

The Fragrance of Christ (2 Cor 2)

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Introduction: What will truly please God?

- A. Too often we treat God like we do our mates, we give them those things that we like rather than listen to the one we are trying to please.
 - 1. Nadab and Abihu found out the hard way. **(Lev 10:1-2)**
 - 2. God has pleaded with His people to listen. **(Deut 10:12-13; Micah 6:6-8)**
- B. We often judge the things God expects of us on the basis of “what works”.
 - 1. This is a badly flawed concept! We have limited vision. In the area of men there is the “law of unintended consequences”. (Ex. Welfare and the tragedy of Human Compassion.)
 - 2. We must always ask the question: “What does God want?” **(Isa 55:8-11)**
 - 3. There are consequences that we may think are bad, but in fact is the will of God.

I. The Goals and Grief of the Apostle Paul (VV1-4)

- A. Paul has great concerns over the church at Corinth.
 - 1. He has two sources from which he wrote his first letter. **(1 Cor 1:11; 7:1)**
 - 2. Even though he spoke the truth, there was the ever present danger that Satan would win out.
 - 3. A true servant of God will greatly feel the loss when others leave the faith. **(Phil 2:17-21)**
- B What does true love do?
 - 1. Tell the one they love what they need to hear. **(Mark 10:21-22)**
 - 2. He will show the patience to let the word do its work!
 - 3. He will rejoice and encourage all visible progress.
 - 4. He will do the hard things, even when it deeply hurts. **(2:4)**
(Ex. Father for son)
 - 5. Many mistake sentimental selfishness for love.
 - 6. It is this kind of heart that will effectively carry the gospel.

(2 Tim 2:24-26)

II. The Purpose and Follow-up to Church Discipline (VV5-11)

- A. The church at Corinth has previously decided it was not necessary to practice church discipline. **(1 Cor 5:1-3)**
 - 1. They has allowed pride to cause them to be “above” this sort of thing.
 - 2. In the process this kind of heart no longer cared for the true needs of others! (Ex. “If I should depart...)
- B. This action brought results that saved this man!
 - 1. This process allowed him to see where he was at. **(1 Cor 5:4-5)**
 - 2. If human wisdom was used, this would never, never, never be done!
- C. The Corinthian church was put to the test in this too. **(v9)**

1. What is a church of Christ? (**Luke 6:46**)
2. Do we really follow the Lord in all things?
3. In our reasoning are we following God or men? (**Gal 1:10**)
- C. There was however a important follow-up needed.
 1. He needed to know he was forgiven by men and God.
 2. Forgiveness is a healing process of the soul. (**Psa 51:1-12**)
- D. Satan will use our failures to recapture the penitent Christian. (**v11**)
 1. One cannot live faithful for long filled with guilt.
 2. Satan will use our failures to convince us to quit. (Ex. Judas)
 3. Do not let Satan tell you what the will of God is. Go to God's word and believe it!
 4. Do you encourage others who respond to the invitation? Where is your heart?

III. The Fruits of the Right Kind of Preaching (VV12-17)

- A. Paul knew that God's way will always lead to triumph. (**V14**)
 1. From the standpoint of sight there was considerable doubt. (**V12-13**)
 2. Still Paul would only preach the pure gospel of Christ. Here the results were certain. But what are they? (**2 Cor 4:1-2**)
- B. The results were an "aroma".
 1. In the old testament this is a sacrifice that pleased God. (**Gen 8:21; Ex 29:18**)
 2. This same concept is found in the New Testament. (**Eph 5:2; Phil 4:18**)
- C. There are two results which please God! (v16)
 1. What if someone hardens his heart like Pharaoh? (**Rom 9:15-18**)
 2. We need to see that only a certain kind of heart will respond to the gospel! We simply must preach it to all.

Conclusion: Let us never try to be smarter than God.

- A. The gospel will provide the same results for ever age. Will we believe it? (**Matt 28:18-20**)
- B. What is your attitude towards the obligations of a Christian to another Christian?