

# **Who Has What It Takes to Do the Job?**

2 Corinthians 2: 12-17

# What has taken place ...

- Paul changed his travel plans (out of love) ...
- to spare them another painful visit
- Instead, sent a “tough” letter, delivered by Titus
- Charged with being fickle and insincere
- Letter did the job and Corinthian believers publicly disciplined “offender” (2 Cor. 2: 6)
- Church discipline caused “offender” to repent
- Paul asked them to forgive and welcome him back (2 Cor. 2: 7-8, 10-11)

# **Abrupt change of subjects from 2: 14 to 7:4**

<sup>12</sup> Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ ... <sup>13</sup> I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia. (2 Cor. 2: 12-13)

## ■ Paul's long digression (2:14 to 7:4)

<sup>5</sup> When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. ... <sup>6</sup> But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.

(2 Cor. 7: 5-6)

# Why such a long digression ?

- 2:14 to 7:4

# Recall that ...

- Paul's opponents are working hard to discredit him

## **In this long digression ...**

- Paul describes, explains, defends his ministry as an apostle (ministry of the new covenant)
- He continues to counter opponents' "attacks" on his apostleship/leadership
- Paul brings out the privileges of suffering as an apostle of Jesus Christ
- Paul wants readers to understand the nature of his ministry over against his opponents'

# Outline of 2 Cor. 2: 12-17

- Paul had no peace of mind ministering at Troas; so he departed for Macedonia (2: 12-13)
- Narrative stops at v. 13, and picks up again at 7:5
- Starting at 2:14, switches to PRESENT TENSE
- 2:14 to 7:4 – Privilege of an apostle of Jesus Christ
- Thanksgiving for victory in Christ – triumphal procession and its sweet aromas (2: 14-16)
- Paul contrasts himself with opponents (2:17 to 3:1)

# Paul and Titus' travel plans/arrangements





# **Paul's state of mind when Titus didn't show at Troas as arranged**

<sup>12</sup> When I came to the city of Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me. <sup>13</sup> But I had no peace of mind because my dear brother Titus hadn't yet arrived with a report from you. So I said good-bye and went on to Macedonia to find him. (2 Cor. 2: 12-13; NLT)

- At Troas, the Lord opened a door of opportunity to preach the Gospel
- Paul was so troubled that he couldn't continue his ministry at Troas
- So he left for Macedonia to look for Titus



- Paul worried about divisions at Corinth, lax attitude toward sin, their other problems ...
- He founded this church; he loved them much; worried all his labors might come to nothing
- Anxiety so high couldn't continue ministering at Troas, despite success he was having
- Worried sick about Titus and Corinthian church
- So, left Troas for Macedonia, hoping to find Titus there

# Identify with Paul's weaknesses ?

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# Highest honor for victorious General ...

- Triumph (noun) = great victory
- Triumphal (adj.) = something to celebrate a great victory
- TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION



# Triumphal Procession



VG 24/7

# **From anxiety & despair to grateful shout of victory!**

<sup>12</sup> Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ ... <sup>13</sup> I still had no peace of mind, ... So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

(2 Cor. 2: 12-13)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. (2 Cor. 2: 14; NIV 1986)

# 2 kinds of people in procession

- Soldiers who had won the battle
- Prisoners of war



# Triumphal Procession





# 2 kinds of people in procession

- Soldiers who had won the battle
- Prisoners of war
- Which group does Paul imagine himself belonging to ?
- “prisoner of Christ” or “good soldier of Christ” ?
- “prisoner of Christ” >> “good soldier of Christ”
- Central theme of 2 Cor. – Relationship between suffering and the power of the Spirit in Paul’s life



# **From anxiety & despair to grateful shout of victory!**

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. (2 Cor. 2: 14; NIV 2010)

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. (2 Cor. 2: 14; NIV 1986)

# God uses believers to spread the knowledge of Him everywhere

<sup>14</sup> But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. <sup>15</sup> For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?

(2 Cor. 2:14-16)

14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma (*osmē*) of the knowledge of him everywhere.

15 For we are to God the pleasing aroma (*euōdia*) of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? (2 Cor. 2:14-16)

- *euodia* and *osme* are used often in Greek OT to refer to aroma of a sacrifice pleasing to God

# God uses believers to spread the knowledge of Him everywhere

- *euodia* and *osme* : sweet smell of incense along the streets during triumphal procession
- *euodia* and *osme* : the aroma of a sacrifice pleasing to God
- When believers offer themselves as “living sacrifice” to the Lord (Romans 12: 1), our suffering becomes the aroma of a sacrifice pleasing to God

# Same aroma; different meanings

<sup>15</sup> For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. <sup>16</sup> To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? (2 Cor. 2: 15-16)

- Odor of death because prisoners marching to enslavement or death
- To the victorious General, his army, and citizens of Rome, sweet aroma of life



# Same aroma; different meanings

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- Paul preaches Jesus is alive and delivers people from sin & death
- For those who believe, aroma of life
- For those who oppose/reject the gospel, remain lost in their sin and condemned; stench of death
- Not only resent gospel, but also hate its messenger

# Who Has What it Takes ?

- “And who is adequate for such a task as this?”  
(2 Cor. 2: 16c; NLT)
- It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. (2 Cor. 3: 5-6; NLT)

# Paul contrasts himself with opponents

And who is equal to such a task? <sup>17</sup> Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God. (2 Cor. 2: 16b-17)

Is anyone competent to take it on? No - but at least we don't take God's Word, water it down, and then take it to the streets to sell it cheap. We stand in Christ's presence when we speak; God looks us in the face. We get what we say straight from God and say it as honestly as we can.

(2 Cor. 2: 16b-17; MSG)

# **“Peddlars” of God’s Word ...**

- “water down” or alter the message in order to increase “sales”

# Real motive of “peddlars” of God’s Word?

- Personal financial gain

A lot of people try to get rich from preaching God’s message. But we are God’s sincere messengers, and by the power of Christ we speak our message with God as our witness.

(2 Cor. 2: 17; CEV)

- Some seek “control over others”
- Others seek fame and recognition

# Paul contrasts himself with opponents

- Paul refuses to receive financial support from Corinthian church

8 I “robbed” other churches by accepting their contributions so I could serve you at no cost. 9 And when I was with you and didn’t have enough to live on, I did not become a financial burden to anyone. For the brothers who came from Macedonia brought me all that I needed. I have never been a burden to you, and I never will be. (2 Cor. 11: 8-9; NLT)

# Paul contrasts himself with opponents

- “Who has what it takes to do the job?”
- They “market” the Word of God” for profit - health-wealth preachers of 1<sup>st</sup> century
- I have suffered (greatly) for the sake of the gospel
- I speak with sincerity, integrity and honesty
- I am a person of integrity
- Despite my weaknesses, I depend on the Spirit of God to accomplish my calling

# **“Who has what it takes to do the job?”**

- Those who are trying to discredit me because of my weaknesses and suffering?
- “I have what it takes to do the job in Christ, through God’s power!”

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ’s triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. (2 Cor. 2: 14)



# Final Questions

- Are you a captive in Christ's triumphal procession?
- How are you responding to the preaching of the good news? Your response will decide your eternal destiny!
- Does your life release the fragrance of Jesus Christ?
- Who has what it takes to do this job?

