

Sermon: What's That Smell?

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:12-3:6

Discussion Questions:

- It is clear that Paul's reputation has been under attack by some of the people in the church in Corinth. In chapter 1 verse 12, Paul defends himself by stating that his conscience is completely clear because he has conducted himself with integrity (or holiness) and godly sincerity. What does this tell us about the accusations that have been made against him?
- How might all of us live our lives by relying on God's grace and not worldly wisdom? (v. 13) What are some examples of what this looks like in our daily lives? How hard is this to do?
- Another accusation that appears to be leveled against Paul is that he is fickle, weak, vacillating and even a liar. This stems from the "promise" that they say Paul made with regards to visiting them. How does Paul respond to this in verses 15-24?
- What does Paul say about the Holy Spirit in verse 22? Take some time to discuss how important this verse really is.
- According to 2 Cor. 2:1-4, why has Paul been so firm and confrontational with the Corinthians? How might this be viewed through the lens of "love must be tough"?
- Chapter 2 verses 5-11 is referring to a situation that we're not quite sure what it is. It seems as though an individual in the church has been way out of line—and the leadership has "inflicted" punishment on him. All of this might be the situation we read about in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 (go back and look at it). If this is the case, what did Paul say to them then? What is he saying now? What has changed?
- When Paul left Ephesus, he headed due north through the region that was then known as Asia (now western Turkey), and came to the port city of Troas—which is where Paul met Luke on his second missionary journey. What do verses 12-13 tell us about his stay on Troas on this occasion?
- Take some time to talk (or think) through verses 14-17. What does it mean for God to "lead us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession"? Is this something that God still does through us? How does God use you and me to spread the aroma of the knowledge of Jesus everywhere? This is really the big idea of this entire passage—the fact that wherever we go, we are representing Jesus. We are giving off the aroma of Christ. Take the rest of your time to discuss the many ways that this happens in our lives.