

2 Corinthians 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ— The verb thriambeuonti (θριαμβεύοντι, "to lead in triumphal procession") evokes Roman military triumph ceremonies where generals paraded captives through Rome's streets. Paul daringly applies this image to apostolic ministry—but with a twist: apostles are not the triumphant generals but the captive slaves in Christ's procession. God in Christ leads the triumph; Paul is the displayed prize of grace.

And maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place— In Roman triumphs, incense was burned throughout the procession route. Paul transforms this into spiritual metaphor: osmēn tēs gnōseōs autou (όσμην τῆς γνώσεως αὐτοῦ, "the aroma of His knowledge") spreads through apostolic preaching. The term phaneroō (φανερόω, "to make manifest, reveal") indicates God reveals Himself through ministerial suffering. Paul's hardships—anxiety over Corinth, leaving open doors—paradoxically spread Christ's fragrance. This inverts worldly success metrics: faithfulness in weakness manifests God's power.

Historical Context

Roman triumphal processions were spectacular events where victorious generals paraded through Rome with captives, spoils, and burning incense. Only the Senate could grant a triumph. Citizens lined streets as incense filled the air. Paul's

audience would immediately grasp the imagery's power—but would be shocked by his reversal: Christ triumphs, and apostles are His willing captives.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's portrayal of apostles as captive slaves challenge success-oriented ministry?
2. What does it mean that ministerial suffering spreads the knowledge of Christ?
3. How is Christ's triumph displayed through our weakness rather than our strength?

Interlinear Text

Τῷ	δὲ	θεῷ	χάρις	τῷ	πάντοτε	θριαμβεύοντι	ἡμᾶς	
G3588	Now	be unto God	thanks	G3588	which always	causeth	us	
G1161		G2316	G5485		G3842	G2358	G2248	
ἐν	τῷ	Χριστῷ	καὶ	τὴν	όσμὴν	τῆς	γνώσεως	αὐτοῦ
in	G3588	Christ	and	G3588	the savour	G3588	knowledge	G846
G1722		G5547	G2532		G3744		G1108	
φανεροῦντι	δι'	ἡμῶν	ἐν	παντὶ	τόπῳ			
maketh manifest	by	us	in	every	place			
G5319	G1223	G2257	G1722	G3956	G5117			

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:2 (References Christ): And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Romans 8:37 (Parallel theme): Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Romans 6:17 (References God): But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

2 Corinthians 9:15 (References God): Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

Psalms 106:47 (References God): Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.

Colossians 2:15 (Parallel theme): And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Song of Solomon 1:3: Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.

Romans 15:19 (References Christ): Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Colossians 1:23 (Parallel theme): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Psalms 148:14 (Parallel theme): He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.