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Dear Friends,

In my last letter I focused on our being a bright light in a dark confusing world and I hope it gave you some comfort and courage! This time I'm thinking of how we smell! Sounds weird but the apostle Paul mentions the importance of our fragrance in a smelly world.

As a kid I had nose bleeds and the doctor used acid to fix the problem 🤢 since then I have had a poor sense of smell so, this topic of being a fragrance for God has been a mystery to me until I read today's devotional.

2Co 2:14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

2Co 2:15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

From Experiencing God Day By Day by H. and R. Blackaby.

"Whenever the Romans won a major military victory they would celebrate with a spectacular parade. The commanding general would lead the procession in a magnificent chariot, followed by his soldiers, musicians, and other officials. Then, soldiers would lead the defeated enemies through the city in bondage. As a part of the celebration, the Romans would burn fragrances on altars, filling the entire city with a pleasant aroma. Even those who could not witness the triumphal procession could hear the victory music and smell the pleasing incense. Everyone would know that their army had been victorious. The special fragrance came to symbolize victory to anyone who smelled it. **Paul used this vivid imagery to describe the effect that Christians should have in the world.**

According to Paul, God permeates our lives with the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, our lives should demonstrate to others that Christ is victorious. As unbelievers observe our lives, they should become aware of the victorious power of Christ. As other Christians witness the victory Christ gives us over our sin, they can rejoice in the triumph of their Lord and gain confidence that Christ will bring victory in their lives as well. **The most compelling evidence that Christ is alive and triumphant is His activity in the lives of His people.** It is a privilege to be the fragrance of Christ by which others learn of God's life-changing power over sin. Your life ought to be convincing proof that God continues to work powerfully in the lives of His people."

Having visited several foreign countries I quickly became aware of different smells, even with my blessing of reduced olfactory senses, many draft animals and other stinky smells leave lasting reminders of their presence. I can only imagine that people back in Paul's time appreciated the pleasant smell of incense floating in the air.

We are encouraged by scripture to be a breath of sweet air in a 'spirituality' smelly world. Being filled with the Holy Spirit brings His fruit into our surroundings like fresh air. Galatians 5:22-25

So, follow Paul's encouragement in Ephesians 5:2 ... walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Thank you and God bless you as you travel in this stinky world. *Richard*