

Series: 1 Corinthians
Title: Always Triumphant
Text: 2 Cor 2: 12-14
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2 Corinthians 2: 12: Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13: I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

Paul gives another reason why he did not come to Corinth as he had planned. We will pick up with Paul and Titus' when we get to 2 Corinthians 7. But when Paul speaks of Troas, he is led to give thanks to God for what took place there. Paul stayed at Troas for seven days. It is where he preached until midnight when Eutychus fell asleep and fell out of the upper story window.

Notice, Paul says he went there *"to preach Christ's gospel."* It is Christ's gospel because Christ is the author and the subject. The word gospel is "good news or glad tidings." There is no other gospel, no good news and glad tidings, but in and by Christ. The gospel has not been preached except we declare Christ and all that he has accomplished by his death, burial and resurrection. Christ's gospel is the only message Christ's preachers declare every time they preach. It is the only message his people need and desire to hear!

When Paul went to Troas, he said, *"a door was opened unto me of the Lord."* The same Lord Jesus we preach is the Head of the church, the Lord who sovereignly, effectually opens the door so his preachers have opportunity to preach. Paul speaks of it in another place as *"a great door and effectual being opened."* (1 Corinthians 16:9) In Acts 14:27 he rehearsed *"all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."* He asked the Corinthians to *"pray for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."* (Col 4:3-4) So our sovereign Lord opens the door of service, labor, and opportunity to preach his word wherever he would have it declared. And he opens the door of success, blessing, and power making his preacher speak as he ought and making his people hear and believe on Christ. And when the Lord opens the door no one can shut it. He said in Revelation 3: 7: *"to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."* So the apostle Paul wrote—

1 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

Proposition: God always causes his witnesses to triumph in Christ. We will try to get all the nourishment we can out of this one verse.

THANKS TO GOD ALONE

1 Cor 2: 14: Now thanks *be* unto God,...

As those God has triumphed over, now we know, that we have no reason to glory in ourselves but only in God. We did not love God. In fact, we hated God with enmity we could not change.

1 John 4:19: We love him, because he first loved us.

There we were, religious. Some professing to be saved by Christ while we were looking to the law. We tried to live morally to make ourselves righteous and holy and acceptable to God by our obedience to God's holy

law. Yet, in all our outward morality it was sin. Christ was not the one who produced that, we did and it was all sin. When Peter sinned by turning back to the law and away from Christ by simply leaving the table of the Gentiles and going over to sit with the Jews, Paul said,

Galatians 2: 17: if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, [the sin of looking to the law rather than Christ alone] is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. 18: For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

So we see that the Lord did not love us due to anything in us but simply by his free grace. His elect are his true spiritual Israel to whom he says,

Deuteronomy 7: 7: The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye *were* the fewest of all people: 8: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh [satan] king of Egypt.

Due to his free grace, his everlasting love for us, even when we were his enemies, he sent his Son and redeemed us from all our enemies by fulfilling the righteousness of the law for us.

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 5: 8: But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Still, being dead in our sins, we were unable to give ourselves spiritual life and believe on Christ alone. We were under Pharaoh—the prince of the power of the air which now works in those who are yet dead and disobedient to God.

Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Christ taught us in the new heart what he taught his disciples,

John 15: 16. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Now, God has made us—me as his preacher together with you as his local assembly of saints—to be his ambassadors spreading his gospel.

2 Corinthians 5: 20: Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21: For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

So we take no credit and never glory in ourselves for our personal salvation or in preaching Christ together. All thanks goes to God for all things.

Ephesians 5: 20: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Our Understanding is Christ. Our Righteousness is Christ. Our Holiness is Christ. Our Redemption is Christ. Our Ministry is to preach Christ. Those who believe through our word believe by Christ. So we say,

1 Thessalonians 3: 9: For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

When we give God thanks for our personal salvation and the salvation of those God has saved through our ministry we are saying:

Revelation 7:12: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

All God's true saints glory only in God for all things—*thanks be unto God*.

ALWAYS TRIUMPHANT

1 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ,...

We thank God because it is God who makes us triumph. God does not *sometimes* cause us to triumph, but he "*always*" causes us to triumph in Christ. God does not *try* to do anything. Brethren, if we are in the habit of saying, "God is *trying* to do this or that" let's correct that. God does not *try* to do anything, God *does*!

Psalm 135: 5: For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods. 6: Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. 7: He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

What part do we have in making the weather? None! Can you imagine a man stopping God from causing evaporation or lightning or rain or wind? Satan's lie that man has the ability to change the weather and destroy the earth is the same lie of hell which says man has a free will capable of frustrating God's grace. When it comes to believing science and politicians or believing God's word, believe God!

Psalm 135: 7: He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

Genesis 8:22: While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

Why is that important to understand? Because just as God triumphs in making the elements accomplish his purpose, God triumphs making his word accomplish his purpose:

Isaiah 55: 10: For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

Jeremiah 31:35: Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: 36: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

Jeremiah 33: 20: Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; 21: *Then* may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.

Our success is sure because God always causes us to triumph in and by Christ. Christ is the Word who came down from heaven. He triumphed over all our enemies. He satisfied the law so that the holy, just and good law of God is dead to us and we are dead to the law. He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross so that we can now be one with God. He removed the curse and condemnation from off his people. He conquered Satan and put him on his leash and will soon conquer him under our feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Romans 8: 37: in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Likewise, Christ always makes his witnesses triumph as we preach his word in all the earth. The Spirit of God says the same *word of the truth of the gospel*,

Colossians 1:6 Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, *as it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth:

It is a good thing to be conquered by Christ. To be triumphed over by Christ is to triumph with Christ. Submission and surrender to Christ is liberty. The man who is absolutely dependent upon Jesus Christ is absolutely independent of everything and everybody else, his own sinful self-included. When Christ makes us his servants, he frees us from being the servants of sin and will not allow sin to have the dominion over you. This is what it means when he says,

1 John 5:4: For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Our triumph is by Christ the object of our faith. When Christ triumphs over us making us surrender to him, all the spoils of victory that belong to Christ belong to us in Christ

Romans 8: 15: For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Sinner, has Christ conquered your hard heart? Has Christ made you to surrender all to him? If so you will find sweet victory when you find he has made you more than a conqueror in him.

MAKING MANIFEST THE SAVOR

2 Corinthians 2: 14:...[God] maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

God makes his ambassadors always triumph by Christ by making manifest the savor of his gospel by us.

Song of Solomon 1: 3: Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

This gospel of God our Father and his Son Christ Jesus is “*his knowledge*” and “*the savor of his good ointments.*” *The gospel* is God’s *good ointments* by which he makes sin-sick sinners every way whole in Christ!

Imagine I had a box of savory ointment here in my hand. When I open it up the smell would fill the room. You could not stop yourself from smelling it. God’s ointment goes forth by preaching Christ and him crucified. Wherever God sends us to preach his gospel, God himself fills the place with his savor—his gospel—like a box of ointment opened up fills a room with the smell of that ointment.

Also, the ointment goes forth because Christ in you makes you a savor, the salt of the earth. What does it mean to be saved? It means to be called to reflect the holy character of God. "Be ye holy even as I am holy." What does it mean to be saved? It means to be a messenger, a channel, an instrument of God's redemptive purpose. It means to be the salt of the earth; it means to be a savor (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). The priesthood of the believers means that there are no spectators in the church of God. The priesthood of the believers means that every believer saved by Christ has a ministry and a gift, so you can perform that ministry for Christ’s glory!

When God has opened this ointment—through his holy child preaching Christ’s gospel—none in their presence can stop himself from smelling the savor, regardless of whether he loves it or hates it. We will look more at this next time but for now, let me ask you, do you love the savor of Christ in the gospel? This is the balm of Gilead. Christ is the ointment by which all our wounds are bound up and mollified with this good ointment of Christ.

This ointment is the only cure for your sin and the only ointment to make you holy and new. Reject this ointment and there remains no more sacrifice for sin but a certain expectation of judgment by which you shall be devoured. But receive Christ, surrender to him, and you shall be saved. Which will it be? Whichever it is, his people here and myself, have triumphed by Christ by simply manifesting his savor to you in the sight of God!

Amen!