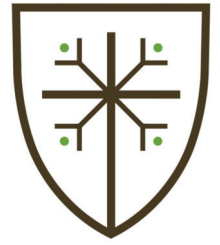


SERMON NOTES



New Creations

An Eastertide Sermon Series

artwork by Ty Nathan Clark

April 28, 2024

SERMON INFO

TITLE

“Jars of Clay”

PREACHER

Rev. Brent Baker

TEXTS

Judges 7:15-16, 19-21

2 Corinthians 4:1-12, 16-18

Mark 8:34-36

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where have you seen God break open your own life, like the jars of clay, in order to make known his power?
2. What things in our lives reinforce the power patterns of the world? What might we replace them with in order to reinforce the pattern Jesus displays?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

One of the major themes that we've seen in 2 Corinthians so far is that of power in weakness. And Brent continued that theme for us in his sermon this week. As Brent said, "God has a really high tolerance for vulnerability and weakness." And it is a dangerous thing to lose sight of the place of weakness in the Christian life. Much like our culture today, Corinth in Paul's day was in danger of losing sight of it in their church.

The Problem

In our text this week, Paul begins with an admonition "do not lose heart." What do they have to lose heart about? Corinth had become too powerful and important of a city to have weak leadership at their church. And, so, there were so-called "super-Apostles" taking charge of the church, claiming apostleship in place of Paul. These men were flashy, eloquent, and most of all, preached a new and different gospel, something other than Jesus. The minds of the people in Corinth were fixated on prestige, sophistication, and intelligence. Paul speaks of a pervasive power of darkness roaming free, the gods of this world that blinded men to the truth of the gospel. And so, why not lose heart?

The Power

Paul reminds his readers that we do not lose heart because the power of God dwells within us and is displayed not through superiority, but through weakness and frailty. Jars of clay, of which Paul speaks of, were nothing special. They were the equivalent of Tupperware in the ancient world – a storage vessel. And just like those clay jars, we are capable of hosting great things but we aren't the source of the greatness. And also like those jars, God must first break us open in order to reveal the power and greatness that dwells in our hearts. Until you face your weaknesses, you will never experience the surpassing power of God.

The Pattern

In Jesus, we are introduced to a new and better pattern than the power pattern of the world. In Jesus first, and now in us, the power of God is hosted in human flesh. The fullness of life is soon only through death. We see this in Jesus, in his person and in his death and resurrection. And yet, we keep borrowing power patterns of the world. The pattern of Jesus is self-denial and cross-bearing. As our lives begin to be molded and shaped by this pattern, we begin to prioritize the transformation of our inner man. We begin to make use of our weaknesses and afflictions instead of obsessing over removing them.