

Treasure in Clay Jars

II Corinthians 4:5-12

KEY VERSES

⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus's sake. ⁶ For it is the God who said, "Light will shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, ⁹ persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, ¹⁰ always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who are living are always being handed over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us but life in you.

In this passage in II Corinthians, Paul speaks to the church in Corinth, answering and explaining to them the source of his authority and faith. In I Corinthians, Paul primarily addresses the conflict going on within their congregation. As Paul states in the first line, "For we do not proclaim ourselves," he sets the stage by letting them know he is not the point, but that "all power belongs to God." **Like Paul, when have you felt called to do something for which you didn't feel equipped?**

The "treasure in clay jars" is our reassurance that God is with us even when we're not worthy, and our empowerment to witness to our faith. In Acts 1:8, we learn that witnessing to our faith is not optional: "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." What makes our faith different from any other spirituality is that we celebrate not what we have done, but rather, what Jesus has done in love on our behalf. **In this light, what does it mean to you to be a "witness" to God's grace in your life?**

When headlines want to make us live in fear, our faith reassures us that God loves this world and keeps showing up even when we think things are falling apart. He will continue to use broken people like us, and our great gift is that we get to do it together. We all have stories to tell about how God continues to show up for us. **This week as we have opportunities to interact with others, how might your stories about the God who shows up in your life and in this world encourage others?**