

“JESUS LEADS US IN TRIUMPH”
2 Corinthians 2:14-17

INTRODUCTION

One criticism against Paul was that because of his hardships, he didn't really have God's stamp of approval. Viewing casually from the outside, he didn't appear to have a successful ministry. Through this view suffering may not seem to be of any benefit to be a Christian. Paul, however, shares the right perspective of success and failure.

LED IN TRIUMPH

Paul was thankful to the Lord, despite the hardships, persecution and false accusations that he experienced. This kept him going! Paul uses the imagery of a Roman victory parade to depict Christian life, as when the generals returned from their conquests. The general marched to the capital to meet state officials, along with his captured enemies. There would be bodyguards, executioners, musicians, priests (with incense and aroma) and finally the conquering general in a chariot with a robe and scepter, with soldiers following shouting, “Victory, Victory!”

Paul is picturing the parade of victory of our General, Jesus. Paul is in that parade, so he is never thinking about losing! The reality is now, not just in the future. Remember, things may be difficult, but we are winning because Jesus is leading us!

AROMA

Smell stamps a memory for people. (To the enemies in the victory parade a certain fragrance meant that death was coming). To those who are perishing we are the fragrance (*the knowledge of God*) that is a horrible smell. This smell triggers panic in their hearts. The knowledge of Him may trigger dread and even animosity or hatred. Hearing about Jesus triggers dread in many unbelievers. Our lives may trigger that same animosity! To the saved, however, Christians are the aroma of eternal life! We can rejoice in the sweetness of fellowship!

HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

- 1) Don't peddle the word. That would mean, “Do not water it down”. (Some used to water down the wine to try to increase profit).
- 2) Live in sincerity. Be pure and transparent. We need to admit that we are in daily need of Jesus!
- 3) As from God. Fulfill your calling and complete your assignment no matter how people respond. Leave the results in His hands.
- 4) In God's sight. Whatever we do, no matter how many people are involved, it's always in God's sight. We do what we do to please Him, rather than ourselves or others.

CONSIDER

We are all called as ministers of God. We are not insignificant. Remember, it's all about our conquering General, our Lord Jesus! We are part of something very grand. We are always moving on to victory no matter how bad it may seem at the moment! Don't be discouraged! We are more than conquerors through Him!

Romans 8:37.

PRAY

- * That we would follow the Lord's leading in the August outreach at Jefferson Park in Canandaigua.
- * That the Lord would allow us to purchase the land behind the church for youth activities.
- * That God's Spirit would refresh the pastors at our East Coast Pastors' conference in September.