

“THE SWEET SMELL OF VICTORY”

(2Corinthians 2:1-17)

May 21, 2017

God is to be praised when a church grows, whether in numbers OR faithfulness.

The Apostle Paul was a competitive person, always wanting to be the FIRST to preach the gospel in a city:

It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

Romans 15:20

Paul did not do it alone, nor even attempt to do so. Paul understood that the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ is and must be a TEAM effort. Last week, we learned the importance of integrity in leadership. But, there must also be integrity in FOLLOWERSHIP.

**I. Learning to handle ADVERSITY
Sin is always difficult to OVRECOME.**

Paul did not write to cause them grief, but to let them know that he LOVED them. He found no JOY in painful confrontation.

II. Learning to handle FORGIVENESS and restoration

The man being referred to has apparently REPENTED and asked forgiveness. Paul wants the church to realize that what has hurt him has hurt the ENTIRE church.

Those who attempt to undermine church leadership ought to be dealt with FIRMLY and forthrightly.

There are times when an individual in the church is off-base in their spirit and in the things they say and do, which POISONS the spirit of the church and lessens the ability of those who are trying their best to give godly leadership.

**Too often, fellow members who disagree with the critic remain SILENT.
But:**

“The pain of confrontation is to be preferred to the sin of silence.”

-Pastor Kenneth Chafin

Paul says that whatever punishment was given him was sufficient, and now it is time to forgive. The church is made up – 100% - of people who HAVE been forgiven.

How can we fail to forgive, if asked to do so by a REPENTANT person who has wronged us? We MUST forgive!

III. Learning to handle WINNING

Paul remembered that he was on the winning team – Team JESUS. Wherever we go in God's name, we are part of a triumphant procession in Christ – a winning group. And we share a wonderful aroma – the sweet smell of VICTORY!

“Whenever I look into the faces of 100 people here, I realize that 98 of them are headed to hell. How can we not be here?” -Dr. Bill Ankerberg

There are 200 churches closing per week in the United States.

I love the teamwork that is a passion throughout our church movement now known as Converge. In contrast to the 200 churches closing each week::

“In 2016, our districts started 30 new churches here in the States, and our U.S. churches launched 19 additional sites. That's 49 new congregations in one year. In addition, 33 independent churches chose to join our movement through affiliation with our 11 districts. So, the grand total is 82 churches added to the Converge movement in 12 months. And each of these is helping people to meet, know and follow Jesus.” -President Scott Ridout

We have an incredible team of Christian believers in THIS church. Some are staff – most are not.

Whether we go out into the community of Lake Havasu OR the community of God's earth somewhere else, so long as we present before us the Gospel truth, we carry with us the sweet smell of victory!