

Apply The Word

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Message Info

Title:

Genuine Gospel
Mission

Speaker:

Steve Heitland

Date:

April 26th, 2026

Scriptures:

2 Corinthians 2:12–17

Theme: Recognize true mission so that you live for God's glory.

Introduction: Christians have largely embraced the principle that the highest purpose of most of our relationships is to share the gospel; therefore, according to this thinking, all other aims should be subjugated to the purpose of winning souls for Christ. However, Paul's model and motivations stand in opposition to much of what is prized in mission and ministry in the Evangelical church today. By understanding mission from the Lord's perspective, we can be effective as Christians in our various roles in God's world.

Second Corinthians 2:12–17 can be split into three categories:

1. The nature of the mission (12–13)

- Paul was, above all else, a gospel preacher, and he was especially focused on preaching the gospel where Christ had not yet been named.
- There were two factors that influenced Paul's decision regarding Troas and Macedonia: providential direction (v. 12) and subjective discernment (v. 13)
- Authentic Christian mission is preeminently about the gospel, operates on a human level, and is carried out by the Lord's chosen agents.

2. The aroma of the mission (14–16a)

- Verse 14 begins the next major section of the letter, about the nature of gospel ministry, which lasts until 2 Corinthians 7:4.
- Paul uses the imagery of Roman triumphal processions to point to Christ as the general, and himself as the incense bearer perfuming the streets.
- Gospel ministers carry the fragrance of Christ in a unique way, since their task is one of proclamation.
- Our lives bear an increasingly clear and evident testimony of the Savior's grace, but to those who are perishing, that aroma is the aroma of death.

3. The agent of the mission (16b–17)

- Those who have been appointed by the risen Christ to serve his church as gospel ministers are sufficient to the task if they are faithful to the Lord and his message.
- Paul identifies three essential character qualities that the authentic gospel minister must bear: (1) he must be sincere, (2) he must be commissioned by God, and (3) he must speak in the sight of God "in Christ."
- Paul states there are many false teachers, and God's people must be spiritually discerning.

Questions:

1. How is your life bearing the fragrance of Christ to those around you?
2. Are your loves rightly ordered as you represent Christ to others?
3. How do you need to grow in embracing the ordinary Christian life?