



Nuggets 42: Stench or Fragrance?

The preacher sat down to open his mail. Two letters responded to the same radio sermon. One person wrote, "Thank you so much for your message! God must have prompted me to turn the radio on, because your lesson was exactly what I needed!" The other wrote, "I couldn't believe my ears. How can you waste people's time with this trash?" Same exact radio message but two very different hearts.

John the Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey in the desert. Jesus lived among the people and socialized. Yet the leaders of the Jewish religious establishment rejected them both. The leaders worshiped themselves and were repelled by God's values no matter how you wrapped them.

The same Jesus is to some "a stumbling stone" but to others a "foundation stone" that saves. Our response becomes our judgment. Paul said Christians are "the fragrance of life" to those who are being saved, but "the stench of death" to those who are being lost. Same Christians, but two opposite perceptions. What repels me? What draws me? This says everything about my own character and destiny.

Am I critical or am I thankful when honest shepherds try to draw me from self-service to Christ-service? What appeals to me more than Christ does? Should I be asking God to awaken my appetite for the things that really lead to life?

Luke 7:31-34; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6-8; Matthew 21:42; Luke 2:34,35; 2 Corinthians 2:15,16; Matthew 5:6; Luke 8:18

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