

A bundle of myrrh and a cluster of camphire IS my well-beloved unto me

This is one of the ways in which, the bride described her love for the bridegroom in Song of Solomon 1. She longed for His intimate presence, which was to her like the sweet fragrances of myrrh and camphire or henna flowers. The love of this woman toward this man symbolic of the church's love for Christ.

When we gather together on the Lord's Day, we should NEVER just be "going to church", but, as children of God we should gather prayerfully and with an earnest desire to enter into the intimate presence of our well-beloved Christ, to be spoken to by Him!

Myrrh Oil and Camphire Flowers are both beautifully fragrant, the bride spoke of having a "bundle of myrrh" around her neck, and a "cluster of camphire flowers" nearby, perhaps in her hands. The pleasing fragrance of both speak of her enjoyment of His intimate presence.

With the Lord's help, I hope to couple this thought with our text!

Last Sunday, Paul allowed us to see into his heart...that he wasn't a mean-spirited preacher who was only full of rebukes and stern commands; he had a fervent love for the people of God, and desired more than anything that they would KNOW the Christ of the gospel!

But the many sins of the Church at Corinth grieved the heart of Paul, and he longed to rejoice in their repentance. Beloved, if we sincerely love sinners, (saved sinners and lost sinners) ...

THIS IS how we will react when we BEHOLD THEIR SINS, with sorrow and grief, but we will also love them by praying for them and by helping them to turn away from their sins to Christ! Remember if God commended His love toward sinners, SHOULDN'T WE?

Paul did not want to make them sorry again; he did not want to rebuke them again, he wanted to rejoice in Christ with them; but we will see today that it completely unsettled Paul's heart that he hadn't heard from Titus on how the church was doing; or how they had received his first letter!

What effect did it have on them? Did they reject it? Or did they receive/accept what he had written?

Last week in our text, (V5-11): Paul encouraged the church to forgive the man (who was a member of the church) WHO HAD openly committed fornication, but WHO had now repented of his sin.

What a great blessing from the Lord, this was an answered prayer that this man had repented and confessed his sin! Since his sin was public, and brought public rebuke/punishment from the church, NOW, the church must (in

Christ-Like Manner) publicly forgive him! (2 Corinthians 2:6)

What the church did with this man would either strengthen the church or rot it with bitterness from within.

Be careful of being too severe and without love in your punishments or rebukes toward others; if one has sinned against you or us, they must know that we are ready to forgive them! How you forgive others, beloved, is directly related to how you rebuked or punished them. You must always leave the door to repentance and forgiveness cracked open. They must know there is a way back!

But genuine forgiveness is difficult for those who punish absolutely.

Forgive him, confirm your love to him, or I fear that he will be swallowed up in sorrow and despair. (2 Corinthians 2:8-11 Read)

Text for today: 2 Corinthians 2:4-5, 12-17

Paul told the Corinthians, after I wrote my first letter to you, I was to meet Titus at Troas, he was going to tell me how you received my first letter. But when I could not find him at Troas, it completely unsettled me because of the love that I have for you all!

This was an internal struggle for the Apostle Paul. What would become of the church at Corinth after receiving his letter, which was full of admonishments and rebukes?

Now he was in Troas, (northwest Turkey), and God had opened a gospel door to him to preach the gospel; this gospel door that was previously closed to him. But he couldn't get his mind off the Church at Corinth.

Just trust the Lord Paul! I love Paul's realness here; he just couldn't bear sitting still, he had no rest in his spirit, he had to do something!

So, he departed from Troas for Macedonia, and departed a gospel door that had been opened to him by the Lord! He could not settle himself, he had to know, he had to find Titus. If Titus was on his way to Troas, they would run into each other in route.

Was this a bad decision? The more I think about this, I don't think so...it just shows us the heart of Paul, the Apostle, his love, care, and concern for the Church at Corinth. He probably thought, if my first letter was not received, it will be the ruin of the church.

There was another instance, in which, Paul would NOT depart from where God had opened a gospel door to him. 1 Corinthians 16:7-11

So, Paul would not depart an open gospel door in Ephesus, but he departed an open gospel door in Troas, which was previously CLOSED! Acts 16:6-9

We ought to see here that the "Great Apostle Paul" was a man of like passions like us, subject to human emotions and to becoming overwhelmed and filled with anxious cares, just like all of us.

Do you remember the fearless and courageous Prophet Elijah, after the Lord's great victory at his hand at Mount Carmel? 1 Kings 18.

Ref: 1 Kings 18, (Then) Read 2 Corinthians 2:13

Bottom Line Up Front: This was a very difficult decision for Paul; that being said, it was nonetheless the providence of God, WHO WORKED ALL THINGS after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL. This departure, though unknown to Paul, would further, not hinder the work and message of the Kingdom of Christ.

So Paul departed Troas, and NOW he rejoiced in His God! But wait, Paul, you just wrote about your anxiety, now you're triumphing in Christ! (V14)

Paul encouraged himself in the Lord and thanked God, WHO had NEVER BEFORE FAILED him, as he wrote here, God ALWAYS CAUSES us to triumph in Christ. Even in Paul's weakness, he was seeking to do the work of the Kingdom of God, therefore whether in Troas or Macedonia, he knew that God would cause him to triumph in Christ! Romans 8:35-37

Paul's departure from Troas was NOT a departure from the Lord! Here's the rest of the story; he did find Titus. 2 Corinthians 7:5-9, 12-16.

I love this about Paul, he didn't put himself out there as a "super saint" who never struggled with anxiety or being overwhelmed by circumstances, he was real, and wrote of his own weaknesses; he didn't present "an untouchable/unattainable Christianity" to us.

But also, in 2 Corinthians 2:14, Paul thanked God for allowing them to MAKE MANIFEST (or spread/diffuse) the savour (or fragrance) of the knowledge of Christ in EVERY PLACE that they had been.

Remember when we opened, I spoke of the bride, who wore a bundle of sweet-smelling myrrh around her neck, and she had a cluster of camphire flowers with her as well. EVERY PLACE that she went was filled with the fragrance/aroma of her bundle of myrrh and her cluster camphire flowers!

Song 1:3: "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy Name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee"

So, Paul here, thanked God, that in every city, which they had visited, the savor and aroma of the gospel had filled that city and place! There is nothing sweeter or more pleasing to the saints, or to a despairing and sinful soul than the gospel of Christ! Acts 5:27-28, 2 Corinthians 2:15-16

We are to be used of God to diffuse the sweet savour of Christ's gospel both to (or among) the saved, and among the lost and perishing!

What an honor and privilege that we have (TO PREACH/ TELL OTHERS) of the gospel of Christ in the world, we are God's diffusers spreading the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ, filling every place that we go with the sweet aroma of His gospel. Habakkuk 2:14

To one human, we are the savour or scent of condemnation and death, and to another human, we are the savour or scent of salvation and eternal life.

Dear saint of God, YOU OUGHT to have this "A GOSPEL EFFECT" and "THIS GOSPEL INFLUENCE" on your family, your world, your personal society!

And KNOW THIS: When YOU HAVE diffused gospel knowledge to lost sinners who WILL NOT turn from their sins to Christ, to them, you are a savor of death. But to those who receive the gospel of Christ, to them, you are a savour of life!

John 3:16-21

"And who is sufficient for these things?"

Who would take on so difficult a work as this, to be held responsible (before God) for rightly pointing human souls to Christ by the gospel?

To be saddled with the responsibility of delivering the message from Christ to never-dying souls, in which, eternal life and eternal damnation hang in the balances. "Who is sufficient for these things?" 2 Corinthians 3:5-6

Paul replied, WE ARE, this is what God called us to do!

2 Corinthians 2:17: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ"

There are many false teachers out there preaching, but we are not false teachers, we don't peddle the Word of God or adulterate it with our own opinions, we preach and witness it sincerely and IN THE SIGHT OF GOD...meaning, we always preach it as if the Lord Jesus were right here with us inspecting every Word and listening to us.

In the sight of God, speak we in Christ! (V12) It is Christ's gospel!

As we close, my prayer is that every one of you (as children of God) would be gospel diffusers in the world, spreading the sweet fragrance of Christ's gospel to everone and in every place that you go. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Appeal to the lost!