

II Corinthians 1-7 Paul's Defense of Himself, His Fellow Workers of the Faith, & His Ministry

2:14 – 5:16 Paul Continues Defense w/ 4 Basic Proofs About His Ministry

Who Is Adequate for These Things? We Are, Here's Why.....

Proof #1 We Are Adequate Because We Do Not Peddle The Word of God 2:17-3:3

Proof #2 We Are Adequate Because We Are Ministers of a New Covenant 3:4-3:18

Proof #3 We Are Adequate Because We Have A Clear Conscience Before Man & God (4:1-4:12)

Proof #4 We Are Adequate Because We Have A New Home Which Is Eternal (4:13-5:11)

Troas to Macedonia Vs. 12-13 Transition Verses

Vs. 12 *"Now I came to Troas for the Gospel.....God opened a door...."*

• We learn 3 things:

1. There was some "opportunity" that Paul was afforded *"a door was opened for me"*
2. Paul understood that it was God's directive. *"door opened in the Lord"*
3. He saw his assignment as chance to begin a new church or at least save some. *"for the gospel"*

Vs. 13 Mood Shifts *".....I did not find Titus".*

- Glimpse into Paul's anguish over Corinth. Eagerly awaiting reply after "Severe Letter"
- At some point he bid them farewell & moved onto Macedonia
- 7:5-7 Initially no rest in Macedonia either until Titus shows.

It's no accident that Paul has shared this information with us.

1. It explains in part where he was while not at Corinth
2. It also reveals his heart & concern regarding Corinth.
 - **1:23** *"...to spare you I didn't return to Corinth."*

Illustration: Not having a peace about a particular matter. It can permeate our entire state & even preoccupy us.

Sometimes when we are burden w/ a matter it is because God has shared His heart with us.

God's heart is burdened for His children and on occasion we experience the heart of God about a matter.

We Cannot Allow Temporary Seasons of Unrest to Derail Us From Our Godly Assignments

Vs. 14-16 Paul Begins to Set the Stage Regarding The Adequacy That True Believers Have in Jesus

He Begins w/ Metaphor - Word Picture – He Likens Himself & Fellow Missionaries to A Fragrance

Vs. 14 *“Thanks be to God.....”* Mood Shifts from Worn Heavy Laden to Triumphantly Praising God!!

1. *“Because God always leads us in His triumph in Christ”*

- I Cor. 15:55 *“O death where is your victory, o death where is your sting?”*
- No matter how difficult life may get, we will ALWAYS be victorious in Christ
- Nothing can separate us from the love of God.
- Nothing can disqualify us from eternity with Jesus.
- This is NOT because of us but because of HIM!!!

2. God *“....causes them to be a sweet aroma & makes Himself known in every place”*

- Notice that Paul credits God w/ the results.
- God purposefully uses believers to bring Glory to Himself.

Illustration: Sample Sale bags & Loveman Ave. basement
Paul Says Wherever He Goes God Uses Him.

Vs. 15 Paul Elaborates on Metaphor of “Aroma” *“We are fragrance of Christ to God among saved & perishing...”*

- 2 categories of people “saved” and “perishing” (this encapsulates every human)
- People have either accepted Jesus or have not. Saved, or perishing. Present tense.

Vs. 16a *“....to one an aroma from death to death and the other an aroma of life to life.”*

- For those who reject Christ, the message of the cross is repulsive.
- I Cor. “cross is foolishness”
- Consider Paul’s discussion of the Law in Romans 6. The Law brings death because it sets a standard.
- Gospel demands a response. Hearing Gospel & rejecting Jesus is a continuation of death.
- Hearing Gospel and accepting Jesus leads to life eternal

Illustration: Motocross - There are only two types of riders. Those who have fallen & those who have yet to fall.

- There is no in between. There is no 3rd category of people.
- Undecided IS NOT a category. Undecided is one who is perishing.

Paul’s Metaphor of FrAGRANT Aroma Is All About Jesus Christ

Notice Centralized Emphasis of Christ Throughout This Truth Paul Is Revealing

- Gospel of Christ, God leads us in Christ, Fragrance of Christ, Sweet aroma of knowledge of Him
- This tells us God will do the heavy lifting. We just have to be obedient.
- Everything Paul is telling us about being a sweet aroma is credited to the hand of God.
- Thanks be to God that it is not my credentials that save me but Jesus’ redeeming resurrection.

Vs. 16b Paul Now Introduces a Somewhat Rhetorical Question That He Will Go to Answer w/ 4 Proofs

- This is the question we will be answering for the next 3 messages.
- This is the question that our lives should also answer as true believers in Christ Jesus.

Vs. 16b “*who is adequate for these things?*”

- Who is adequate for what things?
 - Who is adequate to be a sweet fragrance for Christ?
 - Who is adequate to be to be triumphant in Christ?
 - Who is adequate to be used by God to spread the knowledge of Himself everywhere.

Proof #1 We Are Adequate Because We Do Not Peddle the Word of God.

Vs. 17a “*For we are not like many, peddling the word of God.....*”

- This is direct response to false teachers. Paul does **NOT** peddle, while others do.
- Term peddle implies corruption on many fronts.
 - To retail or sell something
 - To compromise and/or corrupt for the sake of gain.
- **II Cor. 4:2** “*....not walking in craftiness or adulterating the Word of God.*”
- **Gal. 1:6-9** Judaizers “*distort the word....*”
- **NET Translation** “*.....we are not like so many others, hucksters who peddle the word of God for profit...*”
- **I Cor. 9:15** Paul revealed no one could accuse him of preaching for money.....

17b “*.....but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.*”

Why Doesn't Paul Peddle the Word of God? Because:

- “*he speaks from sincerity*”, “*he speaks as one sent by God*”, “*he speaks in the watchful eye of God.*”
- Paul has a clear conscience about the Gospel he is preaching.
- Last week Mykel reminded us how people's consciences can be seared. They no longer recognize sin.

Vs. 1-3 We Don't Need Letters – You Are Our Living Letter

Vs. 1 “*Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Do we need letters of commendation?*”

- In other words: Does Paul's legitimacy & credentials lie in his own claims about himself?
 - Does he need to promote himself like the false teachers? **NO**
 - Does Paul need to ask for letters of recommendation? **NO**
- Apparently Paul's accusers must have solicited “letters of recommendation”
- Paul knew this about them, & challenges his audience that he needs nothing of the sort to prove himself.

Vs. 2-3 “*You are our letter written in our hearts, known & read by all men.*”

- In other words “no, we are not being boastful, and no we don't need letters to validate out ministry”

Illustration: Jerry's near death experience. “Do you want me to go get a priest?” “No, We're Priests”

Practical Applications For Us

Even though Paul Is Defending Himself, We See Theological Truths To Consider in Our Own Lives

- 1. Paul's desire to find Titus DID NOT deal him from continuing his calling or obedience to God.**
 - Too often, our inner turmoil about an unresolved matter creates a paralysis for us.
- 2. We Are a Fragrant Aroma of Christ & Others Should Smell Us.**
 - This is NOT about a manufactured aroma or process we create for ourselves.
 - This has everything to do with what Christ has done on our behalf.
 - We just have to embrace it & walk in obedience.
- 3. We are living letters of Christ's Ministry of Reconciliation.**
 - We are living breathing examples of salvation. The gospel we share w/ others should be personal
 - We are completely equipped to honor & glorify God at any moment.
 - We don't need a resume, or titles after our names or special credentials. Use our story.