

A Vessel for Divine Treasure

Pastor Anthony J. Shetley
Sunday, December 11, 2022

Paul defending his ministry, speaks to his weakness and points to the power and glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:7–9 *⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.*

THE TREASURE is the divine knowledge of the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ and the divine presence of God within each of His children.

God has placed this divine treasure in EARTHEN VESSELS, our frail, earthly bodies. Clay vessels are weak and subject to breaking. However, through our weaknesses, God's power can be realized.

Jesus Christ is our wonderful savior! He rescues us from our helplessness.

Psalm 34:19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

The human body is subjected to sickness, disease, pain, aging, and death. Our spirit, heart, and mind are subject to trouble, fear, anxiety, emotional anguish, and even depression.

In all our troubles, God calls us to trust in Him; to stand strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

2 Corinthians 1:8–10 (ESV)

Paul shared his personal experiences with the church.

Notice the response of Paul's emotions.

*⁸For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For **we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.** ⁹Indeed, **we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.***

¹⁰He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

Paul's emotions were one thing; however, his faith was another!
"But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead."

Paul sums it up like this,

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves."

1. God's power will keep us from being crushed when we are hard pressed on every side with afflictions and troubles.

They are different words used here by the different translations of the bible: hard pressed; troubled; and afflictions. The Greek word used here can be used to describe: the closing in of the walls; to be made very narrow; to be pressed in a crowd;

However, God's power keeps us from being crushed. He will give us a place to breath in; to move around.

2. God's power will keep us from falling into despair when we are perplexed or at a loss of understanding. Although we may not can answer the question why, our faith can remain secured in the omniscience of God. He will continue to go forward with us and guide us on the right path.

3. God's Presence will never leave us when we are persecuted. When a person messes with you, God's child, they are messing with Him.

Jesus calls us His friend; the ones who are living in the will of God are His mothers and brothers, meaning they are family.

Matthew 5:10–12 ¹⁰*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* ¹¹*Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.* ¹²*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

4. God's power will keep the enemy from destroying us, even though he may knock us down.

In his Daily Study Bible Series on the Letters to the Corinthians, William Barclay writes,

“The supreme characteristic of the Christian is not that he does not fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is not that he is never beaten, but he is never ultimately defeated. He may lose a battle, but he knows that in the end he can never lose the campaign.”

God fully understands our weaknesses and limitations. This is why He sent us a savior to rescue us. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ. He became one of us. He has walked and experienced our troubles on every level - body, soul, and spirit.

He is alive and sitting at the right hand of God. He is a very present help in the time of our trouble.

God has demonstrated His love for us. In our helplessness, He sent His Son to suffer for us. He did not spare His Son but gave Him up for us all. If He done that, will He not complete the work which He has started in us?

Romans 8:35 *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

If you know Christ, He is with you no matter what you are going through or are up against! He has not nor will He ever leave your side.

If you don't know Christ or if you are unsure or if you have wandered away, His word promises that if you draw near to Him, He will draw near to you.