

The Aroma of Christ

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[0 : 00] Amen. Tonight, the study is going to be called The Aroma of Christ.

! Again, all these are about creating a gospel community.! All these messages that we've gone over. 2 Corinthians 2, verses 15-16.

It will be the text that this study will come from. Many of you are probably familiar with this passage. And there it says, For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To one, a fragrance from death to death. To the other, a fragrance from life to life. Okay. So, you guys remember the old Folgers commercials?

[1 : 02] Folgers coffee? The best part of waking up is Folgers in your cup. So, you know, there's always that scene as somebody, they had a rough night or something, and then it was early morning, and somebody made a fresh pot of coffee, and the whole house woke up to the aroma of Folgers coffee brewing, and all their troubles went away.

Because the coffee was brewing, and it smelled good. That's when they had a tan of women to brew a lot. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah, I'm for that. Some people, you know, have different opinions. So, think of like, you know, think of a smell that is good and bad. Some people love the smell of coffee.

Some people hate the smell of coffee. You know, some people, especially like, I know if you have those candle warmer things in your house like we do, there are some that smell really good, and there are some that one person might think smells really good, and the other person thinks that's way overpowering, and let's not ever have that smell in our house again.

Amen. So, we are an aroma, and to some, it's a good smell. To others, not so much.

[2 : 19] And so, as we press further into gospel doctrine and gospel culture, the question becomes, what can we expect? So, as we are trying to be a church, as we're called to be a light on a hill, we're sharing the gospel with our words, with our lives, we're reaching out, we can expect that results will come from that.

And so, that's what tonight's study is going to be about. So, when we're doing that, when we're reaching out, I think one thing we can plan, one thing that we can expect is to see more conversions.

That's certainly our hope, to see more baptisms, to experience more joy, to have a greater impact, and a greater outcome for the Lord in our community.

And we hope in doing all of these things, that God will be honored, that the name of Jesus Christ will be exalted. But we can also expect, that as those things go on, more trouble will come as well, as we are boldly witnessing for the good news of Jesus Christ.

So, as we share the gospel, God will spread the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ through us. Again, the gospel is a message about God's mercy, and love to save sinners from hell, and give them eternal life.

[3 : 37] We might expect, therefore, that the world would roll out the red carpet for us. What great news! What great news! We'd expect that people would want to hear this news, and that they would welcome us as we come, and we tell them about the reality of sin, and the hope that is found in Christ, and the good news that they can be saved from their sins, and have eternal life.

But, we won't always receive those kinds of reactions. To some, the gospel, as we share it with them, will be a fragrance, as the Bible says, from life to life, and others will have a completely different reaction.

To them, we will be a fragrance from death to death. And so, the more compelling our churches become through the gospel, the more intense those two reactions will be to us.

Going forward with the Lord means that the future will be both thrilling, and it means that it will also be more stressful than it is at the present. This is exactly what the Apostle Paul experienced himself as he traveled throughout the Mediterranean world, spreading the gospel and planting churches throughout that area.

One man with one message produced two strong responses. There were those who loved the message that he had to share.

[4 : 58] Churches were started, people were saved, and there were those who sought to kick him out of town, or even worse, put him to death. Jesus was the same way, wasn't he? He triggered strong responses during his earthly ministry.

There were strong responses of people who were for him, and there were strong responses, obviously, of those who were totally against him and what he had to say. So, we've got to understand, when we accurately preach the gospel, when we accurately share it with our words, with our lives, we can expect that we, too, will experience the same results as the Apostle Paul did, as our Lord Jesus did as well.

So, here's the main idea for tonight. When our ministries both please and provoke, we should not be surprised. Nothing is going wrong. Rather, something is going right.

God is spreading the fragrance of Christ through us. When our ministries both please and provoke, we should not be surprised. Nothing is going wrong. Rather, something is going right.

God is spreading the fragrance of Christ through us. So, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians 15, 16, to explain this and encourage us to keep steadily on course.

[6 : 11] And so, the first point that he makes to the Corinthians for us is that we are the aroma of Christ. It's the strong scent of Christ that people detect when our churches are filled with the gospel.

We are so unlike him in so many ways, yet still his scent is able to come through us. That's amazing. So, in what sense are we in a Roma? Well, that imagery that Paul uses of being an Roma comes from the Old Testament, if you remember.

It's used as early as the episode of Noah's sacrifice that was a pleasing aroma to God in Genesis 8, 21. It also shows up in the law about sacrifices in Leviticus.

And if you remember, it pleased God that Noah and the Levitical priests offered atoning sacrifices, bearing witness to God's merciful ways with sinners.

And so, likewise, it pleased God that Christ offered the ultimate atonement in himself on the cross. And it pleases God today when we offer ourselves and our churches as living sacrifices, as Romans 12, 1 suggests that we do.

[7 : 20] For the display of the gospel of Christ. These things bring pleasure to God the Father. So, throughout the Bible, God's pleasure comes to a focal point at the cross of Christ.

And again, this sacrifice was foreshadowed in the Old Testament times. Throughout all those sacrifices that took place then, we're pointing to our need of ultimately being saved from our sins, and Christ being the Lamb of God who would take away those sins.

God savors us as we lift up Jesus Christ crucified. He savors us as we lift up Jesus Christ crucified. That is the aroma that pleases Him in our churches. Churches where hearts burn with the gospel, give off the aroma of Christ Himself.

There is much about us that God graciously overlooks. What He notices and what pleases Him in our churches is our passion to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

[8 : 32] And He says that we are a aroma among those who are being saved. So we are a sweet fragrance of Christ Himself. People are cheered and they're helped by our gospel, as if the Lord Himself were present in our efforts, because His Spirit is living and active in us.

And so these people enter into and join in what we are doing, because to them we are a fragrance of life to life. We're also an aroma of those who are perishing.

We give off an offensive smell to others. People wonder what's wrong with us, why we don't get it like they do, why we don't change with the times as they have and be more open-minded as they claim that we aren't.

They turn up their noses often to us in what we believe. Yet even when people are offended, our efforts to share the gospel remain a sweet smell to God above. So we don't stop because people don't like it.

What insight do we gain from these two strong reactions? Well, what is the Bible saying that can help us amid these two polarizing extremes that are expressed toward the gospel?

[9 : 51] John Calvin said of the gospel, it is never preached in vain. He said the gospel is never preached in vain, meaning when the gospel is truly preached, people will react.

When they hear the gospel truly preached, they will give an honest reaction. Notice the present tense that Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 2.15.

He says people are being saved and they are perishing. Some people, he says, are on the road to eternal life. And so the gospel whispers to them, everything you most deeply hope for is becoming real.

And you even now, this very moment, stick with Christ. And they do. The gospel makes a felt impact on both kinds of people. To those who the gospel is a bad fragrance to them.

This is what's happening. They're realizing that everything that they are doing, everything that they are believing in is destroying them at that very moment that they are living and breathing. It shows them that they are wrong.

[11 : 01] It reveals to them that they will die and they are confronted with the reality that they need Christ. So that's why they have such a strong reaction to it because they don't like it.

The one thing the gospel never does is nothing. The one thing the gospel never does is nothing. Every time a person hears the gospel preached, it hardens them a little more or it softens them a little more.

Depending on our heart's condition before God, we cannot stay safely the same as if we were in control. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said this, Be careful how you treat God, my friends.

You may say to yourself, I can repent and go back and find God whenever I want Him. You try it. And you will sometime find that not only can you not find God, but that you do not even want to. You will be aware of a terrible hardness in your heart. And you can do nothing about it. And then you suddenly realize that it is God punishing you in order to reveal your sinfulness and your vileness to you.

[12 : 09] And there is only one thing to do. You turn back to Him and you say, Oh God, do not go on dealing with me judiciously, though I deserve it. Soften my heart. Melt me.

I cannot do it myself. You cast yourself utterly upon His mercy, He concludes, and upon His compassion. There he is. Did you guys know that Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones was a medical doctor? Did you know that? Yeah. And he was a doctor. And I got Jack this little children's book.

Torchbearers, I think it's what it's called. And they have, they're about all these different guys.

And I got him one on Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones. And he left the medical practice. You know him?

Yeah, you remember what I'm talking about? And he left it because, you know, he was called to the ministry. And he was happy to help people physically, but he cared more about their condition spiritually.

And so he was quite the man. Secondly, we see that from death to death, from life to life, this is the responses that we receive through our spreading the gospel.

[13 : 17] Exposure to the gospel makes the true condition of people's hearts more and more obvious, as Paul explains. Not only do people's responses to gospel-saturated churches reveal their hearts toward Christ himself, their responses also move them further and further along.

So they're either moving from death to death or they're moving from life to life. From death to death means that they are falling still deeper into death. They are driven by revulsion at the stench of the gospel.

They are spiraling downward, bad to worse, in a condition irreversible, apart from God's intervening mercy. And so as I was thinking about that, I was thinking about little kids, you know?

When we have little kids come to VBS and we have little kids come to Awana, and we share the gospel with them the very first time, how often do we get a real repulsive reaction from any of them? You know what I'm saying? I can't think of a time where kids are like, No! No, I won't have any of it. I won't believe any of that stuff. They don't start out that way.

[14 : 27] But as we get older, our hearts are hardened, and men, apart from God's intervening mercy, will become harder and harder and colder and colder to the gospel.

From life to life, so that means that those who are born again, their hearts are growing more alive, they're more sincere, more sensitive, drawn on and on by the sweet fragrance of Christ in the same gospel, the good news that belongs to them.

But no one is static. No one is not responding to the gospel. Everyone is moving further along on one path or the other.

So naturally, we want to remove from our churches every obstacle to accepting Christ and growing in Him. We want to adapt our communication wisely and humbly. We want to satisfy people's doubts and difficulties as much as we can, but we can never make a positive response impossible as we effectively communicate the gospel.

Does that make sense? We can never make a negative response impossible as we effectively communicate the gospel. So, I think I've said it before, and what I'm kind of alluding to is you'll go to certain places, and they especially do it a lot of times with teens, in conferences, and the gospel will be preached, there'll be an invitation of sorts, and they'll just keep after those kids to come forward. [16:04] You know what I'm saying? And they'll do it at men's conferences, they'll do it at women's conferences, but they just want to see people at the front, and I understand where they're coming from, because who doesn't want to see people coming to faith in Jesus Christ?

But we shouldn't manipulate them into coming forward to make that response, because even if we do, the fact that we manipulated them to come forward doesn't make them any more saved. It's only God who's able to save a person.

So, you know, we will offer an invitation, and we'll give people an opportunity to respond, but we're not going to coerce a response from them. You're welcome.

So I won't be sitting here like, I know there's somebody in here this morning. Play it again, Dan. Play it again until somebody comes forward. I don't believe in doing that. You may disagree with me, and that's okay, but I want you to see that we cannot, we cannot save somebody.

We can't force them. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. It's not ours to do. We cannot make a negative response impossible. An angry, cynical, from death to death, rejection is not our failure.

[17:14] We've got to understand that as well. Rejection is built into gospel ministry because of the nature of the fallen human heart. So I know a lot of times people are afraid of sharing the gospel because they think, well, I'll get rejected.

And we have this fear of rejection. Or maybe you put too much pressure on yourself. Like, maybe I don't know enough. And that person's going to ask me questions. I'm not going to be able to help them.

And so maybe I'll move them further down the path to hell than, you know, be able to be used by God to share anything positive or helpful with them.

And that's a lie from the devil because when you share the gospel, you're batting a thousand. Even if that person rejects you, you've done what you've been called as a Christian to do.

And it's up to the Holy Spirit to do the rest. And so don't ever let that be an excuse for you not sharing the gospel. The ministry, and again, we can look at countless examples of people.

[18:13] We can look at Richard Wurmbrand. We can look at others who have been tortured for Christ. And we don't at all look at them and say, you were a failure in what God calls you to do. No, we are thankful for those who are courageous and bold as they share the gospel.

So we need to do the same as well. The ministry of the gospel in our churches involves more than doctrinal argumentation. The work of the gospel is subtle, like the work of a fragrance.

It is not just brute facts landing hard on someone's mind, but an aroma wafting into the heart. And the light contact proves to be life or death. Such is the astonishing power of the gospel of God.

So a short and sweet message tonight. We do have some questions for us to discuss, though. And they should be on your page there. The first question is, how is the church a fragrant aroma to God?

How is the church a fragrant aroma? Ready, Wes? Sure. Sure. I think about it on the choir side of things.

[19:25] We used to sing a song called Sweet Aroma of Praise. So as we're praising God, it's a sweet aroma in his nostrils. He's really enjoying that. And as choir members, we're not really performing for the congregation.

We're praising God. And hopefully the congregation just kind of joins in, too. And all that is just a wonderful thing to him. It's a sweet aroma as we praise him and we're singing. Good.

He's getting the glory. He's the object of our worship. We're not here to celebrate ourselves or who we are or what we've done. Right? Good. That is a pleasing aroma to God. Any other thoughts?

Answers to that question? All right, Jerry. How is the church a fragrant aroma to God? I think this church demonstrated that last night. I agree, yeah.

And especially, I know, we were willing to interact with the kids. And the parents saw that interaction. And they knew that it was genuine and real and they appreciated it.

[20 : 24] Yeah. They saw the love of Christ flowing through us last night. Amen. I think that's important. There's a lot of good reasons to do fall festival. And one of those good reasons is that we have kids coming in here.

You know, the world, they're going to grow up in the world. And if they don't have that, if they don't have, if they're not in the church, if their parents aren't Christians, then they're going to hear the message from the world, which are Christians are bad people.

Christians are hateful people, right? Because of all the different things. Because of what we say about homosexuality, abortion, all these things. And so they're going to be told by the world that Christians are strange, Christians are weird, Christians are bad, but they have these experiences here as little kids where they come in.

And hopefully, through their interaction with us, they say, well, wait a second. You know, the Christians I remember growing up, you know, they opened up their building to us. And they gave us all this free stuff. Christians gave us candy, you know?

I mean, how bad could we be? But, you know, we love them. And we did this all out of the kindness of our hearts. So I think it's a good message also to share with our kids that, hey, you know, the message that the world will tell you about us isn't true.

[21 : 29] And so I think that's great. Doyleene? Well, I like that we've added that video at the front because, you know, you all put those verses right up there.

So even if somebody was too noisy around them and they couldn't hear you, at least the verses. And every time the verses came up, I was in this room, I just would sit there and quietly praise God that your word will never return void.

And so some of these people probably heard verses and words and thoughts that they've never been exposed to before. So I can't help but think that that would be a sweet aroma to God, knowing that these people may have just had a first glimpse of who we believe in.

Also, our church strives, our elders, our staff, teachers, the body, we want God's truth taught from the pulpit. Taught in the Sunday school rooms.

Not tickle our ears to please us. So I think teaching the truth also brings him a sweet aroma. And then I also am thankful that we're a praying church and we believe in prayer and that it teaches us more and more to lean on God.

[22 : 34] Again, that's a sacrifice to God and a sweet aroma. I can't say that. Yeah, I agree. Good. Good answer. I agree. I mean, it's easy to draw a crowd.

I mean, if we really wanted to, we could fill this place up. We know how to draw a crowd. You know what I'm saying? I mean, we could just say, hey, we're going to give away a thousand bucks.

Yeah, we're going to give away an 80-inch TV. All you've got to do to get it is come to church and we'll do the raffle and we could fill this place up. I mean, you know, the thing is we'd have to do that every Sunday.

Whatever you win them with is what you've got to keep them with. Jeremy? Well, I'm certainly for events and stuff.

Obviously, I'm all about that. But I think the answer that keeps coming back to me is the living sacrifice is the aroma to God. And being the living sacrifice every day of our lives, you know, we have our church stickers on the back of our cars.

[23 : 40] And, you know, we wear the T-shirts and everything. And then we're in traffic and someone frustrates us and you start cussing them and stuff. And so it's the witnessing or being in Walmart and you're wearing the T-shirt.

And then you kind of get into this tiff with somebody else in Walmart over something silly and stupid, which it always is. But just because the natural in us sometimes comes out when we'd rather it didn't.

So the example I'm thinking is just the living sacrifice, especially when we wear the church that we attend, their bumper sticker. Well, pay attention how you drive in traffic, you know, because one of the things that gets my, that kind of irritates, mildly irritates me, is see a Jesus fish or something on the car and it's driving stupid and just being an irritation to general traffic.

So I think just the witnessing when we're representing, especially when we're wearing representation of our church or on our vehicles, it's just being the example. Good. Yeah, good point.

So collectively when we're together, we have a responsibility to be the aroma of Christ, but also as individuals as we live our lives, you know, we, our everyday life, whatever we're doing, even if it's simply driving our car that we are to at the same time be an aroma.

[25 : 02] Yeah, and we have those, yeah, and some of you guys have those Highland Park stickers on your car, so don't give us a bad name. Some of you guys are crazy drivers. I don't know that to be true.

Question number two. The gospel will elicit a response. How have you experienced these life-to-life and death-to-death responses? I'll share first.

So, you know, as Doylene said, it's great to have people coming and it's great to be able to have those, the things that we do, but, you know, we want to share the most important thing with people when they're here, which is the gospel.

So, Aaron and I worked on a video where we did like a, used a pumpkin as an illustration to tell the gospel. And so we had people come in, we had people watch it, and before we moved them on, and there was most people, it seemed to me, Doylene, you were in here too, they were okay with watching the video, but I did, there was some people who came in and I saw that they were kind of watching and they came back out, and, you know, one person said to me, well, where do we get in for everything else?

And I was like, oh, you'll, you just, you'll watch the rest of the video and then we'll send you the rest of the way. And she just kind of looked at me and she's like, okay, thanks. And then she, they left. So, that was an example where, you know, some people, but then again, it's just like, what do you, what do you expect?

[26 : 26] You know, you're, you're, you're in a church and we are going to share the gospel with you when you're here. So you can't, you know, I'm not, we're not ashamed, obviously, that we tried to share the gospel with people. We invited them to our church, but we'll get those reactions.

You know, even when it should be like, well, obviously, in a church, we're going to tell you about Jesus. But that was just one example recently since it happened yesterday. Do any of you have any of those examples of those life-to-life, death-to-death experiences that you've encountered?

Okay, we'll do Wes and then Barbara. Barbara? I kind of think about my mother and father, how my mother, she was raised Catholic and thought she was going to get to heaven by being a good person.

And I kept sharing the gospel with her and explaining it to her. And it took years and years, but she finally came to Christ, that she understood it's about asking for forgiveness of her sins. But I think about my father, and I don't know how he finally ended up, but you're talking about it keeps getting deeper and deeper.

It just seems like it was. It was getting harder and harder, and I don't want to hear it. And one of the last times I witnessed to him, he was trying to run away from me, and he had a bad leg, so he couldn't get very far.

[27 : 36] But he was trying to get in his car and get away as fast as he could just because it really made a lot of sense when you talked about that, just the kids in the Juana's and all that stuff. You don't get those kind of responses.

But I think of people that have said no, and then it's no, no. You know, it just really does apply. Yeah. Okay. Thanks, Wes.

That's the truth. Barbara? Several years ago, we had a census around in the neighborhood. So I was on Avondale, where a lot of the, most of the houses there are duplexes, which is immaterial to my story. But I went to one place.

A man came to the door, and I told him I was from Highland Park Baptist Church, and I wanted to invite him to church. And he said, oh, I'm an atheist. Well, I heard his partner or wife or somebody in the background laugh.

[28 : 37] And I said, well, we'll be praying for you. I didn't know what else to say. So I said, we'll be praying for you. So I still pray for him. I have no idea where he is.

Yeah. That's excellent. Yeah? Yeah. We'll bless you.

Yeah. certainly door to door you're going to get those responses some people are be polite and others will just want nothing to do with what you had to say anybody else where you've experienced one of those life to life or death to death experiences Jeremy yeah we'll get you a microphone so at Get Real we have a gentleman that visits us often and comes for stuff and anyway he's got a lot of

issues that we're trying to help him work through as a church body well anyway we also many of us from there we also visit a new church here in town that has services on Friday and Tuesday nights called the Abiding Place and so we often visit them well anyway one evening we took the pastor's wife from from my church went over and took him over there to to visit the Abiding Place and like I said he's he's got got some issues but anyway he was during the service on Friday night he was kind of constantly busting out laughing and stuff and the pastor there knows us and trusts us that you know that we brought him and everything but he was having a hard time interpreting him and in the middle of the service he'd get up and he'd just laugh and say well I gotta go have a smoke and he'd go out and have a smoke and stuff and like okay then he'd come back in and and stuff and but anyway towards the end of the service like I said he just kind of kept laughing all through service and at the end of service towards the end of it he came and sat in the front row and the pastor from the Abiding Place goes are you are you ready to give give your life to Christ do you want to give your life to Jesus and he kind of sits there and goes um nope no I don't and of course we're all just kind of stunned you know and we're like well okay but the thing is he keeps showing up and showing around and and letting us speak to him and stuff but he just wasn't ready and we said well you know at least you're being honest at least at least we know what we're working with here uh so but anyway that's just one of those things where it's it's just sometimes when you're giving sharing the word with somebody and the things that are going through their head are just are I think are obviously incomprehensible to us uh it's really difficult to comprehend uh and anyway we just keep praying for him and and working with him hoping to bring him from death back back to life yeah good yeah not giving up on those is my barber's praying you guys are still working yeah so even though we get those um negative reactions yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah we still we still stay after them Willard when I was pastoring at Copan a number of years ago I also had the opportunity to serve as chaplain for hospice for about four years and two two experiences that I had while I was there death to death that I'll never forget and uh two of them they're both gentlemen and uh one of them uh both of these individuals knew uh death was imminent for them in a short while um one of them uh just didn't want to hear it you speak to them about about the Lord Jesus about his provision for them didn't want to hear it

I mean he was adamant and uh that's all you can do the other one uh would listen but said no um and the only the only recourse I had when we finished and he was very civil wasn't antagonistic but uh the only recourse I had was to ask him uh what if I'm right and you're wrong what's the consequence he said I know I know and that was it yeah never had the opportunity to speak to him again because he passed away both of them did shortly thereafter so death to death sometimes is death to death absolutely yeah and it's heartbreaking yeah it is man yeah thanks for sharing anybody else you know a lot of times in in my life when I've had a chance to minister to somebody it's worked a lot of times but I've had some you know really like we're talking about some that are uh you know kind of different and one gentleman that I knew

[34 : 10] I witnessed to him said would you like uh you know we'd like to have you at church and he said no there are too many hypocrites at church and I really didn't know what to say I knew that that I knew in my heart what I needed to say but it was just hard when you're 15 you know yeah so I finally said well then you'd fit right in yeah that's a pretty good answer yeah and you know and always point people well point people to their need for salvation you know I mean yeah you can look at the church and find all the different things wrong with us but you can't find anything wrong in Christ or you know um I would just continue to point them to that but that sounds like a really good response I might have to use that sometime uh so I'll share a life to life I know

I've shared this before but uh it was just an amazing transformation a woman whose uh husband she got to the church for for a real long time I mean decades and everybody knew her and they knew of her husband few of them had ever actually met her husband he'd never come to church and he's an ex-navy guy he's a mechanic a real tough guy his grandkids were in our youth group and so I'd never met him but they'd kind of tell me his grandson and be like yeah he's real he's a real tough man and so uh the first time I got to meet him was in the hospital uh uh his wife it was a long drive uh for her she didn't feel comfortable at her age driving far and uh her daughter worked and couldn't take her one day so I volunteered to take her out there and I met him and I prayed for him and I I know I've shared this with you a week or so later he called me and I went over to their house and so you know he was he had questions about the gospel and walked through the Romans road and explained all of that to him and you know asked him and man

I mean it was just amazing to see this man in front of me uh just breaking down you know the the hardness of his heart was just breaking down and you could just sense you know he had these old tattoos these old you could tell he got them in the navy because they're all faded and um just a tough man real grovelly voice but you know and he was just breaking down and shed a tear and once that happened I mean his wife was in the room with us she left because she just couldn't handle it anymore because you got to understand here's a woman who's been praying for her husband to be saved since she's been married to him they'd been married for 50 years more than that probably more than 50 I don't know somewhere around there 40 I think they were close to 50 when he died so um so he you know and then I'm like all right well now you got to come to church and we need to baptize you and he was all for it he's like I'll be there he's that uh he's like let me take care of some things because he had a uh uh yeah colostomy so he had one so he was real uncomfortable with that he's like let me get used to this and uh but I want to do it and he was baptized and man the people in our church

I mean it was a celebration because there's people who had known her uh his wife for years decades who had been praying with her for her husband uh to be saved and now you know finally he was he came to to faith in Christ and see him baptized and I'll tell you he was one of my best church members for the two or three years afterwards before he died he was always he was always he sat up front I mean this is how dedicated the man became because you know we got our back row baptist but he was always down front and um and he was just constant if you're gonna be there he felt terrible you know he talked about he hated even when his cancer came back and and uh you know it was just amazing to see his his transformation in just a short time become this man who I had heard he was but all I knew is the man that he was now and man he was a he was a solid Christian man when he when he eventually died and so it was amazing because you know he was dead and he came alive and and uh and everybody knew it and I remember at his funeral um I shared all of this and and people were uh impacted because they knew they knew Melvin and they knew the tough man that he was and uh and I think they had seen it and there were some people who were really rattled by that because they saw this transformation and this man that they knew well and uh it was all it was all of God so that's one of those amazing things to be able to see you know what God does and and bringing somebody from spiritual death to spiritual life and then not only does he just leave them there but he he brings them along in Christ likeness and uh he was a very strong Christian man when he went to be with the Lord praise God okay third question we should we be encouraged or discouraged when people reject us for sharing the gospel with them and why so this is a softball right here should we be encouraged or discouraged if I could talk when people reject us for sharing the gospel with them and why all right Cameron

[39 : 46] I think you could almost be both yeah okay explain I think you could be encouraged because we know Christ as the living son was rejected we know not everybody is going to accept the true gospel so when we are rejected it should be encouraging that we know we are preaching the true gospel that Jesus taught and we know the living God was rejected on earth that if we are preaching his true gospel we are going to get rejected in itself but at the same time it can be discouraging even though we know we are reaching out with the true gospel it can be discouraging especially if it is a close friend a family member if they reject it you can get pretty discouraged so I think you can definitely be both even in the same situation yeah that is a good answer to that question I agree Kayla I think the encouraging part to keep in mind would be that sometimes all it takes is planting that one seed and they may not say okay yes pray that prayer with me tell me what am I supposed to do what am I supposed to say but I think a lot of times just opening that door and letting the Holy Spirit do the rest so we can't hold

I mean if you had an opportunity to share in your heart you knew in your heart that you should have and you didn't then you're going to feel a little guilty like you I'm so guilty of that so like you should but I'm learning to get out of my comfort zone and even though the people that I'm talking to may not receive it they're not necessarily running the other way so that alone is encouraging but yeah it's hard for them to not just jump on the horse and dive in sure and I know we can probably all share similar experiences where God and the Lord put somebody on your heart especially if it's a family member who is an unbeliever but it's really on your heart that you want to share the gospel with that person and even if they don't respond to it the way that you would hope the fact that you have shared it with them it's a weight off of your shoulders because now you know hey I've

I was willing I was obedient to what God called me to do and you know as Kayla said we can hope that a seed was planted and that you know it'll be watered and it will eventually sprout and grow but we've done and we've been diligent about doing what God has called us to do and we can be thankful that we were that we were obedient to at least doing that any other answers for that question okay Jeremy should we be encouraged or discouraged when people reject us for sharing the gospel with them so what keeps coming to my mind on that one is when the when we're told that we're supposed to go into the villages and preach the gospel and speak to others and preach the gospel because if we feel led to go speak to them then that's obviously what we're supposed to do and if we don't we're being disobedient but the point is going to the village and preach that if you're welcomed hallelujah absolute hallelujah but if you're rejected you're supposed to knock the dust of that place knock the dust up from your shoes and keep walking to the next spot so whenever we are being rejected we're supposed to kick the dust off our shoes and keep going we have been obedient and done what we were called and told to do and so as far as the being discouraged maybe just trying to keep in mind that I did

I was obedient I did what I was supposed to do I knocked the dust from my shoes and I'm moving on as I've been instructed good yeah because Satan certainly wants to discourage us from continuing on and when we get those we don't get to anytime we share the gospel I know our hope is that the person is going to believe it but we can't like as we've talked about we can't force them to accept it so we could take that rejection and you know allow Satan to keep us silent yeah and be discouraged but that's good because we're just to continue on we're you know we're the guy or the gal throwing seed that's our job and you know the results of it that's up to the Holy Spirit okay Willard maybe two thoughts here I'm still waiting for my Oklahoma State shirt I'm glad for that wind last yeah first Peter chapter four verse 12 Peter writes to us and says beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as though some strange thing happened unto you but rejoice in as much as your partakers of Christ's sufferings that when his glory shall be revealed you may be glad also with exceeding joy so there's reward in that in the future for us if you be reproached for the name of

Christ happy are you for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you so there's testimony there of his grace upon us on their part he is evil spoken of but on your part he is glorified so yeah good let me throw one thing back first question okay while I've got the mic and then I'll quit for sure this is the second thought Cameron that's all right you don't have a limited number you know you were talking about how the aroma how do we do the aroma of Christ last night I've noticed something standing there at the end of the table passing out water the folks came by they had their hot dogs they put the mustard and the ketchup and everything on that hands were full hand them a bottle of water and so many of them would look at you and smile and say thank you and they did it in such a way that I could sense that they were sensing something from us yeah you know that that that that that was something perhaps they don't get every day and it wasn't just the idea of a hot dog and water it was to me the idea of a kindness show yeah so that's simply the fruit of the spirit being evidenced through God's people that's the aroma of

[46 : 47] Christ amen I'm done amen thank you Willard there's another question if you want to we appreciate your responses Clarence I want to say something about the life and the death first I always use that in the life I always use to get into gospel I talk about the new birth and then the death I talk about there's two deaths the physical death and the death spiritual death that's the way I get into the gospel sometimes whenever those occasions arise and to be to encourage a person I use my own personal testimony testimony yeah what Christ how he did for me how he saved that's great that's helpful that's I would encourage people to do that well know your share your own testimony what God has done in your life have it you know be able to share it in about five minutes or so and and just be prepared you know talk about what God has done in your life they're powerful they're powerful okay I'm gonna I'm gonna answer the last question and we'll be done because

I think we all kind of know the answer to these to this last question how can we spread the aroma of Christ wherever we go and so as we've talked about we do it collectively as a church we do it as individuals and I'll just use this this question to plug engage again you know we're we're not we don't have any of those kinds of events planned for the rest of the year because we'll be busy with you know certainly with Christmas and that kind of is an engaged thing too because a lot of a lot of people will come to Christmas Eve that normally don't come to church so that's another opportunity for us to engage unchurched people however you want to label them but when we do do those

things you know that's why it's so important that we go because it's those those little contacts you know what it says I mean we never know how far they can go how much can God can use those things and just your willingness to serve him your willingness to be in that kind of environment where you can show the love of

Christ and so hopefully that will lead for an opportunity for us to share the gospel with them and so it's good it's good that we're doing it and so I just encourage that we continue to do that and I think that as we are consistent in our desire to reach our community and to share the gospel that we will see results from that and I think we already kind of are but as we're consistent in doing that I believe that we'll see the Lord continuing to use our church to let our light shine and that people will see that Jesus is good.

Amen.