

Join the Parade

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

I. In the Jesus parade we spread the fragrance of Jesus and the Gospel.

- A. The last part of 2 Corinthians 2 looks more like a defeat for Paul and the church than a victory to be celebrated. Paul's spirit was not at rest in Troas because Paul didn't find Titus to get the news from Corinth. He was so distracted and anxious about the lack of news of how Corinth had responded to his strong letter that he left the growing church at Troas to move on. But Paul was not depressed. Verse 14: "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."
- B. Matthew 16:18: "**And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**" The church of Jesus Christ is on a victory parade. We are winning! One part of that victory parade is people carrying sweet-smelling incense. This is our job as the church today. Through us (Jesus) spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere (vs. 14). How do people smell the sweetness of Jesus? Through our words and our sacrificial lives. When they hear through us that Jesus died on the cross to forgive them because God loved us so much and see our sacrificial lives, how sweet is that!

II. In the Jesus parade we are led by Jesus as His conquered captives.

- A. One part of the Roman military victory parade has captives led in chains. The Jesus parade also has captives. Us. We have been captured and captivated by God. We take up the cross in death in a parade that reveals the majesty and power of God through our weakness. Think about what Jesus says to all of us as His disciples in Luke 9:23: "**And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'**"
- B. Paul wrote about his role in the Jesus parade in 1 Corinthians 4:9: "**For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.**" Paul does not suffer by accident as an apostle. He suffers by God's design. Paul says, "It is not despite my suffering as an apostle, it is precisely through my suffering as an apostle that God is spreading the beautiful fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus." When people smell the daily fragrance of Paul's dying to himself in weakness for Jesus' sake, they smell something beautiful in his sacrifice.

Application:

Join the Jesus parade by living a life of sacrifice and telling others of Jesus' sacrifice.

Sources:

The Bible

Commentaries by Trent Casto, David Garland, and Gary Millar.

Sermon Outline Questions

- 1) What stress was Paul feeling while the church at Troas was growing? How does sin within the church affect its ability to focus on its mission of evangelism and discipleship?
- 2) How do people outside the church smell the sweetness of Jesus and the Gospel? Can people smell Jesus through your words and your sacrificial life?
- 3) How has Jesus captured and captivated His followers? How does our suffering and our captivity to Christ help spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus?