

**“A Fragrant Offering”**  
**Sermon for Sunday, August 12, 2018**

**SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:22-5:2**

**“Live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering...”**

The sense of smell is very powerful.

Some smells repel us, but there are fragrances that touch our emotions or carry us back in time.

The fragrance of fresh baking bread...

Or the scent of pine at Christmas time...or the smell of salt water by the beach...

The fragrance of lily of the valley... reminds me of my grandfather's house.

Clean, line-dried sheets. And you can think of others?

I wondered: What are the most expensive perfume fragrances?

- **[Image Perfume 1]** The most expensive one you can buy is the DKNY Golden Delicious Million Dollar Perfume. The main reason for the exorbitant price is the one-of-a-kind bottle that contains a 2.43-carat yellow Canary diamond in the cap, 4-carat rose-cut diamond, 3-carat oval-cut ruby, 1-carat tourmaline from Brazil, 4 rose-cut diamonds, 15 pink diamonds from Australia, 7-carat oval sapphire from Sri Lanka, 2,700 white diamonds, and 183 yellow sapphires. Each stone was carefully hand placed and the entire manufacturing process took about 1,500 hours. This million-dollar perfume was created for a noble cause as the sale proceeds were donated to the 'Action Against Hunger' charity organization. Hmm... Feels like there is a little something ironic about that. OK, so maybe that is too rich for your blood...
- **[Image Perfume 2]** How about Clive Christian No. 1 Imperial Majesty Perfume? A bit more affordable at a little over \$12,000 per ounce. The description says this enchanting and sophisticated fragrance for women (or men, I suppose) is created by a combination of ingredients including Tahitian vanilla, Italian cinnamon, jasmine, orris root, and rose oil. You are sure to feel like the Greek goddess of love and beauty, Aphrodite, when you wear this perfume. The bottle's neck is made of 18-carat gold inset with a five-carat brilliant-cut diamond.

**But there is a fragrance worth more than either of these. The Apostle Paul says: "Live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering..."**

The most valuable fragrance of all is the fragrant offering of Jesus Christ. And what is that fragrance that comes from Christ? It is the fragrance of love, of compassion, of forgiveness, of grace. And if we are Christians, we are called to be like Jesus.

If we have made the decision to be a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, God's Messiah, then our lives should reflect a change. We let go of old ways of living and old priorities and we reorient ourselves to the mind and life of Christ... We also should be a fragrant offering-- to God and to others!

So do you pass the smell test?

When others are around us... they observe the way we live our lives, what we say, what is important to us--what fragrance is in the air?

**In his letter to the church at Ephesus, in Asia Minor, Paul talks about a number of beautiful fragrances.**

**There is the fragrance of kindness.** It is amazing how kindness can be a very simple thing. Saying hello and sharing a smile with people you meet... making an effort to learn a name... sending a small card or making a call. Your small act of kindness may be just what someone needed at a particular moment to build them up. Our kind act may be God using us to offer someone encouragement or to lift them up at just the right time.

Be kind... everyone is facing some kind of a challenge. And often we are unaware. There was recently a picture on Facebook that someone had taken... it was a picture at a Dairy Queen. An elderly woman was seated in the passenger seat with the door open and what appeared to be her husband was squatting down near her, feeding her ice cream. That's kindness...

And it is not limited to those we know.

Does your life express the fragrant offering of kindness?

"Live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering..."

**There is the fragrance of being tender-hearted**... another word for "empathy". Our trials build empathy. Our life challenges, disappointments, and hardships empower us to be understanding of others, to put ourselves in their shoes. In fact, something good can come out of our hard times and disappointments, when they allow us to be tender-hearted or empathetic toward another.

I have to say, I have struggled recently, with this downtown construction traffic to be either kind or tender-hearted. And I catch myself with a bit of road rage. But over the years, I decide to say to myself, "Well maybe that person is on their way to an emergency!" When we are tender-hearted, we see the world and others differently. I become less judgemental.

Does your life express the fragrant offering of empathy?

"Live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering..."

### **There is the fragrance of being forgiving.**

Forgiveness is giving up your right to get even.

Forgiving does not mean we will forget, or that we are saying what happened is OK. Forgiving does not even mean we have to be reunited with the other person.

Maybe someday we will forget... Or maybe someday we will be reunited.

But those are not requirements to forgive.

Forgiveness is simply giving up our right to get even.

And we do it, to make ourselves well.

Not forgiving is like eating rat poison and expecting the rat to die.

Out of forgiveness healing has an opportunity to come...

for ourselves, for our relationships.

Maybe you are not ready yet, but in time...

Does your life express the fragrant offering of forgiveness?

Each of our lives wafts a fragrance into the world... into the lives of those around us. What is the name of your scent?

Kindness...

Empathy...

Forgiving...

A fragrance worth more than money can buy.

Let us pray...