

# FRAGRANCE

From the start of the year, Vision Sunday, Forefront has been reflecting on what it means to be the aroma of Christ in the world (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). We will revisit some of the main themes in this short series, and introduce new ideas.

16 September • Jo Kerr  
Fragrance of sacrifice

The aroma of sacrifice, offered in response to salvation, is pleasing to God. We first learn this after Noah and his family emerge from the Ark (Genesis 8:20-21). Later, when the people of Israel are delivered from slavery in Egypt, they make offerings and sacrifices whose smell pleases God: from Exodus to Deuteronomy, we see 36 times the phrase, “It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma.”

The ultimate and final sacrifice for sin was Jesus’s offering of himself on the Cross (Hebrews 10:11-14), and the pleasing aroma of that is eternal. Meanwhile, here on earth, God still seeks those who will make their lives a living sacrifice, “holy and pleasing to God” (Rom 12:1). But what does it mean to live your life as a thankful sacrifice?



The science of fragrance is astonishing. Smell is processed by the parts of the brain which deal with emotion and memory. It brings remembrance, and it triggers a response.

What that response is will be different for different people, according to their experiences and culture. The smell of a damp goat means different things to a Brit and a Maasai, for instance—and think about the compliment in Genesis 27:27!

(Listen again to the Vision Sunday sermon for more on this).

## 23 September • David Burfield Fragrance of worship

What does it mean for our worship to be fragrant, to be acceptable and pleasing to God? Jesus taught that true worshippers worship in 'spirit and in truth' (Jn 4:24) and challenged those who honour God with their lips but not their lives (Mt 5:8).

Fragrant worship combines praise and good works (Heb 13:15-16); an outward expression that reflects righteous living (Amos 5:21-24). Such worship embraces the whole person, all that we are: our heart, mind, spiritual being, gifts, strengths and possessions are brought together to honour God (Mk 12:30).

## 30 September • Dave Sutcliffe Fragrance of prayer

The book of Revelation shows us a vision of the mightiest creatures in heaven, and 24 human elders, holding "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev 5:6-8). We later see "another angel" being given "much incense" to be added to these prayers (8:3-4), perhaps indicating God's mercy in taking our little prayers and making them much more potent.

The important point is not that we must use incense in worship—it is to constantly kindle our prayer life so that our prayers rise like fragrant smoke, mingling with those of the rest of the Church, and change realities in the spiritual realms.



**May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice. Psalm 141:2**