

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (October 10, 2021)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church ran deep. In the two letters we have he covered a wide variety of topics, connecting each of those topics to the growing Christian faith of those within the church. Some of the topics came to Paul in the form of questions the Corinthians themselves were asking. Some topics were addressed because Paul was aware of a particular struggle facing the church. Other topics were (still are) common to every Christian and every church. This morning's topic is of the latter.

What difference did the Christians in Corinth make in their community? Did their love for Jesus have an affect on their families, their neighbors, those they met as they traveled around the city? Do we at Grace make a difference in the life of our community? Does our love for Jesus affect our families, our friends, our neighbors, those we meet as we shop, dine, recreate?

Paul used the terms "aroma" and "fragrance" in this passage. Those are powerful words. Certain smells, particular odors, are pleasing, they linger in the air, bringing positive memories and thoughts of a God blessed future. Think of arriving at the home of your grandparents. When you pass through the front door the aroma of a carefully prepared meal greets you. You feel welcomed, loved, accepted. But bad and offensive smells linger to. You enter a different home, you take a ride in someone else's car, you pass an unfamiliar location, and your sense of smell is under attack. One whiff is all it takes for tensions to rise and thoughts and emotions to go sideways.

How can we, as God's people planted where we are here in Yakima, do all we can to be a "pleasant" smell in all of the places we go and to everyone we meet? Paul calls us "the aroma of Christ." Does our Christian faith, our love for Jesus, change the aroma, the fragrance, of our life? Paul's challenge hits us right in the nose.

### **What Do We Smell Like?** (SERMON PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17)

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ."

## **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What words jump out to you as you read the passage for this week?
2. What does the "aroma" or "fragrance" do for those who are being saved? What about for those who are perishing?
3. How does this passage say the knowledge of Jesus spreads to others?
4. What are the inappropriate reasons, according to this passage, that some talk about Jesus? (verse 17)

## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

5. What does Paul mean when he tells the Corinthian Christians that they are the "aroma" of Christ?
6. Why do some respond to the aroma of Christ negatively, as if it were a fragrance from death to death, while others positively as if the fragrance led them from life to life?
7. What does Paul mean when he speaks about a Christian's responsibility to make a difference in the lives of others (whether at home, on the street, at work, school, or play)?
8. What does Paul mean when he speaks of "peddler's" of God's Word? Can you think of examples?

## **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

9. How are you spreading the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere you go? Share one example from your life.
10. How do you approach those who say they are opposed to Jesus? Those who think Christians "smell bad"?
11. How can you, as a Christian, help someone move from life to live instead of moving from death to death?
12. What are some ways you can serve others in the name of Jesus sincerely instead of becoming a "peddler of God's word."
13. Who in your life has been a good fragrance, a pleasing aroma, that has helped you know and love Jesus (or is helping you ...)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a moment or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to help you be a good "aroma" for Him. Ask God to show you how to help people move from life to life instead of death to death. Ask God to help you be sincere and not a "peddler" of His Word. Ask for boldness and compassion. God loves us and He will help us.