

## **Bible Study Notes**

### **2 Corinthians: Section 8.**

by Larry Roach

### **2 Corinthians 2: 14-16**

#### **The Victor's March**

“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved, and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life,” **vv. 14-15.**

**The Victor's March:** God is leading us in a triumphal procession in Christ and for that we are thankful. He is leading the victor's march and we are following dressed in the armor of God and his robes of righteousness -- keeping in step with him. Paul could have been thinking of a couple of contemporary examples as he wrote this passage. One, he could have been thinking of the triumphal march of the Roman soldiers when they came back from a victorious battle and they marched into the city. Dressed in armor, they would be carrying the treasures of their battle, and would be led by the commander of the army. Also, Paul could have been thinking of the Olympic Games and how those who won the competitions would proceed in a victor's march carrying the crowns that they had secured to present before the Emperor.

In like manner, we too are being led in a processional march in Christ our Lord as those who have won victory over the world. We keep in step with Christ keeping our eyes focused upon him. I can remember when I was in boot camp and learning how to march with a group of men. It was essential that we stayed in step with one another. Every time we took a step with a left foot, everyone else was to be taking the same step. To keep us on step, the commander would call out the cadence left, right, left, right to guide us along the way. And so it is with Christ as he is calling out the cadence through the Holy Spirit and the Word. The Scriptures instruct us: “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit,” **Galatians 5:25.**

**More than Conquerors:** “In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our lord,” **Romans 8:37 - 39.** Notice we did not overcome the world in ourselves, for we overcome the world in Christ. Christ overcame the world and we are included in him and his overcoming when we believe.

Likewise, we are carrying crowns of victory just as the Olympic athletes; however, ours are spiritual crowns. We see from Scriptures at least four crowns that are mentioned: **1 Corinthians 9:25** states, we have an eternal crown. **2 Timothy 4:8** says we have a crown of righteousness. **James 1:12** says we have the crown of life. **1 Peter 5** says we have the crown of glory. We are carrying these crowns until we reach our destination

which is the Throne of God. I would suspect at that time we will lay these crowns at the feet of Jesus as the twenty-four elders will, cf. **Revelation 4:10**.

**Aroma of Christ:** “We are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved, and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life,” **v.16**. First note that we “are to God the aroma of Christ.” This is really good news for when God smells us he smells the sweet fragrance of Christ and not our sinful flesh.

Therefore, as God leads us in procession with Christ, there are two groups of people that are observing. There are those who are being saved and they smell Christ which is the fragrance of life. They respond “yes” with joy to this fragrance. However, others who are perishing, the fragrance of Christ is not the fragrance of life – but it is the smell of death. They smell their own death, because in the light of Christ they see they are guilty and deserving of judgment. And since they are not willing to repent, they see the outcome of their sins which is judgment and death. In other words, when the fragrance of Christ appears, great condemnation comes upon them and they smell judgment. As a response they push away from Christ even more because of the fear of judgement, and they begin to hide in darkness, instead of coming into his light. Oftentimes, this explains why when we are walking with Christ we face persecution and rejection because of the fragrance of Christ is flowing through us.

It is important to notice, Apostle Paul is not speaking about sometime in the future that this victor's march is taking place. It is taking place currently for the believer in Christ, not only in the first century -- it is still taking place today. Those who have come to Christ have been invited into the victor's march and are marching along with all of the saints from throughout history.

“For everyone born of God overcomes the world; this is the victory that has overcome the world even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God,” **1 John 5:4-5**.

**The Verdict:** “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of the light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God,” **John 3:18-21**.

Consequently, those who believe in Jesus are not condemned. However the one who does not believe stands condemned already. Notice that it says he is already condemned. He is standing in his condemnation in the present, because he did not believe in the name of God's one and only Son. This is one of the reasons when you encounter someone who is rejecting Jesus, a condemnation will come over them

because condemnation is their state of being, because of their sin and the judgment to come.

In conclusion, there is a verdict that has come into the world regarding those who love darkness instead of the light. A verdict is a legal term -- it is one of judgment that has already come. This passage is very clear that people love darkness because their deeds are evil -- therefore they will not come into the light. They do not want their sins or their evil deeds to be exposed so they continue to hide in the darkness thinking they cannot be seen by God. However those who are justified by Christ, and being saved, will come into the light so that everything may be seen plainly in the light for the glory of God. They do not try to hide from God, because they know that their sins have already been judged in Christ and the price for their forgiveness has been satisfied by the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Now the believer in Christ can stand before God without any condemnation and is now free to live a new life unto the glory of God.

**In light of this truth, what would God have you do?**