

The Fragrance of Christ

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Paul's purpose in life was to preach the gospel. Yet he knew he would not convert everyone. Whether or not someone is converted depends on their reaction to the message of the gospel. Paul explained that it would be perceived in one of two ways – the same is true today.

Always in Triumph (v. 14)

- Important – Paul would discuss that fact that many people would reject the preaching of the gospel; their rejection led them to persecute Paul for his preaching (2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 11:23-27); we can expect difficulties and persecution as we try to share the gospel today (1 Peter 4:12-16)
- Yet in the end, we will be victorious (Romans 8:36-37; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 2:10)

The Fragrance of Christ (v. 15)

- The “fragrance of Christ” is the “aroma of the knowledge of Him” (v. 14) – this must include sharing the knowledge of Him to others (preaching/teaching)
- Salvation involves coming to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) – the word of God is truth (John 17:17); Jesus had the words of eternal life (John 6:68); the gospel is God's power for salvation (Romans 1:16)
- Teaching must be done – fragrance/aroma is something that is noticed by others; Paul was committed to teaching others (1 Corinthians 9:16); we must be as well (1 Peter 3:15)

Two Responses (v. 16)

- Some will view the gospel as a message of LIFE; others will view it as a message of DEATH
- “Life to life” – this is among those who recognize the gospel for what it is; announces life (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:3-7); leads to eternal life (John 6:68; 1 Peter 1:3-4)
- “Death to death” – this is the reaction from those who reject the gospel; condemns those who reject Christ and continue in sin (John 12:48; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10); leads to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

The Message Does Not Change (v. 17)

- Not “peddling the word of God” – word describes a “huckster” who changes his sales pitch or the product to sell it; we cannot change the message (Revelation 22:18-19)

Acts 20:27), not even to accommodate the “perishing”; a “different gospel” separates one from grace (Galatians 1:6-7)

- Speak “in sincerity” – not to gain something for self (1 Corinthians 9:18), but to save others (1 Corinthians 9:22-23)
- Speak “as from God” – accurately represent His word (1 Peter 4:11)
- Speak “in the sight of God” / “before God” (NIV) – knowing we will give an account to Him (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Conclusion

- Reminder for us as Christians – no matter what we do, many will reject the gospel; this is discouraging, but we must continue trying to reach those who will recognize it as the message of life
- Also a call for reflection – Do we view the gospel as a message of LIFE or DEATH? Will we follow it because we know it leads us to eternal life? Or will we reject it because it condemns the lifestyle we want to continue living?