

## 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12

### **READ 4:1-12**

- The work of the ministry? Giving Light!
- The work of the light? VS. 4 That is; the beaming forth of the gospel.
- The work of the gospel light? VS. 6 That is; the knowledge of the glory of God as seen in Jesus as in the face of Jesus Christ.
- In the ministry is the gospel of the glory of Christ.
- In the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, the life of Christ abiding, resident in the believer, striving to manifest the life of Christ, this is the purpose, the expectation of the shining forth.

This section; 7-12, is one of 3 sections in 2 Corinthians where Paul writes of his sufferings, the other two are 6:1-10, 11:22-12:10.

This week.

**HOW DOES GOD REVEAL THE TREASURE IN THE BELIEVERS LIFE? 8-12**

### WHAT IS THE TREASURE?

- Two possible meanings.
  - 1) The Spirit of God in the Soul of man.
  - 2) The ministry and gospel God had committed to Paul/us.
    - This treasure is the ministry, it is a treasure for in it resides the gospel, the power of God unto salvation.
    - It is the new birth, the life of Christ within.

### WHAT IS MEANT BY "EARTHEN VESSEL"

- This earthen vessel, clay pot, is meant not just the human body, but the whole human being, person.
- The weak, suffering, incompetent perishing man. His whole humanity. Body, strength, mind, intellect, will, etc.
- We are just earthen vessels and what is important is the treasure, the earthen jar must just be clean and empty to be filled.
- Take care of the treasure and God will take care of the vessel.

### WHAT IS THIS POWER?

- Excellence: hyperbole. A throwing beyond. Surpassing.
- The power of God not of man.

### WHY DOES GOD USE THIS METHOD? (Treasure in clay pots.)

- That the Excellency of the power may be seen to be of God!
  - **1 Cor. 2:1-5**
  - 2 Cor. 10:10b, *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible."

- Gal. 4:13; Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you
  - 2 Cor. 11:6a, Even though *I am* untrained in speech
  - 1 Cor. 1:21-29, that no flesh should glory in His presence.
- The effects and results of Paul's ministry infinitely transcend all human powers and abilities in order to magnify the truth of divine power operating in the gospel ministry.
  - That the inherent power within the ministry of the gospel is clearly displayed to be that, not of the talent of an earthen vessel, not its ability and power, but that of the Excellency of God's power.
  - *"All God's giants have been weak men and women who did great things for God because they reckoned on Him being with them."* HUDSON TAYLOR.
  - It is interesting to note that modern ministry with all its pomp and ceremony, all its advantages, special trainings, technology, human skill and gifting, management, organization and finances cannot come close to the power and resulting fruit that the primitive church experienced.

#### **HOW DOES GOD REVEAL, MANIFEST THE TREASURE IN THE BELIEVERS LIFE?**

- On the personal level our treasure is the life of Christ in the soul of the believer.
- Knowing experientially the reality of the life of God, a new life dynamic in our soul.
- This treasure must be worked out, from the inside out.
- This is why the treasure is deposited in a fragile vessel.
- The outer man must give way to the inner man.
  - Eph. 4:21-24;
  - Gideon: Judges 7:20; Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!"
  - The breaking then the light blazing, then proclaiming..
  - Watchman Nee, the "Release of the Spirit."

#### **VS. 8**

- Notice the connection between the "we have," (vs 7) and the "we are." (vs 8)
  - "We are" because "we have."
  - These verses are Paul's testimony of the process of how God sovereignly worked in his circumstances to bring the treasure out, by the breaking of the earthen vessel.
  - Paul compares his circumstances to a contest which he is a combatant.
- **Hard pressed** (troubled, KJV) on every side, but **not crushed**.
  - Pressed or afflicted. As grapes in the press.

- To press together, to be pressed as in a crowd,
- Pressed for room, yet still having room. Pressed by his opponent yet able to turn.
- To oppress or compress with evils, to distress or afflict.
  - **1:8-11**
- (7:5) For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears.
- Mk. 3:9 So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him
- The very word used here as used in classic Greek writing signifies being dashed from without. As the beating of water against a rock and making no trouble or effect in the rock.
- Perplexed but not in despair.
  - Being at a loss of what to say or do. Seemingly having no way or means available.
  - Phil. 1:23-24, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, or stay..
  - Constantly being doubtful of what way to take, yet always finding, being lead to some open way. (Acts 16:6-11)
  - Without resources, to know not what to do, to hesitate, to be in doubt, as a traveler who does not know or not sure of the way or not having the means to execute his travels.
- Not in despair: Not altogether without help. When all earthly resources seemed to fail him, in some unexpected way their need was met and they were saved from despair.

## VS. 9

- Persecuted but not forsaken.
  - To be pursued, hunted.
  - Not forsaken. Not abandoned. Not left behind. **2 Tim. 4:9-18**
- Struck down but not destroyed.
  - Struck down: to be thrown to the ground, down.
  - Destroy: to destroy utterly, to utter ruin.
- Though God allowed man to harass and persecute him, seeking even to take his usefulness and life, yet God did not desert him, or give him up to the power of those who pursued him.
- This occurred so often and in cases so extreme as to make it obvious that the power of God was exerted on his behalf.
- This process was not an occasional one, but it was his normal, regular life even like his Master Christ, one uninterrupted succession of indignities and sufferings.
- In these verses Paul compares himself as a combatant, first hard pressed, then hemmed in, then pursued, then actually struck down, cast, or thrown down, but always delivered, always surviving, God delivering him..

## VS 10

### Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus

- The dying of Jesus. (mortification)
  - Is Jesus dying in me? NO!
  - Is He being put to death again in my body? NO!
  - But as Jesus lived a life of surrender and suffering, so must I.
  - What did this look like in the life of Christ? "not my will but thine be done,"
  - He is our example and we too must die to our will and self-centered desires and pursuits.
  - The out-working of all of Paul's tribulations was the "always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life of Jesus would be manifest.

### CONCLUSION:

- We must not shy away or run away from the cross in our lives. Jesus faced it so must we.
- Do not let us be rebuked by Jesus as Peter was for resisting the cross.
  - Mt. 16:21-24
- The true test of the ministry and service is not stars, but scars...
- When someone asked Amy Carmichael to join her team of workers, Amy would tell them, "Do not come unless you can say to the Lord and to us, "The cross is the attraction."
- *Hast thou no scar?  
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?  
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,  
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star,  
Hast thou no scar?*
- *Hast thou no wound?  
Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,  
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent  
By ravaging beasts that compassed Me, I swooned:  
Hast thou no wound?*
- *No wound? No scar?  
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,  
And pierced are the feet that follow Me;  
But thine are whole: can he have followed far  
Who has nor wound nor scar?*
- The treasure within must break forth in our lives and be exhibited for the good of those around us and for the glory of God. This can only happen when the vessel, ourselves have been broken, truly surrendered.
- Gal 2:20 | have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.