

- I) V8-10 INTRO: We are *hard pressed* on every side yet not **crushed** we are **perplexed**
REVIEW
- II) V7 Paul just contrasted what he called the **treasure** with the **container**
This was to reveal the difference of **quality** between the **treasure** and **vessel**
- III) **Treasure** is something that is a valuable or precious possession of any kind
What is Paul saying is the treasure contained in the earthen vessel?
- IV) The **treasure** is the light of the knowledge of the glory of Christ
The gospel of Jesus is what gives **spiritual illumination** to those in darkness
BRIEFLY
- V) **Light** and **darkness** is often used to speak of the difference between good and evil
Eph 4:18 speaks of those who are **darkened** in their understand and alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of their hearts
- VI) In Romans, Paul gave insight into the fruit of spiritual darkness
Ro 1:21-22 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile, and **their foolish hearts were darkened**. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools
WHAT IS THE REMEDY
- VII) The receiving the message of the gospel, which drives away the darkness
The gospel message presents Jesus to us, and His work of salvation
Jn 1:4 In Him was life, and that life was the **light of men**
- VIII) Ps 119:130 The **entrance** (revelation) of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple
- IX) The entrance of God's word occurs when the message is **received** by faith
- X) To those in darkness, the light of saving knowledge in Jesus has been received
When we trusted in Jesus, the result was spiritual illumination: **enlightenment**
1 Co 2:12-13 What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that **we may understand** what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words

- I) Paul made it clear: the gospel is veiled to those who are perishing (V4)
This is because Satan has blinded those who do not believe the message
- II) This spiritual blindness is removed when the gospel is received
2 Co 3:16 When one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away
- III) V6 God's light, illuminating our darkness, reveals Jesus to us
God who commanded **light to shine** out of darkness **has shone** in our hearts
- IV) Salvation originates with God, and not with man
It is His message of salvation **through Jesus** that we believed and were saved
Jn 1:12-13 To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become sons of God--sons born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will but born of God
BEFORE WE WERE SAVED
- V) We not only **lived** in spiritual darkness, but we also actually **preferred it**
Jn 3:19-20 Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness** instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light **for fear that his deeds will be exposed.**
- VI) V6 *God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of*
- VII) Without God's grace, we are helpless, walking and stumbling in darkness
Eph 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.
- VIII) God Himself brings light into our lives through the illuminating gospel of Jesus
In the beginning God made light to shine, and now shines in our hearts in rebirth
- IX) This is what Paul told the Ephesian church happened when they were saved
Eph. 1:18 The eyes of your understanding **being enlightened**
- X) This treasure is stored in *earthen vessels* (clay pots--**We are made out of dust**)
Earthen vessels are without value, which contrasts God with man

- I) The means the excellence is the *power of God*, not of **the vessels** He uses
It is what is contained in the vessel, not the vessel itself
- II) I once asked my wife about the value of perfumes
I asked if the shape of the container added to its value
- III) She told me it isn't the shape of the bottle alone, nor the scent itself
She told me what makes the perfume valuable is **the Maker** of the perfume
V5 FOR THIS REASON
- IV) We do not **preach ourselves** but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves **your servants**
V5 His critics had said he was preaching himself
- V) In response he said he was not trying to become some great one in their sight
THE FACT IS
- VI) Jesus had taught His men not to seek honor from men
Mt 23:11 He who is greatest among you shall be your servant
Mk 9:35 If anyone wants to be first, he must be the last of all and the servant of all
- VII) As Christians, it is to be our desire to be usable vessels in the hands of the Lord
Paul made it clear that he was only a servant, and that Jesus was the greatest
- VIII) This is something Paul had **earlier** made clear to the Corinthians
They were already arguing about who was great: Apollos Paul Cephas
1 Co 3:5-6 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, **but ministers** through whom you
believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the
increase.
- IX) V5 Paul made it clear that he was a servant, preaching Jesus and not himself
HE SPOKE OF VESSELS OF HONOR
- X) He now answers the question: How can we become vessels used by God
What is the process God uses to produce vessels of honor
THE ANSWER
- XI) Through the process of **spiritual trials** in the life of a believer
BEGIN STUDY
- XII) V8-10 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but
Trials are part of God's process of refining and maturing our faith
They are a necessary element of God training us in the way of holy service

- I) Sometimes, when we are in a trial we can lash out at anyone trying to encourage us
To minister to them, he refers to the **trials** he himself had gone through
- II) This should encourage them, but also serve to remind them of his ministry
- III) His credentials have been called in to question, so he speaks of his trials
This should establish his spiritual authority in contrast to the false teachers
- IV) Trials of faith are a very important part of walk with the Lord
God's purpose in bringing them into our lives is to develop and purify our faith
- V) Our afflictions work to awaken us to what we may not be aware of
C. S. Lewis: God **whispers** to us in our pleasures, **speaks** in our conscience, but **shouts** in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.
- VI) Paul suffered many afflictions but knew that his faith was being purified
- VII) This was something that Job taught us
Job 23:10-12 But he knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot has held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.
- VIII) Trials are a **very important part** of being a follower of Jesus Christ
One of the things that trials, and afflictions reveal is the reality of someone's faith
1 Pe 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ
- IX) Paul's ministry is being questioned so in answer to this, he speaks of his afflictions
This serves to remind them of his sacrifices in **contrast with false teachers**
HE PAYS A PRICE
- X) **Quote:** You may readily judge whether you are a child of God or a hypocrite by seeing in what direction your soul turns in seasons of **severe trial**. The hypocrite runs to the world and finds a sort of comfort there. But the child of God runs to his Father and expects consolation **only from the Lord's hand**.

- I) V8 We are **hard-pressed** on every side, yet not **crushed**; we are perplexed
Paul reveals some of his pain, though he runs the risk of being misunderstood
He begins by revealing **the inner pressure** that he is enduring
INTERNAL CONFLICT
- II) To illustrate this, he uses the image of a soldier in combat
Hard pressed: Troubled: afflicted, distressed; no place of escape
Yet not **crushed**: To be in a narrow place; cramped
THOUGHT
- III) I am under spiritual attack and hemmed in, **but I am not giving up**
Ps 68:20 Our God is a **God of deliverance**; the Lord God is our rescuer from death
- IV) **Perplexed**: Without resources, to be left lacking, not to know which way to turn
But not in **despair**: At loss, utterly destitute of resources; to renounce all hope
Is 41:10 Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. **I will strengthen you, I will also help you**, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand.
EXTERNAL CONFLICT
- V) **Persecuted**: (pursued) To put to flight, drive away; to pursue in a hostile manner
From almost the beginning, Paul was persecuted when he began preaching
EXAMPLES
- VI) Shortly after his conversion, he preached to Jews living in Damascus, Syria
Ac 9:29 (The result) they attempted to kill him
Ac 13:50 (Pisidian Antioch-Turkey) The Jews incited the devout women of prominence and the leading men of the city, and instigated **a persecution** against Paul and Barnabas, and **drove them** out of their district
Ac 14:5 (In Iconium-Galatia) a **violent attempt** was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers to abuse and stone them
- VII) Paul had gone through much persecution by the time he came to Corinth
He had ministered in Thessalonica and had to be sent out by night (Ac 17:10)
He went to Athens, and then came to Corinth
- VIII) At first he was afraid to continue ministering because of opposition
It was at that time that Jesus told him to remain, and to preach
Ac 18:9-10 The Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, Do not be afraid but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and **no one will attack you to hurt you**; for I have many people in this city
He was persecuted, but not **forsaken**: Abandoned, deserted (Heb 13:5)

- I) He knew persecution, and this should have earned their respect
- II) **Struck down**: To throw to the ground
But not **destroyed**: To put out of the way entirely, to ruin; render useless
ANOTHER EXAMPLE
- III) In a city called Lystra (Turkey), Paul was used to miraculously heal a crippled man
What an amazing thing, worthy of awe and a holy fear
WHAT WAS THE RESULT
- IV) Ac 14:19-20 Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, **thinking he was dead**. But after the disciples had gathered around him he got up and went back into the city
- V) This was Paul's life: sharing the gospel and often, suffering for doing so
- VI) V10 Always carrying about In the body *the dying of the Lord Jesus*
He never forgot that Jesus died for him, which fueled his service to Him
- VII) This gave him the strength to serve Him, even though suffering as he did so
Col 1:24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and **I fill up in my flesh** what is still lacking in regard **to Christ's afflictions** for the sake of His body which is the church
- VIII) The afflictions he endured made Paul aware of the price Jesus paid on the cross
This made him aware of his need to **die to self** so Jesus could be seen in him
He surrendered his personal desires and ambitions in order to live for Jesus
THE FACT IS
- IX) God uses trials in our lives to refine our faith and produce dependence on Him
Paul died **to self** daily, which revealed that he was only an earthen vessel
- X) V10 Paul carried about in his body **the death of Jesus**
This is a way of saying that **he was enduring suffering** for a lost world
- XI) He was experiencing the sorrow and rejection Jesus had experienced
Phil. 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death
- XII) V10 That the life of Jesus also may be manifested **in our mortal flesh**
We are transformed by God's power so that we can display Jesus (Jn 12:24)

- I) V11 For **we who live** are always **delivered to death** for Jesus' sake that the life of
Interesting: We who **live** are always delivered (exposed) to **death**
We live in the atmosphere of impending death
- II) My response to this is to continue serving Jesus
This is because I had the desire to remain faithful to Him, no matter what
Lu 9:23 Jesus said to all of them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must
deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
- III) We are constantly facing death, yet we also constantly see God deliver us
The result of what we go through serves to strengthen us and make us dependent
2 Co 12:9 He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made
perfect in weakness."
- IV) V11 that **the life of Jesus** also may be manifested in our mortal flesh
God's power is revealed in us, freeing us from a life given over to the flesh
- V) V12 So then death is working **in us** but life **in you**
You reap the fruit of my sufferings, and have life in Him because I died to my self
- VI) In the face of persecution, I brought the gospel to you, and you were saved
Can the false apostles make such a claim?
- VII) V13 But since we have the **same spirit of faith**, according to what is written I
He quotes Ps 116: A hymn of thanks for **deliverance**
- VIII) Paul had the same kind of faith the Psalmist had: He expected God to deliver him
God's word brought comfort to him **in the midst** of all his suffering
- IX) V14 **Knowing** that He who raised up the Lord Jesus **will also raise us up** with Jesus
Paul speaks by a **faith that is fully convinced**, having no doubt about being raised
- X) God raised Jesus from the dead, and He will also raise us up
1 Co 6:14 God has both raised up the Lord, **and will also raise up us** by his own power
Ro 8:11 But if the Spirit **of Him who raised Jesus from the dead** dwells in you, He
who raised Christ from the dead **will also give life** to your mortal bodies through His
Spirit who dwells in you.

- I) Though we endure afflictions, **together** we will one day be presented to God
Eph 5:27 That **He might present** it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.
- II) V15 For **all things** are for your sakes, that grace having spread through the many
All the sufferings I have gone through are worth it if it results in your loving Jesus
This is the heart of a father who truly loves his children
- III) V16-18 **Therefore** we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing
- IV) Paul closes by revealing that he has an eternal perspective concerning suffering
He knew that his suffering was but a momentary and very light affliction
- V) We endure physical and emotional affliction, and it impacts us greatly
How do we view these things? Do they tempt us to reject God?
- VI) We are not losing heart: Our inward (spiritual) man is renewing strength daily
These afflictions remove our grip from the world, and make us long for Jesus
In comparison to the eternal glory awaiting us, this is but a light problem
- VII) Our perspective is one that is **eternal**, and our treasures are found **in heaven**
- VIII) In the eyes of the world, Paul's life was a waste of talent and a horrible failure
He gave up a promising career, embracing hardship, persecution and rejection
WHY DID HE DO THIS
- IX) Paul had an eternal perspective because he knew the world was not his home
One day he would see Jesus, face to face, and it would be worth it all
Job 19:25-27 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I will see Him with my own eyes, I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me
- X) The product of all this affliction was what he called the eternal weight of glory
The final result was **to be like Jesus**
Phil 3:20-21 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

- I) This is what these trials will produce, and this is what the believer truly desires**