



November 16, 2025
Pastor Wil Staley

“Enjoying the Abundant Life of Jesus: Courageous Life”

2 Corinthians 4:5-10

Introduction:

“Courage is not the absence of fear but rather the judgement that something else is more important.”

– Ambrose Redmoon

2 Corinthians 4:5-10 – “For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies.”

BACKGROUND

- Paul started a Jesus community in Corinth on one of his missionary journeys (Acts 18).
- He moved on to Ephesus (Acts 19-20), but received a report that things weren't going well in Corinth, so he wrote them a letter “1 Corinthians”.
- Paul chose to visit with the church because apparently, not everyone agreed with what he wrote in the first letter. The visit became known as a “painful visit” (2:1).
- After everything most of the Corinthians realized their arrogance; they wanted to apologize and reconcile.
- So, Paul writes this letter to assure them of his love and commitment.

The key theme of this section is found in 1 Corinthians 4:1 and 16; “We do not lose heart!”

I. A Courageous Life Proclaims Christ (v. 5)

2 Corinthians 4:5 – “For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.”

Paul shows us that the Courageous Life is not one that:

- Trusts in itself (2 Cor. 1:9)
- Commends itself (2 Cor. 3:1-5)
- Or preaches itself (2 Cor. 4:5)

II. A Courageous Life Shines in the Darkness (v. 6)

2 Corinthians 4:6 – “For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Genesis 1:2-3 – “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.”

2 Corinthians 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

III. A Courageous Life Comes from God's Power (v. 7)

2 Corinthians 4:7 – “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 – “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

The believer = the jar of clay
The gospel ministry = the treasure

2 Corinthians 12:10 – “For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

“All God’s giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on Him being with them.” – J. Hudson Taylor

1 John 4:4 – “Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”

2 Timothy 1:6-7 – “For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

IV. A Courageous Life Never Gives Up (vv. 8-10)

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 – “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed”

Four “BUT NOT” statements:

1. Hard pressed on every side BUT NOT pulverized
2. Puzzled and at a loss BUT NOT without hope
3. Subject to prolonged hostility BUT NOT abandoned
4. Knocked down BUT NOT the end of existence

2 Corinthians 4:10 – “always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies.”

We never give up because we remember that we are privileged to have the treasure of the Gospel in our jars of clay.

Conclusion: The power of Christ is at work to transform all of our fears into all the courage we need.

Galatians 6:17 – “From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you typically respond to fear? Do you immediately conquer it? Escape it? Avoid it?
2. Has fear ever been a positive motivator for you? Please share what that looked like in your life?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. It sounds like such an oxymoron, but how do you think boasting in your weaknesses can help make you more courageous?
4. Are you in a situation now where you feel afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, or struck down? What would it look like to add a “but not” phrase to that situation?