



2 Corinthians: Triumph in Trials

Week 4: Our Competence and Aroma

2 Corinthians 2:12- 3:6

Feedback from last week: Costly reconciliation.

Has last week's passage and session changed you in any way this week? Has it changed the way you have behaved or felt about situations where you have been hurt and left in pain?

Share your stories

Read 2 Corinthians 2:12- 17 (twice preferably!)

- 1) Is there anything that specifically spoke to you from the Sermon's on Sunday?

Questions (choose some from):

- 2) How does Paul sense the Holy Spirit guiding him (v12)? Have you ever experienced something similar?
- 3) What do you think it means for you to be the 'aroma of Christ' in the world? Think about your frontline – the places you find yourselves in the week. What does 'being the aroma of Christ' specifically look like for you in your contexts?
- 4) Why does it say in v16 that the aroma brings 'death' to some and 'life' to others?

Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-6 (twice preferably!)

This continues to pick up the discussion about the challenge to Paul's leadership from the 'Super Apostles' who came with their great 'references and CV's' (their 'Letters of Recommendation') and used these to discredit Paul.

- 5) What do you think Paul means by saying 'you yourselves are our letter' (v2-3) [Think... it is like saying 'you are the fruit of our ministry... you are the evidence that God's grace has been working through us']
- 6) Think about your own lives and witness... who might you say is 'your letter' – who has borne fruit because of your witness? How do you feel about your response?
- 7) What do you think it means that these 'letters' are written 'not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God' (v3)?
- 8) What do you think it means that 'our competence comes from God' (v5-6)? Do you rely on your own competence or God's competence? What would it look like to rely on God's competence more?

Respond and Encounter:

Some suggestions:

- 1) Put some quiet worship music on. Take a bottle of perfume or spray deodorant in one corner of the room. Allow the aroma to spread from that corner to every person in the room. As this happens, encourage each person to reflect on what it means to be the aroma of Christ on their frontlines. After a few minutes of reflection, split the group into 2s and 3s to share their reflections and pray for each other.
- 2) Give out some post it notes. Invite each person to write on them their name, their frontline and one way in which they can be the 'aroma' of Christ on their frontlines this week. Stick all the post it notes up in one place and reflect on them and pray for each other. Give the post it notes back to different people and invite them to pray for that person in that place this week.
- 3) Take some time to be still (you could put some quiet music on in the background) and invite people to prayerfully reflect on what it means for them to live from God's competence rather than their own this week. It may be appropriate for some to confess where they have been doing things in their own confidence and competence. Pray over each other that the Holy Spirit would empower them afresh and give them life this week.

Key verses to meditate on this week:

'For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing' (2 Corinthians 2:15)