

# Triumph in Christ

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Welcome to your service this morning as we come together to worship God we pray that this word to us would receive lodging in our heart.
- We can begin by singing verses from the beginning of Psalm 96. Psalm 96 and from the beginning of the psalm.
- Lately he is to be magnified yea worthy to be feared is he above all gods beside. For all the gods are idols done which blinded nations fear.
- But our God is the Lord by whom the heavens created were. And so on. Let us sing these verses from the beginning of Psalm 96.
- O sing a new song to the Lord. Sing all the earth to God. O sing a new song to the Lord.
- [ 1 : 3 9 ] Sing all the earth to God. To God sing black says near Jesus still.
- Heads still in heaven are bright. Among the leagues and nations is glory to keep laid.
- And unto all the people shall.
- Heads still in heaven are bright. For great the Lord, now give me thee, Assuming my delight, Be worthy to be pure busy, After all God's design.
- For all the gods, now I lose them, Which blinded nations the earth, But your goddess, now Lord, By whom we have created you there.
- [ 3 : 5 8 ] Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. O Lord, O God, as we come before you, And call upon your name in prayer, Remind us of what prayer is, And how we are to approach a God who is holy, Who sits upon a heavenly throne, Encircled by holy angels, Accompanied by the spirits of the saints, Who have ascended into thy presence.
- We give thanks that we can contemplate such a vision, Even though we see, But through a glass, darkly.
- We read your word, And your word speaks to us of truth, That we allow our mind to fixate upon our times, And to seek to comprehend the incomprehensible, To try and come to some kind of appreciation Of what lies in store for a people Who live their life here in this world, And in many respects, Where very much just we are.
- But now, Having followed, As the Lord himself gave them Opportunity to follow Here in this world, And even into the next, So that they would be with him To whom they gave their heart Here in this world.
- We marvel at the ignorance That surrounds us in this world, That there are so many Who are pleased to think about A heaven Awaiting The soul So that All who exit this world Are above With the opportunity To look down At the earth beneath.
- [ 6 : 4 5 ] And notwithstanding That they lived their lives In total oblivion. Oblivious to the truth Concerning Christ And his death And his Sacrifice For sin.
- And yet they believe it possible That they will be ushered Into his presence A presence A presence they despised Here in this world. A presence they did not seek Nor indeed would they.

And yet the wisdom Of so many is That that is all That lies beyond The world In which we live. Which is a contradiction To what your word Declares to us That Not only is there a heaven But there is a hell.

And those who Leave this world Will go to one Of two places. They will appear In your presence Or they will be Dismissed from it.

They will Experience The mediator Interceding For them Even in glory. Or they will appear In the unmediate presence Of a God Who is holy Whose holy wrath Will burn Without measure And without cessation.

[ 8 : 12 ] Lord as we come Into your presence Remind us Afresh That Here we enjoy The opportunity To come to a throne Of grace Before we appear Before our throne Of judgment Here we have The privileges Afforded us In the gospel That allows us To gather In Relative Peace And harmony And secure From Many of the things That intrude Upon our peace.

We pray That you would Bless Our privileged Position to us And make it A means By which we Praise and magnify The name of God Bless your word To us As we sing it And as we read it Bless the Young children As they are taught From it As the truth Of God Is brought Before Fertile minds And minds That are Unsullied By much Of the Ills Of this world Is so Riddled with That they may Be enabled Through your grace To see Jesus And to Learn to love him As indeed He loves them We pray That you would Impress upon These young minds The wonder

That there is That Jesus Has said Concerning Little children That they are Not to be Prohibited From coming Into his Presence So for the Little children To come Into me For of such Of such Is the kingdom Of heaven There are so Many prohibitions That prevent Them from coming While meaning Parents Perhaps Think that Religion Is a Hindrance And Christianity Is something That Detracts From living Life To the full Whatever the Fullness of Life entails Whereas in Reality The life Lived in Christ Is A life Bettered by Fire Unequored By anything The world Possesses Or would Set before Any one of

Us As Decider So hear Our prayers On behalf Of our Young The children Of our Parents Here in This community We covet Them for Christ And we Pray for Them as We pray For their Parents Even their Grandparents We pray For your Blessing To be Upon The witness And the Testimony Of the Church of Christ May it Be Faithful To God And to Your Revealed Word We pray For your Blessing To be Upon All the Churches Within our Island And beyond And we Pray Lord That you Would bless The gospel As it is Proclaimed Today Remember The young People of Our congregation As they Meet Over the Weekend And we Pray for The time That they Have to Be A time

By which They are Introduced To a Meaningful Experience Of what Being in Christ Entails So that Even as They are Met under The sound Of the Gospel That they Would be Drawn to See Christ For themselves Remember Those who Are going On in This world Who Have so Many years Behind them Of Indifference To the Gospel Or Defiance To the Claims Of Christ Or a Radical Understanding Of the Truth That does Not Support The Claims Of Christ That does Not in Any way Acknowledge The claims That Christ Makes upon Their lives As being Relevant Or Of any Great Merit In their

[ 12 : 51 ] Own wisdom Many have Decided Even having Heard the Gospel Having Witnessed The power Of the Gospel That it Is not Something That they Are willing To yield To In Mercy Lord Take The Blindness That causes Such Lack Of Vision Away So that They may Behold The one Who is All together Lovely We pray For the Power of The Holy Spirit To work Amongst Us Without You We can Do Nothing We trust That your Word will Return And prosper In that Which you Have Sent And Whatever It is That you Intend By it It will In a Great Measure Of Eternity Be Proved For what It is A word

That will Not Return Unto You Empty It will Accomplish As we Said What you Have Purposed For it Our Great Fear Is that Many Are Experiencing Gospel Hardening Because Of their Own Resolute Resistance To the Claims Of Christ Fragment These Stony Hearts And in The fissures Created By Your Own Magnent Power May you Introduce The balm And the Healing Power Of your Love That Christ May be Magnified And That he Would Draw All men To him As promised I If I Am Lifted Up Will Draw All Men To me May we Lift Christ Up In the Gospel As he Was lifted Up Between Heaven And earth On the Cross Of

Galvary His Nailed Pierced Hands Stretched Out To Draw Men And Women Young And Old To him His Feet Nailed To This Cross Signifying That he Was there Unwillingly And yet In the Most real Sense he Was a Willing Sacrifice The Nails Pierced His Limbs Suggesting That he Was there As an Unwilling Victim But as The Lamb Of God He gave Himself A Sacrifice For sin May we See him Thus Pour out Your Spirit Upon us To that End We pray Remember Amongst us Those who Have needs That Are great We think Of those Who are Grieving And sorrowful And sad Those who Have hearts

That have Been recently Assorted By the Bitterness Of Bitter blow Of death And we pray That you Would heal Their hurts We know That this Worm Is not Doubt Our Abiding Place Of Residence We are Sojourners We are Pilgrims So often We reflect On what That means When we Look back Upon our Lives Lives That are Slowly Ebbing We see How true The word Of God Is That here We have No continuing City We pray We pray For wisdom To make Use of The day Of opportunity So heal The hurt Of the Grieving Bear the Burdens Along with Those who Are burdened For loved Ones Those who Are unwell Those who Are cared For in The home Those who Are cared For in The care Homes Of our Community Those who

Are confined To hospital Beds We pray For all And ask That you Would deliver Them From their Grievs And their Sadnesses And their Ailments Whatever they May be Physical or Mental We pray For your Blessing To be Upon all Upon whom Devils The burden Of care Of others And we Thank you For the Disposition That they Have towards Them Remember Our nation That is So deeply Stained With the Sins Of those Who have Turned Their back Upon god We pray For our King His family Government That will Present him In Holyroote And Westminster We pray For the Nations of The earth Some embroiled In war And civil War We pray Lord For your Deliverance And we

[ 17 : 52 ] See So graphically Brought to Us The loss Of life And the Destruction Brought by The hand Of man Puny man Insignificant Man What is he Like in Comparison To the God Who has Brought from Nothing All that There is And who Will reduce To nothing All that There is By the Word of Your Power May we Realise That all Who Are mighty In their Own eyes And all Who These Nations That puff Out their Chest And declare Themselves to Be Omnipotent They are Soon To realise That their Impotence Will be Exposed So help us To pray That the Will of God Will be Done You will Be done

As the Truth That is Before us And we Pray that We would Seek that Above all Else Whatever Prejudice Resides Within our Heart Whatever We believe To be Right Or Whatever We believe To be Wrong We know That God Is just And that Your Righteousness Will be Exalted Above all Nations Hear our Prayers Watch over As we Ask in Jesus name Amen Boys and Girls I'm not Sure Where You're Going to Be today In Sunday School We'll Have a Stab at It anyway I think It might Be You're Working on The commandments And I Think it May be The third

Commandment Yes The third Commandment And We are Reminded By the Lord How we Are to Remember That his Name is A name That is A holy Name And that We shouldn't Have his Name Upon our Lips In vain And we Can do That in Many Ways But Very Simply We live In a Day and Generation Probably no Different to Many others Where The use Of God's Name In an Inappropriate Name Is Commonplace People Know Very Little About the Person Of the Lord Jesus Christ

And Yet Whose Name Is upon Their Lips In a Swear Word More Often Than Any Other Word That they Speak His Name Which is Above Every Name Is a Name That is Upon their Lips As a Swear Word And I think That's The most Obvious Example And God For Richard God Says That it's Not Right God Says That we Should Never Use His Name Inappropriately It's Right For us To Worship Him And to Recognize Who He Is As Our God To Acknowledge All His Attributes What Is True About Him The

Good Things That We Can Say About Him The Power That He Possesses That He Is All Mighty That He Is All Powerful And Yet So Easily Expletives Are Attored That Seem To Suggest That He Does Not Have That Power In The Summer Time I Was On Holiday We We Had A Few Days In Glasgow At Some Point We Were In Glasgow And I Remember Just Going Down Into The City There And I Have To Say I Been Going Here For Many Years And The More Often That I Go The More That I See The Dirt And The Filth That Is On The Streets Of One Of Our Capital Cities One

[ 22 : 55 ] Of Our Main Cities But More Often Than Not What Jars My Ears Is The Language That You Hear On Our Streets The Men And The Women And The Boys And The Girls And The Language That They Use Is Utterly Apparent And The Sad Thing Is While That Stabs Me To The Quick It Doesn't Seem To Mean Anything At All To Them They Are So Used To It They Are Oblivious To These Words And What They Mean And I Think It Tells Us Something About The Reality Of Our Fallenness That Whoever We Are If We Are Exposed

To To That Kind Of Culture Or That Kind Of Language It Soon Becomes Our Own And I Remember In The Workplace How Some People Habitually Swore Habitually Used Bad Language And If You Were To Correct Them Or Address Their Bad Language Some Of Them Would Listen Some Of Them Would Do Their Best To Change Their Language At Least In Your Presence But Some Went Out Of Their Way To Make Sure That You Heard Their Swearing And Their Miss Calling Of God What I Been Taught Is To Pray For Them When

They Refuse Correction To Pray For Them But It's A Day For Them That Awaits Them If They Continue As They Are That The God They Offend Will Bring Their Offences To Their Attention And Deal With Them According God Teaches Us In His Word That We Are To Honor His Name And That We Should Be Mindful Of How We Speak His Name And How We Speak It In His Presence Or Out Of His Presence Well May God Remind Us Of That And We Pray That We Would Be Mindful Of Who He Is As A God Who Is Holy We Are Going To Sing As You Go Out Now Words From Psalm 119 Oh How I Love Thy Laws Psalm 119 Verse 97 We're

Going To Sing The Section Of The Psalm Psalm 119 Verse 97 How Love Thy Law It Is My Study All The Day Makes Me Wiser Than My Foes For It Doth With Me Stay Than All My Teachers Now I Have More Understanding Fire Because My Meditation Thy Testimonies Are In Understanding I Excell Those That Are In For I Endeavour To Keep All Thy Commandments My Feet From Each Will Thill Way I Stay That I May Keep Thy Word I From Thy Judgments Have Not Sweared For Thou Has Taught Me Lord We'll Sing This Section Of The Psalm O How Love Thy Lord Is My Study All The Day O How

Love Thy Thy Lord It Is My Study All The Day It Me To My Serm And My Voice Are It God With Me See Than Almighty Church Church Know I Have More Understand If I Because My Medication I

[ 28 : 01 ] Can Listen Moon Listen When woman Sign In In understanding I excel those lives of ages.

For I am there ready to keep on the lake of my name.

My gift from which I will escape.

That I in the ship thy word. I from thy judgments have not sweared.

For thou hast taught me, Lord. How sweet unto my praise, O Lord.

- [ 29 : 33 ] Are all thy words of truth. May I do find them sweeter, Lord.  
And hand it to my love. I through thy grief steps are pure.  
Through understanding it.  
2 Corinthians chapter 2. Chapter 2. But I determined this with myself.  
That I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad?
- [ 31 : 11 ] But the same which is made sorry by me. And I wrote this same unto you. Lest when I came I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice.  
Having confidence in you all. That my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears.  
Not that ye should be grieved. Not that ye should be grieved. But that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me.  
But in part. That I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man as this punishment which was inflicted of many. So that contrary wise ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him.  
Lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love to Walton.
- [ 32 : 17 ] For to this end also did I write. That I might know the proof of you whether you be obedient in all things. To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also.  
For if I forgive anything, to whom I forgive it. For your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ. Lest Satan should get an advantage of us.  
For we are not ignorant of his devices. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel. And a door was opened unto me of the Lord.  
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.  
Thou thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ. And maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place.
- [ 33 : 19 ] For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ. In them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death.  
And to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things. For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God.  
But as of sincerity. But as of God. In the sight of God speak we in Christ. Amen. And may the Lord that his blessing.  
Through this reading of his word. We can sing now from Psalm 68. Psalm 68 from verse 16.  
To verse 20. Why do you leap, ye mountains high? This is the hill where God desires to dwell. Yea, God in it for a will make a boat.
- [ 34 : 22 ] God's chariots 20,000 drive. Thousands of angels throng. In his holy place God is. As in Mount Sinai them among. Thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended up on high.  
And in triumph victorious led captive captivity. Thou hast received gifts for men. For such as did rebel yea even for them.  
That God the Lord in midst of them might dwell. Blessed be the Lord who is to us of our salvation God. Who daily with his benefits us plenteously doth load.

He of salvation is the God. Who is our God most strong. And unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong. And so on these verses.

Psalm 68 verse 16 to verse 20 to God's praise. Why do ye leap, ye mountains high? Why do ye leap, ye mountains high?

[ 35 : 33 ] This is the hell where God is ours to dwell.

Ye God in it. For ye leap, ye mountains high? God's chariots 20.

Jesus and God. God bless you.

Lord, no glorious ascended up on high.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you.

[ 37 : 04 ] God bless you. God bless you. Thou hast received with gifts on end, for such as did we them.

Game for them that God the Lord in midst of them might dwell.

Amen. Blessed be thou, Lord, who is to us of our salvation God.

Who daily way there's benefits as plenteously adorned.

King of salvation is the God. Who is our God most strong?

[ 38 : 39 ] And can't you drop the Lord from death? Is you who belong?

I'd like us to turn back to the passage of the scripture that we read together. Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians chapter 2.

And we can read from verse 12. Furthermore, when I came to Throas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.

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. Now thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

For we are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish, and so on.

[ 39 : 54 ] I'm sure that every one of us has an idea about what kind of passion a preacher is.

Or, not so much passion, but what do we look for from a preacher of the gospel? What is it that we expect to hear from them?

What is it that makes a preacher of the gospel? And maybe we have our image of the idea, maybe we have idealistic notions of the kind of things that we ought to see and hear, that make them what they profess to be.

Sometimes our thinking is way off the mark. Sometimes what we expect is unrealistic. Sometimes what we believe them to be responsible for is quite contrary to what they are actually called to do.

But if you wanted to find out for yourself what should form the basis of your thinking, you could do worse than study the things that the apostle Paul says about himself, and how he perceives his ministry, the things that he expects to fulfill as a minister of the gospel, his calling, and what it entails.

[ 41 : 40 ] And if we look at some of the things that he has to say, they may surprise us, and they may cause us to wonder.

When he writes to the church in Colossae, he says the following in the first chapter, Whereof I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God, which is given to me for you to fulfill the word of God.

And there are a number of things in that statement. He abbreviates his calling, his message, and the purpose for which God has called him to deliver that message into a few succinct statements.

And in a sense they also correspond to the kind of situations that confronts the apostle here, and how he imagines how he is to fulfill his calling in such a context.

And when we try and look at what Paul is saying here, there are many things that confront us that do not necessarily conform to our ordinary understanding of what the Christian ministry is all about.

[ 43 : 09 ] And they do not obviously teach us anything about the kind of constraints under which a minister of the gospel, let alone a minister such as the apostle Paul, finds himself in.

So I want us to have that at the back of our mind when we look at this section of the epistle. There's a lot going on here, which we don't have time to go into.

But what I think we need to understand is that Paul sees himself pre-eminently as someone that is the means by which God communicates to others.

And that does not simply mean his words. We might think that God's communication to us is always by means of language, spoken word.

And I suppose the bulk of what Paul has to say from God is linguistic. It is language. They are words that we can understand and follow.

[ 44 : 32 ] But sometimes God speaks to us through his providence and the place that he puts his people in.

And that he uses to communicate to us also. Essentially, Paul sees himself as the servant of God.

We've already said that. But we can look at four things, I think, that rise to the top from these verses.

First of all, we see that he states something which we would imagine is really what a preacher is. He is in Troas at that time to preach.

That's what you would expect a preacher to be doing. He is in Troas to preach. That is his calling. That is the pre-eminent thing that his life is engaged in doing.

[ 45 : 43 ] The second thing that we have is that he is there and he sees himself. And I'm not too happy with the word I'm using here, but I'm using it in a particular way.

He is, as the preacher, Christ's prisoner. He is in chains. He is in bondage.

As the preacher of God. And I use that word perhaps with a measure of liberty.

But I hope that when we come to explain what I mean by it, you'll understand what I'm saying. The third thing that we have here, that is his role as a preacher and prisoner of Christ, is to perfume the atmosphere that he is in, whether it is by word of mouth or by his presence.

In verse 15, we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ. And the fourth thing that he is reminding of, that as a preacher of the gospel, as a prisoner of Christ, as the one who perfumes the atmosphere with the fragrance of Christ, that he is called to be principled in his calling.

[ 47 : 19 ] So, four Ps. And that's why there's a stress, there's a strain placed on these words, in a sense. But the first thing, and it's going to be brief, is that he says, that he is in, I came to throw us to preach Christ's gospel.

And a door was opened unto me of the Lord. Now, there's a complexity about Paul's arrival in Troas. Historically, we are told that it's the second time he was there.

Prior to that, if you go back to Acts chapter 18, it will tell you how he came to Corinth. And how he spent 18 months preaching the gospel in Corinth. And his preaching was blessed, along with companions who shared in the burden of preaching the gospel.

And his intention was, after leaving Corinth, to come back there to Corinth and preach the gospel again. He promised that he would come back.

But God's providence prevented him from doing that directly. And events in Corinth changed.

[ 48 : 44 ] And there were complex issues going on in the congregation there that conserved Paul and make his desire to come back there more prevalent.

But his ministry took him back to Troas, which is in Turkey. Now, when he is in Troas, he does what a preacher does.

He preaches. And you would think that the description that is given to us of his preaching is just exactly what a preacher would want. We are told that he preached and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.

Now, some people say that just means that he had the opportunity. And sometimes preachers may want to preach, but the opportunity is not immediately available to them.

Sometimes what they want to preach, they are prevented from preaching because the circumstances that surround their being there prevent them from preaching the message that they envisaged they wanted to preach.

[ 50 : 10 ] There's a whole host of different things that you could imagine impact upon the way Paul is thinking here. But I think essentially what you think, it was an ideal situation for Paul to be in.

A door of opportunity, which means probably my own thinking on it was that the heavens were opened. The spirit of the Lord was present.

His word was being proclaimed and blessed by God. That had happened before in Troas and it was happening again. Ideally, what the Christian preacher wants to see happen.

Opportunity and God's blessing upon it. And then what you find is that regardless of the ideal situation that he was in, in verse 13 you read, I had no rest in my spirit because I felt not tight as my brother, but taking my leave of them I went from thence into Macedonia.

Now, sometimes we're never sure how long this takes. How, you know, it's a matter of minutes, hours, days. But it seems that notwithstanding the opportunity that was there to preach the gospel and that God was blessing it, Paul had to leave it behind.

[ 51 : 42 ] But why he did that, we're not told, other than that he was concerned about his brother in the Lord, Titus.

He was concerned that he wasn't where he expected to find him and he was troubled in his spirit and he needed to leave the preaching behind and go on and find Titus.

So he went to Macedonia. Now, some people find that extraordinary. Some people find fault with the Apostle Paul because of what he did.

And we're not told that the Lord told him to do this. We're not told that the word of the Lord came to Paul and said, go away from here. Sometimes you read of Paul intending to go somewhere and it is a heartfelt desire to go and preach the gospel in a particular place.

But God prevents him and sends a message to him, clear and unambiguous. No, don't go there, go here. This is where I want you to be.

[ 52 : 49 ] But that's not what you find here. And you wonder why. And sometimes the complexity surrounding the role of a preacher is such that it may not be obvious what the Lord is doing or how he is doing it or why he is doing it.



It's not for him to explain the mystery and the complexity of the building up of his kingdom, which he does always.

What came to mind as I was reading this was the account that we have in Mordoma Collies, the book that went into his diaries, I loved, and his history, and his life as a minister.

And I had heard it many years ago that when he was a minister in Govan, that at the time that he was called to go to Bach, that there was a revival in the congregation in Govan.

And he received the call from Bach, and he accepted the call. And many people were much, much against that decision.

[ 54 : 18 ] But I hadn't realized until I read his own account of it how difficult it was for him to respond to the call from Bach.

In fact, according to the account that you have in the book, he tells us there that he had written a letter to the session clerk of the congregation or the presbytery, presbytery clerk, indicating that he was turning down the call from Bach.

But he had never posted it. And it was his own word that he never, ever wished to receive a call again if he had to go through what he went through as a result of having to decide whether the Lord meant him to stay where he was or go elsewhere.

Sometimes, as on Lucas, we cannot enter into the situation that the preacher is in or the servant of God is in.

To try and understand why Paul did what he did, may not, you know, people would say, well, Tactus was just a servant of the Lord, the same as you are.

[ 55 : 40 ] He had to do his own thing. He had to face his own problems. Your calling was to preach, and your preaching was being blessed, and the word of God was having free course.

That was your calling. But Paul left through us and went to Macedonia. And no explanation is given to us.

But then he says, he goes into what people call a digression. A digression that lasts from verse 14 into chapter 7.

Well into chapter 7. And whether we agree with that assessment or not, it is clear that there is a breach made here at this point.

He doesn't explain what happened, but he goes into the detail, if you like, of what it is like for him to be under the call of God as a preacher of the gospel.

[ 56 : 47 ] And he calls himself, and I have called him a prisoner of Christ, but I says, I have found, thanks be unto God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

He's not justifying his actions at this point, although it may seem to us that that is what he is saying. Never you mind what I was doing in Troas. Never you mind that you would have done differently.

What I believe is that God was able to bless me wherever I am as a servant. Now that's not the way Paul is thinking at all.

But he is describing his own calling in a particular way. And it doesn't seem immediately obvious to us. Thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

It doesn't matter how hard you try and unravel these verses. They're very difficult to make sense of. But looking at the translation that we have in the ESV, you find a bit more light.

[ 58 : 21 ] Just a bit. And the ESV translation of verse 14 is, Thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

That sort of establishes the imagery that the apostle is using.

His description, and most of the commentators have this understanding, that what is in the mind's eye of the apostle at this point is this.

The triumphal procession as it is described, or the triumph in Christ that he is alluding to, is based upon a description that some of them would be familiar with.

And the image is of Roman soldiers who were on a campaign, returning to Rome.

[ 59 : 36 ] With the permission of the emperor, they were allowed to proceed into the city in procession, and they would be celebrated as victorious.

And part of the procession would involve them displaying the captives that were part of their, the emphasis, the evidence for their triumph.

So the paraded, as part of that procession, would be the vanquished foe in chains. And as part of the celebration, different versions of what took place exist, some say that at the head of the procession, there would be obviously the general, or whoever it is, riding on horseback, going at the head of his soldiers.

But in front of them, there would be those who carried censers of incense. And they would wave the incense, which would have a fragrant scent in the air.

Some say that it was all alongside the procession, so that the smell of burning incense would follow the procession into the centre of the city, where the emperor would wait for them.

[ 61 : 16 ] And if you can imagine that picture, Paul is describing himself in that respect.

He always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. But what is significant is that Paul is not seeing himself there, as if he is one of the generals leading the procession, but rather one of those that are in captivity, that they are the Lord's prisoner, and as such, they are fragrating the atmosphere by their presence.

It's a complicated picture, but it is a picture of how Paul sees his role. One of the commentators, Denny, says, Paul is not the soldier who wins the battle and shouts for victory as he marches in triumphal procession.

He is the captive who is led in the conqueror's train, and in whom men see the trophy of the conqueror's power. I think that's more an accurate reflection of how Paul sees himself.

He always causes us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

[ 62 : 58 ] So that Paul has this duality. He himself is somebody that Christ has triumphed over, has brought captive by the power that Christ alone possesses.

He was once an enemy, and Christ has brought him to submit to him. But not only is Paul submissive to Christ, he is also somebody as Christ's ambassador, Christ's preacher, somebody who proclaims the unsearchable reaches of Christ and who fragrances the atmosphere with the word of God and the truth of the gospel.

You will notice that Paul describes himself as the aroma, the sweet savour of Christ.

That's not easy to explain in many respects, but I think it has to be understood like that, because what Paul is describing is his interpretation of the place that he possesses.

He is not saying, look at me because of my superior knowledge or my gifted ability to proclaim the gospel.

[ 64 : 21 ] Look at me, somebody that Christ has triumphed over, that Christ has brought captive. Look at me as someone who is now projecting that same Christ to you.

Derek Prime writes, to those who receive the message of the gospel, we are the fragrance of Christ, for we bring them the good news about him.

We are the fragrance of Christ, for we bring them the fragrance or the good news of Christ about him. In the Roman context, again, what you have to remember is this.

There were those who were prisoners and they were in chains and they were captive. Their fate was set.

They were either going to be sold in a slave market and some of them would be in bondage for the rest of their days. Some of them would be brought by those who operated the entertainment of the day and they would be sent to the amphitheaters where they would be put to death as sport.

[ 65 : 48 ] They would face the lions or they would face the wild beasts or they would be put to death by gladiators in the arena.

You can imagine in that situation that this savior that he speaks of, we are unto God a sweet savior of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish.

To the one we are the savior of death and to death and to the other the savior of life and to life. who is sufficient for these things. What does Paul say? The same message that I bring you of good news.

The same message that I bring you of a Redeemer who is Christ Jesus. The same message that I bring to you that tells you that there is life in Christ tells you that there is death for you without it.

and it doesn't matter that there is only life by way of the gospel or the gospel establishes that you are spiritually dead destined to be eternally damned to spiritual death.

[ 67 : 07 ] the question that Paul asks declares the solemnity of what he has to say. Who is sufficient for these things?

The burden is his. He has to tell people you have to tell that the righteous that there is salvation in Christ. You have to tell the righteous that all is well with their soul but equally so you have to tell the wicked that their faith is sealed if they continue as they are.

Paul has no choice in the matter and that's why the verse that comes at the very end of the chapter insists on this. We are not as many which corrupt the word of God but as of sincerity but as of God in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

It's not up to me to decide what message that I preach. It's not down to me to keep from you what might hurt you what might concern you what might disturb you.

What you need to hear from me is the truth. What would you like to hear? Would you like me to tell you that everything is well with your soul when it isn't? Would you like me to tell you that you're safe when you're not?

[ 68 : 33 ] Would you like me to tell you that you're quite at ease in your life when you have no right to be at ease in your life because your life is without Christ? Maybe that's the kind of minister you would prefer.

Paul doesn't want to be that kind of minister. I'm going to finish with a story from Bishop Ryle. in his day he always had to preach the gospel but he remembers a man called Hugh Latimer who was put to death by Queen Mary I think it was but he was burnt at the stake if I remember correctly.

But at one point he was called to appear before King Henry VIII and his speech to King Henry VIII went like this Latimer Latimer do you remember you are speaking before the high and mighty King Henry VIII before him who has power to command that you be sent to prison before him who can have your head cut off if it please him will you not take care to say nothing that will offend royal ears?

It's as if he's speaking to himself and after a pause he says Latimer Latimer do you not remember that you are speaking before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords before him at whose bar Henry VIII will stand before him who will one day you will have to give account yourself Latimer Latimer be faithful to your Master and to your Lord well you know King Henry VIII he was quite liberal with who he executed didn't matter to him and Latimer took a very grave risk but he understood that the message of the Gospel needed to be the message of the Gospel whosoever here heard it you don't change it to suit the audience you don't preach a different

Gospel just because those who are present don't want to hear this Gospel Paul knew the place that he had his words would be aromatic to some but they would be very opposite to others it is like that today it is like that today no different it will be like that until the end of time but God be praised that his Gospel is still the same Gospel and that whoever preaches the Gospel whoever is faithful to their calling as vassals of the King of Kings the Lord of Glory they are assured that what they do in his name will be blessed by him do you believe that do you believe that well you should because at the end of your days my days we are all going to appear in the same place give account for ourselves for me what

[ 72 : 37 ] Gospel have you preached for you what have you done with the Gospel that was preached to you did you believe did you put your trust in Christ well may God encourage you so to let us pray the Lord our God we give thanks that the apostle was in many respects someone who displayed vulnerabilities that are human and there are decisions that he took that maybe are not immediately obvious to us as to what they were based upon but we thank the God who was sovereign that all things are done well and to your glory and that we pray that your blessing would be upon the endeavours that are so much bound in with our own humanity and our weakness but that the glory is yours in

Christ may all who hear of him be drawn to him forgive our sins in him Amen I am going to sing from Psalm 61 Psalm 61 and verse 5 For thou the vows that I did make O Lord my God didst hear thou hast given me the heritage of those thy name that fear a life prolonged for many days thou to the king shalt give like many generations be the years which he shall live he in God's presence his abode forevermore shall have O do thou truth and mercy both prepare that may him save and so will I perpetually sing praise unto thy name that having made my vows

I may each day perform the same for thou the vows that I did me O Lord my God it's here are thou the vows not I believe O Lord my God it's here thou hast been in the de in O true, the King, He shall give, like many generations in the years which He shall live.

He is all that, the King, He shall give, like many generations in the years which He shall live.

He shall give, like many generations in the years which He shall live.

[ 77 : 04 ] He shall give, like many generations in the years which He shall live.

He shall give, like many generations in the years which He shall live. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.