



What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaways:

1. Paul uses the image of a Roman triumphal procession to describe the Christian life. Followers of Jesus are not captives being marched toward judgment -- they are the rescued, walking behind their general in celebration. No one auditioned for a spot in this parade. Jesus went and got them out of the chains himself.
2. Just as incense filled the streets during a Roman triumph, Christians carry the aroma of Christ into every space they occupy. That same fragrance smells like life to those being saved and like death to those who are perishing. The response of others is not the Christian's responsibility -- carrying the fragrance faithfully is.
3. Paul warns against peddling a diluted version of the gospel to make it more acceptable. Watering down the message may make it easier to carry into certain conversations, but it robs people of the real thing. Sincerity, not strategy, is the standard.

Discussion Questions:

1. When you think about a parade, what comes to mind? How does the image of a Roman triumphal procession change the way you picture what Paul is describing in verse 14?
2. You're not marching in that parade to pay off a debt. You're marching in that parade to highlight the goodness of the one who has rescued you. How does that distinction shape the way you think about your daily life as a Christian? Does your life feel more like obligation or celebration right now?
3. Reflect on this statement: "Nobody in that parade auditioned for their spot. Jesus went and got them out of the chains himself." What does it do to your sense of identity and purpose when you remember that your place in the parade was entirely Jesus's doing?
4. To the same flower, one person loves the smell and another swells up with allergies. The flower does not change, but the person's response to it does. Have you ever experienced a situation where your faith or your words about Jesus were received very differently by two different people? What was that like?
5. Other people's response to the aroma is not your responsibility. Your job is to carry the smell. Is there someone in your life you have gone quiet around because a previous conversation about faith did not go well? What would it look like to stay present without changing what is true about you?

6. Paul asks in verse 16, "Who is adequate for these things?" and then answers in 2 Corinthians 3:5 that adequacy comes from God. What does it practically mean to rely on God's adequacy rather than your own when sharing your faith?
7. Dishonest merchants would dilute wine to make it cheaper and easier to sell. In what ways are Christians tempted to dilute the gospel message to make it more acceptable to the people around them? Have you ever felt that temptation personally?
8. What is lost when the gospel is softened or adjusted to avoid offense? Can you think of a specific element of the gospel that tends to get left out in these kinds of conversations?
9. The word "sincerity" in verse 17 carries the image of holding an object up to sunlight to reveal any hidden flaws or impurities. What would it look like for your life and your words about Jesus to hold up under that kind of scrutiny?

Practical Applications:

1. Identify someone you have gone quiet around. You do not need to force a conversation. Simply commit to staying present in that relationship without shrinking back from what is true about you. Pray for that person by name each day this week.
2. Audit the message you are carrying. Think about how you typically talk about Jesus with people outside your church. Are there parts of the gospel you tend to leave out because they feel too difficult or too offensive? Write them down and bring them back into your prayers and conversations.
3. Reflect on your place in the parade. Set aside ten minutes this week to write down specifically what Jesus rescued you from. Let that reflection fuel gratitude rather than obligation as you go through your week.
4. Memorize 2 Corinthians 2:14. Let the image of the triumphal procession become a daily reminder of who you are following and why you are following him.