



# SECOND CORINTHIANS

*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*



Part 10 —“Led in Triumph to Proclaim the Gospel” (2 Cor. 2:2-17) — 26 November 2023

## Introduction: The Triumph of Aemilius Paullus

Paul had exhorted the Corinthians to reaffirm their love for the repentant offender from their congregation so they would not be outwitted by Satan. He then returned to the subject of his decision to go on to Macedonia rather than returning to Corinth. Although he had been discouraged by the lack of news concerning the situation in Corinth during his time in Troas and Macedonia, he continued to preach the Gospel and to trust in the ultimate victory of God in Christ.

**Main Point:** Although we will at times find ourselves \_\_\_\_\_ by the circumstances of our lives, it is Christ who is \_\_\_\_\_ and can therefore continue to work through us to further His purposes in the world.

## The Triumph of Messiah - 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

- Paul described the difficulty of ministry as he awaited news from Corinth in the aftermath of the 'severe' letter to them (2:12-13)

### Observations:

- Paul traveled to \_\_\_\_\_ in order to await the arrival of Titus.
- During his time in the city, there was opportunity to preach the gospel.  
*“a door was opened”*
- Even so, this was a time of great \_\_\_\_\_ for Paul.  
*“my spirit was not at rest”*

“The spiritual unrest so distracted him that it inhibited his work in Troas, so he was forced to make a ‘reluctant and solemn farewell.’ That good-by does not imply, however, that all was lost; some converts were won (see Acts 20:6-12).”—David Garland

**Key Point:** That the gospel continued to spread even at a time that Paul was struggling with his own \_\_\_\_\_ should remind us that God is powerful to work through us even in the midst of our struggles.

- In spite of such difficulties, Paul could give thanks to God that He continued to spread the Gospel through men like him and his companions (2:14-17)

### Observations:

- Paul offered thanks to God and then employed the imagery of a Roman “triumph” in his description of gospel ministry.  
  
⇒ It is \_\_\_\_\_ who is being honored with this “triumph” in order that the glories of His victory might be displayed for all.
- Triumph imagery is used to highlight what God does both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ his bondservants.  
*“in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession”*  
  
⇒ Paul could mean that believers share in the triumph as victorious \_\_\_\_\_. It is more likely, however, that he intends to portray believers in general (and ministers of the gospel in particular) as those who have been taken captive by the triumphant leader. These captives are put on display for all to see.

*“and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him”*

- ⇒ A Roman triumph was also \_\_\_\_\_ with the sense of smell. Fragrant incense was burned along the way with everything culminating in large numbers of sacrifices (animals and incense) being offered to the gods in honor of the victor.

*As bondservants, believers have chosen a life of captivity to Messiah and therefore share ironically in His \_\_\_\_\_ even as they face loss of their own lives.*

3. Paul then made further use of imagery associated with \_\_\_\_\_ to describe how the knowledge of God is spread among others by God's bondservants.

*"For we the aroma of Christ to God"—εὐωδία (euōdia)—An aroma or pleasing smell; usually associated with a sacrifice.*

⇒ It is Christ who is ultimately the pleasing sacrifice and aroma to God (Eph. 5:2). Because of our identity with Him, believers can offer pleasing sacrifices to God (1 Pet. 2:5).

4. The aroma of Christ is received differently by different kinds people.

*"fragrance"—ὀσμὴ (osmē)—The quality of something that affects the mind or sense of smell; an odor (good or bad).*

*"among those who are perishing"*

*"a fragrance from death to death"*

*"among those who are being saved"*

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"The idea is that the preaching of the gospel causes either death or life to become increasingly more rooted in the hearer. To those who are on the road to destruction, the gospel is like a noxious fume that relentlessly carries the unwary to their death. To those on the road to salvation, it is comparable to a invigorates all who come in contact with it." —L.L. Belleville

***God is at work through believers to spread the knowledge of Him in Christ in ways that are both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.***

5. Paul asks and then answers a rhetorical question in light of these amazing truths.

*"Who is sufficient for these things?"*

⇒ Paul contrasted his ministry and that of his companions with those who were "peddlers" of God's word.

*"men of sincerity"*

*"commissioned by God"*

*"in the sight of God"*

*"we speak in Christ"*

**Key Point: Although Christ is to be victoriously proclaimed through His people, their lives will often look like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the eyes of the world.**

### **Concluding Thoughts**

- Paul's words in this passage help us to understand that the nature and purpose of our lives are bound up with Messiah:

2 Cor. 2:14a—But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession...

2 Cor. 2:15—For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing

2 Cor. 2:17b—...but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.



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