriptural examples of prayer for your life and witness:

- *Lord, by the power of your spirit, help me to keep your commands and live as Jesus did so that all will know your truth is in me. Make your love complete in me (1 John 2:3-6).*
- *God of peace, sanctify my whole spirit, soul and body. Keep me blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24).*
- *May my reverence for Christ as Lord ever be evident. Guide my preparation and reflection. Keep me vigilant and always ready to share the gospel and the reason for my hope. Give me your spirit to remember gentleness and respect, that my words and actions always flow from my place in Christ (1 Peter 3:15-16).*

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