

2 Corinthians 2:14-16

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[0 : 00] me to the book of 2 Corinthians. 2 Corinthians. As you're turning there, I do want to encourage you to come back tonight. I want you to come back and again. I was approached and asked about the possibility of this night, and I said, you know, if that's your passion, that's what you're excited about, God's brought you here as a church, then we're going to come beside you and behind you, and we're going to do those things. I try to be a person of my word and do those things, so I want to encourage you to do that.

You're taking your Bibles, you're going to the 2 Corinthians chapter 2. 2 Corinthians chapter 2 is where we will be at this morning, just continuing to make our way through the word of God together. Now, you're going to notice that I'm, some of you are very diligent in your note taking. As a matter of fact, some of you are more diligent in your note taking than I am in my sermon preparation notes. This is all I have prepared for my sermon.

Some of you have much more notes than I have, and I would love to see your notes. Maybe I could learn something, other than some scribbles that I have in a notebook before I type this out. You guys are so good. Some of you are going to notice, you're going to say, Pastor skipped two verses. That he left off in verse 11, and he's not picking up verses 12 and 13, because our text this morning is going to be verses 14, 15, and the first half of 16. So let me go ahead and get the air out there.

[1 : 13] If you read verse, I'm not asking you to stand yet, because this is not our text. If you read verses 12 and 13, it says, now, when I came to Troy, I was for the gospel of Christ, and when the door was opened for me, I had no rest from my spirit, not finding Titus my brother, but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia. Okay, now turn over with me to the seventh chapter.

Look at verse five. For even when we came into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side, conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus. So the thought that Paul starts in 12 and 13, he does not complete until chapter 7, verses 5 and 6. Paul got carried away with an aside, is what happened. Okay?

And so, we will pick up Paul's thoughts in 12 and 13 when we get to the seventh chapter, because we're going to skip over what he was introducing until we can get to the rest of the story, because it picks up in chapter 7. So, as you know this, the Bible wasn't written in chapter and verse breaks, it was written as a letter. And if you ever read it as a letter, and you read it without the natural breaks that man has put in, I've had copies of Scripture given to me that are that way.

They don't have chapters, they don't have verses, and I think, man, how did any pastor ever preach out of this? Because he couldn't point to the congregation where he was going. But when you read it in its natural writing, it's a lot easier to go back and go, okay, this is where that fits together.

So, we will get them. Don't get out of shape. I will come back and get them. It's going to take us some time, because this, as some Bible scholars call it, the great interruption is good. It's the meat of 2 Corinthians.

[2 : 49] So, if you're physically able to desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together? We're only going to read a couple of verses, two and a half. We're going to start in verse 14. 2 Corinthians chapter 2, starting at verse 14. But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved, and among those who are perishing.

To the one, an aroma from death to death to another, an aroma from life to life. We'll finish it. And who is adequate for these things? Let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for this day. God, what a great honor, and great glory, and joy it has been to gather together with Your people thus far. Lord, as we have read the Word, and we hear the Word, Lord, we pray now that You would speak through it.

We pray that You would open our hearts and minds to understand it, and that our lives will be exposed to You to live it out for Your glory and Yours alone. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Now, we're leaving off the second half of the 16th verse, and that is, and who is adequate for these things? The reason being is because Paul doesn't answer that until we get into the third chapter, and we are adequate because of this. So, we'll pick that up in just a moment. But we're starting here in 2 Corinthians, chapter 2, verses 14, 15, and 16a. And what a joy it is to continue looking at the Word of God. And we're seeing here this interruption as Paul is interrupting his thought. We will get back to that later.

[4 : 25] If you remember in context, Paul has been writing to the church at Corinth, and he is encouraging them to live with authenticity. Paul has encouraged them to live out their faith in reality as it is. He wants them not to live a false profession of faith, but an authentic profession of faith. He is not admonishing, he's not rebuking, but he is encouraging the church.

But he is also writing in light of some people who have spoken against Paul's apostolic authority, if you will. That is, they say, well, Paul was just bluffing us when he wrote the first letter. He didn't really intend to come.

And he's writing in response that he has spent the bulk of chapter 1 and even into chapter 2 defending his not appearing. He has been defending his apostolic position. He is defending the reality of why he didn't come. He did not come because he wanted to spare them sorrow.

And again, he completes that starting in verses 12 and 13 with the coming of Titus, just to put it in a historical setting, what Paul is telling us here. And if you want to see the context for this, you have to go to Acts chapter 16. You remember the Macedonian vision, right? Acts chapter 16. This is where we kind of see what's happening historically with what Paul is writing here to the church at Corinth. So what Paul is saying is that he was so distraught over the sorrow that he possibly caused in the church at Corinth that he could find no peace until Titus, the one who he had sent with the first letter, came back and reported to him, no, they accept you, Paul.

[5 : 50] They repented of their ways and he found great encouragement of that. So we'll get to that later. But he gets to this interruption here because with all of this in view, this reality that he is not only defending why he didn't come, he is beginning to defend who he is as a person and how he is living out his faith. And this quote unquote great interruption really is this discourse on the unique position of the believers. I want you to see that this morning. The unique position of the believer. Do you want to read the end of this chapter getting to third chapter, fourth chapter, fifth chapter, sixth chapter, by the way, the fifth chapter is great, right? Because the fifth chapter is that which says that we groan in our body, not that we want to be exposed naked but we don't want to be unclothed, but we want to be clothed and we're hard pressed to stay here or to go there, whatever it is. And there's this great longing for glory and this great longing to be in the presence of Christ that it is a win win situation for the believer.

But what Paul is declaring here is not only what Paul has been doing with his life, but what the believer in Christ is enabled to do with their life. That is to be not necessarily on mission, but to be the missionaries where God has put them. Not to have to go anywhere, but to really just to be a part of the ministry of leading people to Christ and being those who are exposing people to Christ. And we see it here as Paul introduces it. Now I know it's only just a couple of verses, but these verses are so rich when they speak of really what he's going to kind of flesh out in the next several chapters. And that is the unique position which we enjoy in which Paul says that he is attempting to live for the glory of God and what he is encouraging the believers at Corinth to live for the glory of God. Now you need to understand this, that what we read of when Paul refers to himself as an aroma of Christ and he begins to refer to himself as living for the glory of the Father. He's not saying this is what I do and you don't have to do it. He is saying this is how we live our lives for the glory of the Father. It is a not here's here am I and there are you type of thing. Remember he's encouraging the church to live authentically and an authentically lived life is a life that is lived for the glory of the Father and not for the glory of man. And it is one that is lived to display what we have in Christ. And it is a life calling of every believer. I believe in the biblical doctrine of the priesthood of the believer. I believe it that we are all called to be Paul. Peter writes of it in 1st Peter and we find it in the Old Testament that God had called the nation of

Israel out of Egypt. Remember this when we went through the book of Exodus. This is a little side right here. He brought them out of Egypt in order to bring them into the promised land. Remember that? He redeemed them and then he gave them this promise. I said it this past Wednesday night.

You should remember it if you were here. He said you will be a nation of priests. And because of their failures they became a nation with priests. Right? That God wanted them to be a nation of priests to the world that the world would know who he was. One of the gracious things, most gracious things that God ever did was call Abram out of the land of the earth of Chaldeans and raise up a nation out of him which we refer to as Israel. It is not because God was picking and choosing who's good and who's not and wasn't picking teams because if you know Abram in the land of the earth of the Chaldeans there's nothing desirable found up in him because he lived amidst idolatrous people and he himself more than likely was an idolatrous individual but for the grace of God. But what God did was raise up a nation to show the world what he looks like and what it looks like to live in a relationship to him. And he called them out of Egypt so that they would be a nation of priests and that they would be those who ministered between a holy God and sinful man and they would minister and bridging the gap so to say. What does Job cry out? Notice book in scripture. Job says oh I wish that there was an umpire between us. Love that word. I like baseball. I wish that there was an umpire between us. One who could lay his hand upon God and could lay his hand upon man and could stand in the gap and bridge it because I cannot go before God. I know who I am. Job is the oldest historical book in scripture which shows us this is the cry of man's heart from the very beginning. I need someone to stand between me and God.

God called the nation of Israel out of Egypt for that. They failed to walk in obedience so they became a nation with priests. They needed someone to stand in the gap for them inside the holy of holies. Then we get to the New Testament that umpire has come. That umpire is Jesus Christ. He stands. He puts a hand upon the father. He puts a hand upon man and now he calls us those who have his hand resting upon us to be the visible representation of the position that he holds and we refer to that as a priesthood of the believers right. We are to those who minister into a world of lost humanity so that the gap can be closed between a holy God and sinful man. We are the visible representation of the kingdom of heaven in the world which is a unique position and Paul is beginning to define what it looks like.

Now you say I can't do that. Well got good news. Paul couldn't either because he says who is adequate for these things. That's next Sunday if the Lord allows us to tear you right because our adequacy is not found in us. We don't want to get ahead of ourselves. I understand that overwhelming feeling who is adequate for these things but let's not go to that.

[11:05] Let's not go to self-pity yet. Let's just see what this position entails. A number of things that I want you to see as we just look at this position that we hold. Number one I want you to see that this is a surrendered life. This is a surrendered life. Look at what Paul declares. But thanks be to God. So he starts this praise. This as he defines our position he starts with this proclamation of praise. But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. But thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ. The imagery that Paul is portraying and dispelling displaying here is the imagery of a Roman leader who has won a great victory and it's his victory parade if you will. This is the whole passage. It's about his victory parade. As he's coming into the capital city he has all of his captives in front of him and he has the chariots coming behind the captives and they're burning incense as he comes in and behind all of the captives is the victorious king who is riding upon his throne or his chariot and he is there showing the spoils of his battle. That he has come with all these people because he is the victor. He has won the battle and these are the people that have surrendered to him and he is taken captive. These are the people who have come in. Roman leaders throughout the ages have come. Some have come with elephants pulling their chariots. Some have come with lions pulling their chariots. Some have come with other unique instruments and there's always this pulp and this display of the battle they've won. But one thing that is in common is before them are the captives that they won the spoils of warfare and they're putting it on parade and the people would line the streets. It would be the modern day equivalent of a ticker tape parade, right? Back then they didn't celebrate who won the sport contest but they celebrated the king who won the battle. We have almost entertained ourselves into weakness is the way I like to say it. But anyway the victor would come in and all the spoils before him would be there and people would see that this these are the people that not only he is captive but these are the people that have surrendered. And

Paul makes this declaration but thanks be to God. Think about this. Where does Paul put himself? Paul says I'm not the one in the chariot. I'm the captive that's before the king. I'm not the one who's riding in the horse-drawn chariot. I'm not the one with a laurel on my head. I'm not the one that

everybody's casting flowers at but I'm the one who is being led in Christ. That is Christ is the king. He is the victor. I'm the captive. Paul says I have been captivated by Christ. And this is a life of surrender. Now let's just go ahead and by the way this is an exciting message to me in case you haven't figured it out. Try to slow it down just a little bit. Has nothing to do with the sake of time brother. I haven't even looked at it. It's just it's good. It's rich. So what we see here is Paul says it's not me in the chariot. It's me in the parade. So I'm the guy in the front. And so what we understand here is that Christ has won the battle. Now in case you realize it Christ isn't fighting you. It's not fighting you. So many people think that God is fighting them or Christ is fighting against them. He's fighting for you. This is a position of surrender. That is the battle that Jesus has won is not a battle against you. He's won the battle against the enemy of your souls who held you captive. It tells us in Ephesians 4:8 that Christ came to set the captives free to carry the captives captive. He doesn't set the captives free so they can go run and lead their lives however they want to. He came and set the captives free. He led captive a host of captives it tells us when they were brought out of Egypt God didn't say okay cross the Red Sea and go live however you want to. That's the whole picture of redemption right. If all God wanted to do was set some slaves free he would have brought them to the Red Sea got them across drowned Pharaoh and his army said okay you guys have fun there's wilderness out there go find you good land settle it. No he brought them out and told to bring them in. Don't forget that picture. He brought them out of Egypt to bring them into the promised land. What happened in between was their sanctification. God had a purpose in mind. He didn't just want to set them free he wanted to bring them in. When God sets you free from your enemy of your souls who is Satan when he fought the battle and he won the victory he has led you captive. He didn't set you free so you could live your life however you wanted to live your life. He brought you out of captivity with Satan to bring you into the captivity of his relationship. He wanted to bring you into his presence. He wanted to have you living with him and in relation to him. He didn't set you free so you could go live however you wanted to. He set you free so that he could put you in front of Christ and say these are those who have surrendered to me because he is a worthy king. When Jesus walks to the temple there and he gets a scroll of the book. He's actually given a scroll and he opens up the scroll to the prophet Isaiah. You remember that? Jesus begins to declare his ministries in Luke chapter 4 I believe it's verse 18. Luke 4:18 the first declaration of his public ministry.

Jesus opens up the scroll of Isaiah and he reads from it that God had given him one of these ministries right to set the captive free. Friend listen to me we are captive. We're either the captive of Satan or the captive of Christ but either way we're surrendering to something and what Paul is saying here is that this is a life surrendered. It is a life surrendered to a king who is victorious. It is not a life saying that I'm going to live my life however I want to live my life. It's not a life saying that I'm in charge of this. This is a life that understands that it has been held captive by a slave. It has been enslaved to sin all of his life and one came in a stronger man entered the house and bound the strong man right because your enemy is stronger than you. I don't know if you acknowledge that or not but he is but a stronger one showed up and bound him and he led you out and now he put you in front of him and he put you on display for all the world to see. We don't walk with heads down going oh I'm a captive of Christ. No we walk with heads high saying I've got a great king now because the one who used to parade me around was just trying to give me a number but he's given me a name and he's recorded it in the Lamb's book of life in heaven. See I have been held captive by Christ and I surrender my life. That's why when we sing the hymn I surrender all. I don't like it when we sing it all down and out. What did you give up to come to Jesus Christ?

[17:09] You gave up filthiness and rags and a wicked heart and a desperate life. You gave up all this and I surrender all to him I give. Well then give it to him because he gives you everything. Look at what he gives you and what you surrender. You don't give up anything in comparison to what you gain. So when you are on parade then my friend you may not be wearing the laurel. The praise may not be declared to you but you walk with head high and chest out saying I surrender to the one who's behind me because it's not about you but it's about him. It's a life of surrender.

Number two it's a life of submission. See surrender says this. Surrender says you're greater than me and I can't stop you so I give up. Some people are there. Jesus is greater. He's stronger. He's more powerful than me so I just give up and that's good. We all need to get to a place of surrender and in his mercy and his grace God ordains that we get to that place at some time. And we get to this reality that he's greater than me. He's stronger than me so I give up. Submission

doesn't just say you're greater than me and I can't resist you therefore I give up. Submission says this. You're my Lord and master and you command me and I obey. Big difference between surrender and submission.

Surrender says I can't stop you. Submission says whatever you want me to do I'll do. And this is exactly what Paul says we've come to this place of surrender we're being led in triumph in Christ. But look at what he says and God manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him in every place. That's submission. What Paul is saying is no matter where he leads me no matter where I'm at there's this aroma that's coming from some Christian smell. Not all the smells good right. Some of us stink at it. Some of us stink in a good way. Some of us stink in a bad way. But either way he says I'm the aroma of the knowledge of Christ in every place. Now in context Paul is speaking here in Acts chapter 16 we was commonly referred to as the Macedonian vision. When they went into this Asian region the doors were closed but he Paul tells us that there was some opportunity given to him that went there and they had unsettled spirits so Paul was praying about it and he saw in the vision of the night a man from Macedonia crying out saying come to me and he went to him. He was like oh that's good God led him in such a good way because wherever God leads he provides right. So what did God provide when they got to

Macedonia? Well there was a lady who came to Christ in prayer and there was this demonic girl that was following around and Paul cast the demons out and then the owners of this demonic slave girl got upset so they threw Paul and Silas in jail so God led them straight to a jail cell. That's where they're at right? And you remember it's in Philippi. So they're there in the Philippian jail and they're praising God in the middle of the night. Why? Because in every place he is the aroma of knowing Christ. In a place of prayer he could declare that Christ was worthy and in the place of the prison in the middle of the night he could sing that Christ was worthy because in every place where God leads them they were putting off the aroma of the knowledge of Christ. The life of submission says this no matter where you have me I'm going to live in such a manner that those around me cannot escape the reality that I know you. That no matter where I'm at if I'm in a place of prayer or if I'm walking down the street and this person is following me or if you throw me into the prison cell no matter where I'm at the reality of the knowledge of Christ is going to permeate from me. And see this is such a great display. I told you Wednesday night we had to see this in context because it is while they are praising God in the middle of the night that a great earthquake comes and the walls fall down and the jailer runs in. He sees all the walls and prison doors open and the jailer is going to kill himself and Paul says his greatest miracle wasn't that the doors were open. The greatest miracle wasn't that the walls fell. The greatest miracle is what Paul said here. Paul says don't kill yourself for we are all here. There were more prisoners there besides Paul and Silas. None of them left. Right? Why? Because God was ministering to the jailer and he was calling him to himself and this is what shook the jailer to his core. Not that the doors were open. Not that the walls fell down. But then nobody left. There's something about this situation that doesn't seem right. He comes to Christ.

[21 : 06] He's baptized. The Bible tells us he and his whole household are baptized. The aroma of Christ, the knowledge of knowing him was being displaced as much in the jail cell as in the place of prayer where Lydia came to Christ who was a seller of purple. And what Paul is saying is I have submitted my life to the point that no matter where I'm at the knowledge of Christ is going to be known. The reality that I know him. Now that's not just a life of surrender. That's a life of submission. Because sometimes he leads us to a place of prayer. Sometimes he leads us to a busy street. Sometimes he leads us to a jail cell. Sometimes he leads us to comfortable places. Sometimes he leads us to uncomfortable places.

Sometimes he leads us to moments of torment. Sometimes he leads us to moments of pleasure. Paul says the submitted life says no matter where it's at I want the reality of the knowledge of Christ to be permeated through me. And that's a hard thing. That's not just saying oh but Jesus is greater and stronger than me and I can't stop him. That is submitting and saying no matter where he puts me people are going to know that I know him. Quick question. This is a really a an inspection question that I have to ask myself. In every circumstance of my life is it clear that I know Christ? How I'm handling this situation? Is it clear? If it's not then there's a point in my life I haven't submitted yet. In each and every situation. Paul says I'm being led in this victory parade. It's not my victory. It's his victory. He's greater than me but I'm also being led in my life so that no matter where I'm at the reality that I know him should be evident. Why? Number three.

This is a sanctified life. It's a surrendered life. It's not our battle but he's won it. We've just surrendered it. It's a submitted life. That is we're going to do what he wants us to do wherever he wants us at. And it's a sanctified life. Look at what it says in verse 15. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. Paul goes back and forth between illustrations. He's speaking of the victor's parade. Now he goes into the tabernacle or the temple. He says for we are a fragrance of Christ to God. A number of things inside the temple. The altar of incense there that the priest would go.

[23 : 31] Zachariah was there. Remember in the book of Matthew. And he's burning the altar, the incense on the altar of incense. And it is said that the incense would be a representation of the prayers of the people of Israel ascending to the father. But the wording is that it's a soothing aroma. That God is pleased with the smell. You go back to the book of Leviticus and you read of all of the sacrifices and all the requirements in a number of them. The only one that's not by the way is the sin offering. The sin offering is never described as a soothing aroma to the Lord because our sin stinks.

The guilt offering. But the others, the fellowship offering, the peace offering, those things, it is always defined as a soothing aroma to the Lord. That is, it ascends to him and he smells it. It's an offering to God. Now Paul is talking of the life of the believer and he says for we are a fragrance of Christ. Not to the world. Friend, listen to me. This is where we have to differentiate this. We are not to be the aroma of Christ to God. That is, our sacrifice. We aren't giving ourselves to the world. We give ourselves to the Lord God Almighty and he uses us in the world.

That's a big difference. Because if you're giving yourself to the world, I promise you, you will tire out, you will wear out and people will discourage you and people will wear you out and you will want to throw your hands up and you will say, I'm done with it. You know why I can say that? It's because I've been to that point a number of times. Nothing against any of you, nothing against anybody I've ever pastored. But if you try to convince yourself that you're giving yourself to these people, people let us down. But when we affirm ourselves that I am given to God for these people, that's a big difference. Because God does not fail us, nor forsake us, nor does he let us down.

Big news flash for you, a number of pastors deal with depression throughout history, even in today. A lot of depression. Depression among ministry leaders. Just very clear. The darkness is there. Most of them define it as right before the dawn. Charles Spurgeon used to say my darkest moments came before the dawning of the brightest day. That is, the enemy works hard. I know a number of them deal with depression. I know a number of them struggle with that. And reality is, is because the weight, who is sufficient for these things, right? We understand this. Paul gets to that. A lot of people who give themselves to others deal with depression, deal with darkness, because who can do this? Nobody can do this on our own, because what it does is it just highlights our own weakness. But the Bible declares for us that we are an aroma of Christ to God. That is, we are sanctified. To be sanctified means to be set apart for specific service. Sanctified. I like to define it this way. You've heard me say it. And people always chuckle at it. You laugh at it, but see how serious I am. You see the offering plates. Many of you handled the offering plate just a minute ago. Pass the plates. You put your offering in it. All it is is a wood plate with a cloth liner in it. It's just a plate. We'll have a fellowship meal here next Sunday night. There'll be plates out there too, and people will be filling their plates with food. But if you come up here and you get one of the offering plates and you go back there and put fried chicken on it, you're going to be in trouble. Maybe not with me. But somebody's going to get upset. Because that plate, while it is still a plate, is set apart for something else. To be sanctified means to be set apart. And you are sanctified in Christ. Not for the world, but you are set apart for God. While in the world. You have been sanctified. It is a life sanctified to God. While lived among man. And we need to understand that. Because if we don't, we will tire ourselves out trying to please man rather than living for the glory of God. We are set apart for his glory. Even if the world rejects us. Even if the world hates us. Even if the world persecutes us and denies us.

We're not here for them anyway. We're here for God. We are set apart for him. We are sanctified. It is a life sanctified. Fourth and finally, and I'll be done. It is a specified life. That is, it's got a purpose. There is a specific purpose to the surrendered, submitted, and sanctified life. Look at what the word of God says. It says, we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. By the way, I want you to notice a little aside. You are to live that way among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. That doesn't mean

you're saving anybody and it doesn't mean you're condemning anybody. Because salvation and condemnation is not of man. You just live among those who are being saved or being judged. So which defines for us the specific purpose. Because if salvation was of man, that is, if you could go out and save some folks, then the salvation of man would wholly depend upon you. You would be set apart for them. And it would be becoming on you to save as many as you could. We'll get some people in here and we're going to save them. No, we ain't going to save anybody. Salvation is of the [29:19] Lord. It was thought of by the Lord God Almighty. It was enacted by the Son of Jesus Christ. And it is brought forth by the Holy Spirit. Completely and fully of the Lord God. But we are those who are sanctified among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. That is, we have a reason for being there. It says, to the one an aroma from death to death. That is, those who deny the gospel, those who forsake Christ, those who want nothing to do with it. We are repugnant to their senses. We smell like death. Go back to the victor's parade. The same smelling aroma of victory to the captives that went before the victorious king smelled like death to them because in the Roman world they were being led to the Colosseum and thrown to the wild beast. So what was sweet soothing aroma to the crowd didn't smell too good to them. People who deny Christ, deny the gospel, want nothing to do with it. When they encounter us, it doesn't smell good. When they encounter us, it bothers them. When they encounter us, it brings what we call conviction because they'd rather us not be there because it just smells like death. The Bible declares in Romans chapter 1 that God has revealed what may be known of himself to all of man throughout all creation. But man also will not be excused on the account of ignorance because God has left his church here to be a display of his glory. We are to be those instruments who so reflect Christ in the knowledge of knowing him that the world is without excuse. Too often the church is the excuse the world gives rather than being the one thing that makes the world be without excuse. So that when we live in such a way that the knowledge of knowing Christ does not offend people as it causes them to say, well, I want nothing to do that because of them. But it lives in such a way that people cannot claim ignorance because they would never be able to say, well, I didn't know.

And God will say, well, did you not encounter my priest? Did you not encounter the church? Were they not there? Were they not ministering to one an aroma from death to death and to another aroma from life to life? That is to those who are being saved. We are to be the hope and the encouragement and the anticipation of things coming. We ought to be those who walk beside them and undergird them and support them and say better days are ahead. We ought to be those who smell like the victory is coming. They will encounter us in such a way that it will be encouraging. This is why we forsake not the assembling together one another. We need to smell each other's presence every now and then because the world stinks out there, right? And we need to come together. You know, everybody has a smell about them. You just do. Everybody, you know it, you know, you walk into somebody's house and you know, you kind of, their nose bond to it. You're not, you know, I'm not saying it's a good smell or bad smell. Everybody has a smell. You just do. It's just one of those things. You say, well, pastor, I can't believe you're going here. Well, you do. When I'm working, you know, I'm cutting logs. I have a certain smell about me. Carrie one time asked her to define my smell. She said, it's somewhere between sweat, sawdust and shower soap. Somewhere in there. You know, it's not really, you know, pleasing to a lot of people, but that's you. I know that's you. You smell like chainsaw oil, sawdust and books. That's me. That's, that's what I smell like. My wife has a smell. So when she walks into the room, even if I don't see her, I know she's there. Oh, I'm in the presence of my wife. I'll be studying in my office every now and then on Sunday mornings. I won't even look up. I hear the door open because if I hear the slightest of knocks and then the door open, I know it's Carrie coming in. If somebody bangs on my door, they need to talk to me. She'll just slightly knock and she'll come on in because she knows the door's always open and she come in and I know that's my wife. Why? Because I smell her presence and things change because I'm in the presence of my wife because now the two that have become one are now one. We're back together. We need that with one another, right? We need to be in the presence of one another so that when we come together, we smell life. We go out there, we smell death because the world is not only its way to glory, but when we come together with one another, we're all on the same road to glory and we're encouraged because we know we're in the presence of like-minded believers to another life to life. It's a specified purpose. And we see here, this is the unique position of the believer and what a position it is. Let's pray.

Oh, Lord God Almighty, we thank you for this day. We thank you that you've called us to such a unique position. Proclaim as Paul that we're fit and unworthy of this position, but God, you've done it anyway. So, Lord, I pray now that you empower us by the power and presence of your spirit to live it out for your glory, that we would live it out in the world that you've placed and put us, that we would be the aroma of the knowledge of Christ to those who come into contact with us, that none may be unaffected by our presence. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[35 : 35] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.