

The Fragrance of Christ vs. Self-Conscious Spirituality

by Bryan Anthony

Bryan Anthony emphasizes the importance of being a broken vessel to manifest the fragrance of Christ, contrasting it with self-conscious spirituality.

Scripture: Romans 12:2, Romans 14:17, 2 Corinthians 2:14, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 2:3

Topics: "Spiritual Victory", "Christian Character"

Description

Bryan Anthony preaches on the ultimate triumph led by God, which involves being a broken vessel through whom the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him is manifested. He emphasizes the importance of inward surrender to the Lord over conforming to external expectations, highlighting that true victory in Christ is evident when we love our enemies, resist worldly temptations, and seek God's glory above all. Anthony challenges believers to examine their motives and actions, ensuring they emit the fragrance of Jesus Christ in all interactions, reflecting His character and nature.

Transcript

"... thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place." -2 Cor. 3.14

The greatest triumph is not in the establishment of an impressive organization, the saving of my reputation, or the performance of some great spiritual feat before men. The greatest triumph is led by God Himself, and it has to do with wringing out my personality and aura until I am a broken vessel through whom He shows forth "the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

Though I have adapted to the niceties and expected behaviors of Christian culture, though I know how to act around the right people, though I have "stopped doing what I used to do, because now I'm a Christian," I may yet be bound by self-conscious spirituality. The life of faith does not have to do with conforming to external expectations in relation to the Christian subculture that I've been inducted into. It has to do with an ultimate inward surrender to the Lord of history, "who always leads us in triumph in Christ," over every earthly influence and power. When we are so conscious of the Lord that we are able to love our enemies, resist the lusts of the flesh, and we are no longer moved inwardly to seek glory from men, only then is it evident that we are following the Lamb of God in His holy triumph.

If I am not emanating the fragrance of Jesus Christ, I must still be bound by self-consciousness in some way or another. When the light of heaven shines upon me, it may yet be seen that I am still concerned for my own glorification. The evidence of this is that I am not yet "broken bread and poured out wine"; I am failing to emit the "sweet aroma" of Jesus Christ. When "the least of these" come into contact with me, are they coming into contact with the vitality of the Son of God, or something that smells too much like the work of man?

When we have soulish ties to men, to this earth, or to our own religious ideals and presumptions, rather than a total jealousy for God's glory, it becomes impossible for us to "triumph in Christ," and we are incapable of manifesting His "sweet aroma," which is His very character and nature. His fragrance is always antithetical to our self-conscious attempts at spirituality. I may need to ask myself some questions along these lines.

When challenging or rebuking another saint, am I abiding in the kindness of Jesus Christ? Would the Lamb of God deal as abrasively as I have when addressing that child or that struggling brother? When complimenting or encouraging someone, am I using flattery to gain some end myself, or am I actually expressing His own encouragement? When correcting some faulty doctrine in another brother, am I exhibiting my own knowledge and correctness, or am I speaking out of a true jealousy for the glory of God and the good of that soul?

I may claim to be radical for the Lord, carrying the cross and going against the tide of this age, but am I emitting the very fragrance of Jesus Christ in the process? If I am not, it may well be that the "tide of this age" is still sweeping me away, except that I am blanketed in Christian phraseologies and ideas. The only solution to self-conscious spirituality is God-conscious living, and Jesus has rent the veil that we might abide with Him in that holy place. From there we triumph in Christ, and manifest the sweet aroma of the knowledge of God "in every place."

You are not required to pass through a religious maze to "manifest" the fragrance of the Lord. There is no puzzle involved, no trick up His sleeve, no riddle to unpack. To experience the depths of Christ, you need only to go down into death, taking up your cross and following the Lamb wheresoever He goes. He will inevitably lead you on paths that will wring out your personality and press His glorious image into your person. You will still be unique as an individual, but you will exhibit the wisdom and power of the age to come, which is "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

We do not triumph in Christ by boasting in a meeting, seeking favor from men, or finding our way onto some platform of religious fame. We triumph in Christ when the power of self is broken from our lives, and the very fragrance of Jesus flows from our being. When He leads us in triumph, we will bring to bear the knowledge of God Himself upon a world that is perishing for want of that great Light.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bryan-anthony/the-fragrance-of-christ-vs-self-conscious-spirituality/>

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