PRINCESSES 2017 NATIONAL CONFERENCE  - Winnipeg, Manitoba
Sunday Morning Devotion

SWEET AROMA UNTO GOD

2 Corinthians 2:14-17
“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. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 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? 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 Corinthians‬ ‭2:14-17‬ ‭NIV‬‬

When we spend a lot of time with someone, we begin to think and act like that person.  When we abide in Jesus Christ the true vine, we will look like Him.  Spending time with Jesus will help us spread a pleasing fragrance to those around us.

When Mary poured a bottle of a very expensive perfumed oil on Jesus head, the disciples only smelled the aroma of waste: “This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor” (Matthew 26:9 NIV).
“Aware of this, Jesus said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.”  Matthew‬ ‭26:10‬ ‭NIV‬‬
“When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.”
‭‭Matthew‬ ‭26:12‬ ‭NIV‬‬

Perhaps Jesus could smell the sweet fragrance of Mary’s sacrifice because He knew that love finds meaning in sacrifice: “We understand what love is when we realize that Christ gave his life for us. That means we must give our lives for other believers” (1 John 3:16 GWT).
The Holy Spirit presses us toward the realm of grace, where we are transformed into seeing opportunities to love where others see wasteful sacrifice.  "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength".  Deuteronomy 6:5.  May God help us to move from smelling the odor of waste to the bouquet of grace.

The beautiful thing about the christian life is that the child of God has become a sweet fragrance to God.  Whenever God smells us, He smells a sweet fragrance not because of who we are, but the fact that in us, He  sees and smells Christ.  According to verse 15, we are not going to be a sweet aroma, we already are.  This is true freedom, we don't have to try to please God. God is already pleased with us, not because of what we have done or are doing, but because of what Christ has done.

How did God see us before we came to Christ?
WHO WE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST:

1. Sinners destined to die.     “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”  Romans‬ ‭3:23‬ ‭NIV‬‬.   “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”  Romans‬ ‭6:23‬ ‭NIV‬‬

2. The best we could do was seen by God as filthy rags (Isa. 64:6).

2. Enemies of God (Col. 1:21). “This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.”    Colossians‬ ‭1:21‬ ‭NLT‬‬

WHAT CHRIST DID

1. He became sin for us.  “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”  2 Corinthians‬ ‭5:21‬ ‭NIV‬‬. Jesus didn't just bear our sins on the cross, he became sin.   In becoming sin, we became the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God.  Jesus went to the cross and we have RELATIONSHIP rather than RULES.  His sacrifice allows us to find forgiveness of sin, approach His throne and fellowship with Him freely.

2. He took away the enmity that was between us and God, thus making peace  (Rom. 5:1-2;  Eph. 2:13-16)

3. He presented us Holy and blameless without a single fault in the sight of God (Col. 1:21-22).

 However, according to col. 1:23, "we must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it."    We must continue in the faith and in the hope that comes only through the gospel. This means, we must constantly trust in the finished works of Christ  alone and never on our own works. Trusting in our own works will only take us back to where God took us from; filthy.rags.   God’s desire for us is to live triumphantly everyday, and in every situation (2 Corinthians 2:14).  We are victorious in Christ.  The Lord Jesus has given us the victory over limitations, struggles, and the pressures of life. He said in John 16:33, “...In this world you will have tribulation.  But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”  Our victory is assured.

We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing (2 Corinthians 2:15).  Our fragrance is pleasing to God, but it also attracts others to Him or repels them.  We who understand the sacrifice of Jesus have the opportunity to be the fragrance of Christ - a reminder of Him to others.  We as Christians present both Life and Death. To those who are willing to follow we are presenting them a way for LIFE, eternal life with God, but there is also the flip side of Hell for those who refuse God which is Death.  Just one more instance where perspective is everything. The gospel presents both life and death but glory be to God, we as believers have chosen life by the special grace of God.

God loves all people of the world, but those in Christ are sweet aroma.  The depth of His grace and mercy far exceeds our understanding.  It's too wonderful for comprehension.  Our desire should be to have a strong and lasting relationship with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.  It's amazing that to GOD, we are ALWAYS a sweet aroma.  God chose to allow us to smell the fragrance of His knowledge, the fragrance of His love, the fragrance of His Name, the fragrance of His anointing.  If we allow that anointing to come upon us, we will come out with  a fragrance that will attract others to His heart.

Much as the smell of perfume makes for an enjoyable physical atmosphere, there are multiple things that we are told are sweet-smelling to God in the spiritual realm:

1. The smoke of Noah's sacrifice is called "sweet" (Genesis 8:21).

2. The Levitical burnt offering is said to be “a sweet aroma" (Exodus 29:18).

3. Christ also loved us, and gave Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a "sweet-smelling aroma (Ephesians 5:2).

4. The saint’s prayer brings an odor like incense before the throne of God (Revelation 5:8).

5. The free will offering given is similarly pleasant to God (Philippians 4:18).

But God warns:    “If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over.”  Leviticus‬ ‭26:27-28‬, 31).

Let us commit anew to live lives that will be a sweet aroma in the presence of The Most High God.  When we walk with God, we leave behind a sweet fragrance that can inspire others to follow.  All that we do should be fragrant with what we are. And what we are should be a sweet fragrance of Christ.  There can be no question about the fragrance of the Lord Jesus. It was a part of His very nature.  Wherever He went, whatever He did, whatever He said, the precious perfume of another world accompanied Him.  It literally was that - the fragrant atmosphere of heaven

The Ministry Of Melchizedek by Zac Poonen

"Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb.7:17). Melchizedek was an unknown man - but a man who knew God intimately - who met Abraham when Abraham was returning from a war, and blessed him with food, and with a word from God (Gen.14:14-20). Abraham was tired and was in great danger of being puffed up after being so victorious. He was also in danger of coveting the property of the king of Sodom that he had captured in the war. But God sent Melchizedek with food that refreshed his tired body, and with a word that saved his soul from being defiled by pride and covetousness.
Melchizedek told Abraham, "Blessed be God, the Possessor of heaven and earth Who gave you the victory over your enemies." He did not preach a long 7-point sermon to him. No. He just spoke one sentence - but that was a prophetic word that met Abraham's need exactly. Through that one sentence, he reminded Abraham that since it was God Who had given him the victory, he should not take the credit to himself. He also reminded Abraham that since his God owned the heaven and earth, there was no need for him to take any of the spoils of the battle, as victors normally do.
A few minutes later, when Abraham met the king of Sodom, these words of Melchizedek helped him to do the right thing. He told the king of Sodom that since his God was the Possessor of heaven and earth, he would not take even a thread from the spoils (Gen.14:22-24). Jesus has now been appointed by God as a high-priest after the order of Melchizedek. And we are now to be priests according to the same order - and are to fulfil this Melchizedek-ministry.  Consider how Melchizedek, without any show, or pomp, or publicity, or advertisement, appeared quietly and gave Abraham just what he needed - food for his bodily needs, and the right word to save Abraham from pride and covetousness. After meeting Abraham's need, he disappeared just as quietly as he came.

This is the ministry that we must all covet - to quietly bless those that God sends our way as our Ministry Focus statement clearly says - ONE WOMAN REACHING ANOTHER WITH THE LOVE OF CHRIST - and then to disappear without seeking any honour, appreciation, thanks or publicity for ourselves.

May The Most High God daily minister His word to us by His Spirit, that we may be Sweet Fragrance of Christ, attracting others to His heart, in Jesus holy name.  Amen.