

The Fragrance of Victory

But 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.

2 Corinthians 2:14 ESV

Roman military triumphs were often followed by elaborate processions down the streets of Rome. There were certain criteria by which a conqueror had to comply to warrant such exaltation. Among the requirements was that the victory had to be decisive with a large number of enemy combatants killed. The victory had to put an end to hostilities and extend the territory of the state.

On the day of the procession the conqueror was dressed in fine apparel and rode in the finest chariot drawn by four horses. The people lined the streets with palm branches and waived them in the air as they shouted for joy over the great conquest and in honor of their conqueror. The presence of the town officials at the parade was also a great honor to the conqueror.

As part of the parade the conqueror displayed the spoils of war. All of the precious metals and artifacts were displayed for the people to see. Even the prisoners of war were forced to march in the parade. The temples of the gods were opened and decorated with beautiful flowers and incense was burned from the altars. Fragrant spices were burned in the streets so all the people could smell the odor of victory.

The procession ended with sacrifices and offerings being made to the gods. This was followed by a feast in which the public was invited to attend. It is not too unreasonable to believe that the prisoners of war were made to look on as the people feasted with the king. A table was prepared for the victors in the presence of their enemies. It was a grand celebration.

Maybe this triumphal procession was going through the mind of Paul when he penned the words of 2 Corinthians 2:14. Through Jesus' triumph on the cross and consequent resurrection he has won a decisive victory over the enemy. We are now partakers with him of that victory and have been made the fragrance of victory. He has even prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies.

His victory is worthy of our highest praise; not only as we wave our palm branches (arms), but as we allow our lives to be his fragrance to those around us.

Have you been washed in the blood of the Lamb? Has Jesus delivered you from the consequences of sin and death? Ask the Father to make you the fragrance of his victory in every place.

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Scriptures for meditation:

1 Corinthians 2:15-16

Psalms 23:5

Revelation 7:9-10