

# A Pleasing Aroma

Believers are called to bring the pleasing aroma of Christ to the world.

## Are You Hungry?

Have you ever tried the durian fruit? How did you react to it?

Durian is a fruit that is commonly found in Southeast Asia, and it is considered one of the smelliest fruits on earth. The smell is so bad that it is even banned from some hotels and certain forms of public transportation. While some flee from the durian stench, others crave the fruit and thoroughly enjoy its flavor. How can durian repel one person and attract another? It all depends on the person. Much like our reactions to the durian fruit, different people have different reactions to the Gospel. As we see Paul discuss in this passage, some receive the message while others turn away.

## Taste and See

How does Paul describe those who carry the Gospel to others (vv. 15–16)?

*He describes them as a pleasing aroma of Christ that spreads the knowledge of Him.*

Paul used to be a person who persecuted Christians, but now he is someone who travels to various cities to promote the cause of Christ. He carries the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, spreading the knowledge of Him everywhere he goes. Paul describes those who live a life of obedience to Christ and resemble Him in words and deeds as a pleasing aroma of Christ. As they spread the Gospel message and sacrifice themselves for the cause of the cross, they are a pleasing fragrance to God and to those who receive His Word.

How can you be a pleasing aroma of Christ?

While professional missionaries like Paul have an important role in spreading the Gospel, every Christian is called to spread the knowledge of God. Believers have received the wonderful grace of the Gospel message, and we should share it freely with others around us. As we bring the Gospel into our families, neighborhoods, and schools, we will be a fragrant aroma of Christ, giving glory and honor to God. He will be pleased with us as we display His love and spread the Good News to our communities.

How might a believer bring death to some but life to others (v. 16)?

*When a believer shares the Gospel message, those who reject it are choosing death, but those who embrace it are choosing life.*

When we present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people, they have a choice. They can choose either to accept it or reject it. Those who reject the Gospel bring judgment upon themselves. They refuse God's grace and remain in their unbelief. Because their hearts are hardened toward the things of God, the Gospel message is a stench to them, and they do not understand the knowledge of Him. Those whose hearts receive the Gospel, however, choose to repent of their sins and accept a new life in Christ. They recognize their need for a Savior and find the Gospel message to be a sweet aroma.

How do you feel about being a stench to others?

Jesus said that those who embrace the world will hate those who follow Christ because the world refuses to submit to the kingdom of God (John 15:18). Unbelievers may mock you for your choices or look down on you for your beliefs, but remember that they do not know God. Our strength and validation comes from the One who sees and knows all things. One day, He will bring all struggles to an end and judge those who have hardened their hearts against Him and His people. Until then, may we be encouraged to continue to live for Christ and spread the Gospel message of love and grace wherever we go.

## Chew on This

How can you encourage missionaries who are struggling to spread the aroma of Christ?

Many missionaries and their families endure loneliness and suffering as they serve in mission fields that are hostile toward the Gospel. God can strengthen and encourage them directly, but the body of Christ should also reach out to them and support them. Here are some practical ways you can reach out to your fellow brothers and sisters so that they can persevere in spreading the fragrance of Christ:

1. Commit to supporting a missionary family in prayer.
2. Send an email to let the missionaries know why they are appreciated and loved.
3. Support them financially.