

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

May 8, 2016

Overview:

Have you ever wanted to go on a treasure hunt? Maybe your desire for a treasure hunting adventure began after reading *Treasure Island*. There is a part in all of us that likes the adventure and seeks to discover the unknown. Whether the adventure is on a far off island or rediscovering long lost treasures in your basement, the sense of adventure is still there.

At the end of April there was an enormous treasure found in Spain. In the town of Tomares, Spain construction workers stumbled upon a treasure trove of ancient Roman coins. While digging at a construction site the workers found 19 clay jars. From the outside these jars looked fairly unimpressive. It wasn't until one of the jars broke that they saw each jar was filled with Roman coins dating back to the 3rd and 4th centuries. A single jar weighed too much for one person to pick up. In total these 19 clay jars contained around 1300lbs of Roman coins.

This treasure was stored in plain, ordinary clay jars. By looking at the jars no one would even consider that they contained a treasure. In 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul compares the human body to clay jars. The treasure that believers carry around is the Gospel message of grace. When you look at fellow believers or yourself do you just see what is on the outside or do you see someone containing an eternity impacting message.

More often with life we get so caught up in the here and now that we forget to have an eternal perspective. Paul reminds us that our bodies (clay jars) may be wasting away, but we still have hope for eternity with God. This eternal perspective helps us view our heartache, loss, and hurt as incomparable to the eternal weight of glory. This doesn't take all the pain or sorrow away from life, but it does give us hope.

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Here is a picture of the amphoras Roman clay jars found in Spain.



1. What is your first impression of these clay jars? Why is it so difficult sometimes to get past the first impression when looking at people to see who they are on the inside?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9. Because of God's power demonstrated in Paul's life he was able to confidently say he can be: pressed but not crushed, perplexed but not despaired, persecuted but not abandoned, and struck down but not destroyed. Discuss a time in your life when you felt God's power carrying you through a difficult situation.

3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8. Paul's faith has grown from his experiences. At one point he was in despair and now he can say that he is not. In what ways can your faith grow during a hardship if you keep an eternal perspective?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16. Discuss some verses you find encouraging and that keep you from losing heart or giving up.
5. How has your endurance through difficult or suffering helped enhance your witness for Christ?
6. How would you explain to a non-believer the difference between suffering for the sake of the Gospel and suffering because of poor life choices?
7. In what ways can one being overly content with this current world lead to a lack of hope for being with God?
8. John Piper once said: "This means that the decaying of his body was not meaningless. The pain and pressure and frustration and affliction were not happening in vain. They were not vanishing into a black hole of pointless suffering. Instead, this affliction was producing for Paul an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison. The unseen thing that Paul looked at to renew his inner man was the immense weight of glory that was being prepared for him not just *after*, but *through* and *by*, the wasting away of his body.... When he is hurting, he fixes his eyes not on how heavy the hurt is, but on how heavy the glory will be because of the hurt."¹

In the midst of pain why is it important to keep your eyes fixed on the promise of future glory? How do you keep your eyes fixed on God?

¹ Future Grace, John Piper.