

I. Intro

A. Text: **2 Cor. 4:7-18**

7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.* **8** *We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.* **11** *For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.* **12** *So then death is working in us, but life in you.*

13 *And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke,"* we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.* **15** *For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*

16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.* **17** *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,* **18** *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* (**2 Cor. 4:7-18**)

B. Series Focus: **Matt. 16:24**

24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."* (**Matt. 16:24**)

C. Recap and Background

1. Self-Centered World
2. Cosmetic, Self-Image Culture
3. Paul lived the opposite of a Me, Myself and I life.
 - a. Selfless in his focus in the midst of a self-centered world.

4. As a Spiritual Father to many, Paul looked out not only for his own interests, but for the interests of others.

- a. **1 Cor. 4:15:** *¹⁵ For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

II. Paul: Imitate Me

A. Our Cosmetic Issues are Exposed... Naturally (v. 7-10)

1. Treasure Beyond Imagination Inside

7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Cor. 4:7)*

- a. Hearts are fashioned with a longing.
- b. Looking for a hidden treasure.
 - i. Leprechauns, pirates, etc.
 - ii. Look for treasure in things, money, positions, relationships, drugs, etc.
- c. Greatest treasure is God Himself.
 - i. **Gen. 15:1-2:** *"Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward. But Abram said, Lord what will you give me, seeing I go childless?"*
 - ii. **Col. 1:26-27:** ***26** the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. **27** To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*
 - iii. **Matt. 13:44:** *"The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid, and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys the field".*

2. The Treasure on the Inside is Accented by the “but” on the Outside.

7 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, [but] not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed — 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. (2 Cor. 4:7-10)*

- a. The beauty on the inside often contrasts our frailties on the outside.

*God does not need the strength of Men to display His glory.

- b. On the outside we’re earthen vessels.
 - i. Clay, frail, flimsy.
- c. Paul was okay with looking less than on the outside.
 - i. **2 Cor. 10:10:** *10 "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."*
 - ii. **1 Cor. 2:1-5:** *And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

B. That Christ's Beauty Might Be Exposed in Others (Spiritually)

11 *For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.* **12** *So then death is working in us, but life in you.*

13 *And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke,"* we also believe and therefore speak,* **14** *knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.* **15** *For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.*
(2 Cor 4:11-15)

1. *"All things are for your sakes" (v. 15)*
 - a. Paul was committed a lifestyle of building up others, discipling others, encouraging and mentoring others.
 - i. Barnabas came alongside of Paul
 - b. Instead of maintaining a manicured image of himself, Paul got up close and personal: Building others up.
 - i. Timothy, Silas, Tychius, Onesimus, Aquila and Priscilla, etc.
 - ii. *2 Tim. 2:2: The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.*
 - c. One of Paul's greatest desires was to see the grace of God spread to others.
2. *"Death is working in us, but life in you" (v.12)*
 - a. My outward Pressure results in your inward Prosperity
 - b. *1 Cor. 4:9-13: 9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!*
11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and

*we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. **12**
And we labor, working with our own hands. Being
reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; **13**
being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as
the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until
now.*

C. WE Might Enjoy the Glory of the Lord (Eternally)

***16** Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, **18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor 4:16-18)*

1. Selfie Game is Perishing Daily on the Outside
 - a. Renewed Daily on the Inside.
2. Been through hell, high water, and every episode of Bonanza.
 - a. ***1 Cor. 11:24-30: 24** From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; **26** in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; **27** in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness — **28** besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. **29** Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn*

with indignation? 30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.

3. Light Affliction
 - a. It's nothing
 - b. It's just for a moment

III. Conclusion: God is producing a Glorious Photo/ Portrait

A. Often, a Good Photo Needs Contrast

1. **Contrast:** *Difference between black and white in your images. Without **contrast** you wouldn't have an image because there wouldn't be any differentiation between light and dark; everything would be black, white, or a single shade of grey somewhere in between.*
 - a. God is Producing a High Contrast Photo
 - i. Focus is not on me at all.
2. Paul's Focus:
 - a. The Glory of the Lord (with Background)
 - b. The Glory of the Lord (Black and White)
3. Focus: Far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (contrasted against his obvious personal frailties).
 - a. Focused on the glory of the Lord that shall be revealed to us, in us (Eternally)

Glory (doxa #1391): *the honor resulting from a good opinion. It is used to describe the nature and acts of God, the manifested perfection of His character (especially His righteousness). Glory is also the state of blessedness into which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into the likeness of Christ. Biblically (especially in the Old Testament), glory also conveys the idea of weightiness and/or heaviness.*