

The Fragrance of Christ
(2 Corinthians 2:14-16)
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Introduction: “Just exactly what is Our Responsibility in Evangelism?”

A. Every Christian has a responsibility to teach the gospel to others as they have the ability and opportunity (**Mat. 28:18-20**; e.g., **Acts 8:4**).

B. Yet, are Christians held liable for what response each person gives to the gospel? - *To hear the way some brethren talk, you would think so!*

C. After all is said and done, if we have done our job to share the gospel with others, the response each person makes is *essentially their own*.

1. The truth is that we are not held responsible for people’s disobedience to the gospel nor are we credited for people’s obedience.

D. The power to convert is not within us, it comes from the power of the gospel! (**Rom. 1:16**).

I. Victory in Evangelism Comes Only by Faith in the Lord.

A. Sometimes we don’t always take advantage of opportunities to teach others due to our own inadequacies (**2 Cor. 2:12-13**).

1. Due to our own anxieties and personal challenges, we don’t always take “the doors” that God puts before us.

2. Like Paul, we may have great cares and concerns that weigh us down and hold us back (e.g., family troubles, strife among brethren, financial woes).

3. Sometimes, because of our troubles, we may feel inadequate to take on such a huge responsibility as teaching the lost the gospel (cf. **Ex. 3:11**).

B. Only in Christ are we adequate to bring the gospel to the world.

1. “*Who is adequate for these things?*” (**2 Cor. 2:16b**): No one without the Lord, yet with the Lord we will *always* be victorious! (**2 Cor 3:4-7**)

2. Only in Christ can we cast aside our fears and doubts and have the courage and confidence to move forward in the efforts to reach the lost.

II. Thanks be to God Who Always Leads Us in His Triumph in Christ!

A. In Christ, there is **always** victory (**2 Cor 2:14-16**).

1. “*A triumph in Rome was a magnificent procession in honor of a victorious general, and the highest military distinction which he could obtain.*” – ISBE.

2. Similarly, as Christ “leads us in His triumph” we may picture our own “victory parade” in which we celebrate our triumph in Christ.

B. The triumphal sweep of the gospel of Christ gains the victory! (**2 Cor. 2:14**)

1. Thanks be to God for allowing us to share in **His** triumph!

2. When we do our duty to proclaim the gospel, the knowledge of God will spread everywhere like an aroma that distributes in the atmosphere.

3. By our preaching *and* good example in Christ (**1 Tim. 4:16**) we cause the people to take notice, like a perfume that permeates the air.

4. Yet, *regardless* of the results, let us be thankful to take part in the cause of Christ in spreading **His** gospel! (e.g., **Acts 5:40-42**).

III. The Gospel Will Bring Differing Responses that we are not responsible for.

- A. Inevitably, people will respond in different ways to the gospel.
 - 1. To some, our example and the gospel we speak will be like a sweet aroma, to others we will be like a stench of death (**2 Cor. 2:15-16a**).
 - 2. Some will view the gospel as the saving power of God, others will view as utter foolishness (**1 Cor. 1:18**).
 - 3. There are different problems that can occur that prevents a person from responding favorably to the gospel (**Luke 8:11-14**).
- B. To certain ones, the lives of Christians and the gospel proclaimed is “*an aroma from death to death*” (**2 Cor. 2:16a**).
 - 1. Christ like behavior is observed as a standard of living that they do not want to be subjected to (cf. **1 Pet. 4:4**).
 - 2. There will be people today who will respond with hostility to the gospel and will “*cover their ears*” (e.g., **Acts 7:54-60**).
 - 3. The gospel reminds them of their sins which are a horrible “odor” indeed! (**John 3:19-20**).
 - 4. To many, “the smell” of the gospel is foul and unpleasant because it exposes their sins and warns of eternal death (**Jn 8:24; 2 Cor. 2:15-16**).
- C. To those who are being saved, the fragrance of Christ is an aroma of life! (**2 Cor. 2:16b**).
 - 1. To those who are seeking God, who are *truly interested* in serving God and going to Heaven, they will be attracted, not turned off, by the gospel.
 - 2. There is a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness (**Mat. 5:6**).

IV. Maintain Your Integrity in Evangelism.

- A. In the yearning for “success,” there is a temptation to “market” the gospel (**2 Cor. 2:17a**).
 - 1. Some treat the gospel like a business profession or trade in which he must produce results at *any cost*.
 - 2. We can get caught up in the “numbers game” and attempt to “package” and present the gospel in an appealing way to attract more people.
 - 3. In effect, we peddle the word of God for our own selfish purposes and fail to give God the glory!
- B. We must never take our eyes off of God in evangelism (**2 Cor. 2:17b**).
 - 1. We preach the gospel in the sight of **God** and what He thinks is the only thing that truly matters, not brethren, the community, etc. (**Rev. 3:1-2**)
 - 2. Knowing that we have pleased the Lord by proclaiming His gospel is what must be our focus (**Rev. 2:8-11**), not our favor by the people
 - 3. Whether one receives or rejects the gospel is **not** under our control.
 - 4. Let us take heart knowing that we have done what the Lord has asked us to do; let us rejoice that we are “*the fragrance of Christ*”!
 - 5. That we are being exactly what God would have us to be: **His** representatives! (**Eph. 5:1-2**)

Conclusion: Without Shame or Reservation, Let Us always be a Fragrance of Christ to the World in Which We Live.