

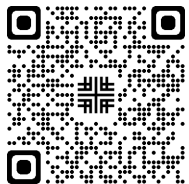
HOME CHURCH

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

NT Wright writes, “The sense of smell was highly valued in the ancient world. The very mention of “sweet-smelling knowledge” in this passage of 2 Corinthians could have awakened many different associations in the minds of ancient readers. Paul may well have more than one scent in mind.

They might have thought of sacrifice in a temple, perhaps in the temple in Jerusalem. People believed that the divinity would smell the sweet smell of the sacrifice and be pleased. Or they might have simply thought of incense, which was regularly used to indicate the presence of the divinity, in both pagan and Jewish worship.

1. What smell brings back the most vibrant and clear memories for you?
2. Remember the ancient practice of the victorious general (in the Roman Republic or the Emperor in the Empire) welcomed back to the city with their troops and prisoners in tow. How is Paul using this “triumph” march in 12-17?
3. 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 presents a challenge to us. What is it? How do we live it out?
4. What is the problem Paul is responding to in 2 Corinthians 3:1-6?
5. Ben Witherington III tells us that this is the *Propositio*—the statement to be proved true or false by the arguments that follow in the discourse. A *Propositio*, a statement about past behaviour about which some sort of charge/accusation has been made (BW3, 371).
6. He calls them his letter of recommendation. What does that mean? What would it mean today?
7. 2 Corinthians 3:3-6; Jeremiah 31:33 is alluded to here—a new covenant which is greater than the Covenant God made with Moses is here. A law put into “hearts”. What does that mean for how we live?
8. What else did you think of or feel when you heard this message on Sunday?



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SECOND CORINTHIANS SERIES

THE SMELL TEST

2 CORINTHIANS 2:14-3:6

There is a “corpse flower” named “Uncle Fester” at Bloedel Conservatory in Vancouver that reeks of rotting flesh when it blooms. Its smell is irresistible to the insects which pollinate it. The ancient church leader, Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians says, God uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. “For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life.”

Does our community pass The Smell Test?

TAKE OFF: Stories

THE TEXT: 2 *Corinthians* 2:14-3:6

REVIEW

OUTLINE

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 Triumphal Faith

2 Corinthians 3:1-3 Ministry Credentials

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 Confidence and Competence in Ministry from God

FLIGHT: Through The Text

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 Triumphal Faith/God Sent Paul

2 Corinthians 2:17 is the *Propositio*—the statement to be proved true or false by the arguments that follow in the discourse.

A statement about past behaviour about which some sort of charge/accusation has been made (BW3, 371). Paul is being accused of not being an apostolos. He is being called a false agent.

2 Corinthians 3:1-3 Credentials Please

Letters of recommendation very similar to today

Paul appeals to two sorts of proofs; the Old Testament and the Corinthians themselves, and their faith to witness to the authenticity of his ministry (BW3 375).

NT Wright (27) Paul was clearly hurt by the accusations that he was “writing another self-recommendation.” He comes back to it several times in 2 Corinthians 6 more in fact (total 7?).

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, in Corinthian letters

Gordon Fee tells us it is referred to in various ways over 140 times. Paul speaks of the Spirit present in the individual, and in the midst of the people. **Ezekiel 37:14**

2 Corinthians 3:4-6 Confidence and Competence in Ministry from God
Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:26-27

LANDING: Living it

Knowledge of Christ: the responsibility of a minister

Divisive Message

Kingdom Competency