

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Shining through Broken Vessels

Today I have before me two different Pots – In my right hand – one I picked up in Costa Rica – nice designs

A) In my left hand one I got Home Depot

B) Not If I were to ask which Pot do you think is more Valuable I am sure that most of you would say – the one from Costa Rica

1) It looks more Valuable – it is more attractive – more designed – nicer to look at – and put on display

C) The truth of the matter is that I paid about the same for each one.

D) The reality of is that the one in my left hand is actually more valuable because of what is inside of it

1) The nice looking Pot from Costa Rica contains a blank piece of paper

E) Whereas the normal looking Pot contains a \$100.00 dollar bill!

See the Value of the pot in measured by what it contains.

A) That is precisely the point that Paul makes in our text this morning

B) God has placed a treasure in earthen Vessels.

6 For it is the God who commanded light to 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 Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

A) Here Paul is likening the Believer in Jesus to an Earthen Vessel or a Clay Pot { Not very Flattering

B) It is kind of a major blow to the ego – Just a clay – Pot?

1) Surveys online if you were an animal what would you be? –Puppy – Lion / Rat- Car /Song/ flower

C) Nothing for if I were a clay Pot!

But This is a great Picture to use because A clay pot, or earthen vessel, is made to hold something { So are We

A) We were made to hold someone/& that someone is God himself.

B) And this is the amazing thing: By His Spirit, God places the Treasure of His Son into the clay pots of our lives!

C) This is like placing the Hope diamond in a Glad trash bag.

D) I mean it is only logical that if someone has a thing of beauty and value, he would have a gold-covered box, or something exquisite to contain it.

Therefore, it's a mystery indeed as to why God would place the Treasure of His Son in clay pots like us

A) Like a Diamond on Black Velvet – God places His Son in Us –

B) But the reason becomes evident as God works in our lives – we begin to understand –

C) The excellency – the good that is coming out of our lives isn't because of us – but who is in us! {JESUS

D) His greatness and glory are magnified on the background of our weaknesses and inabilities

Fundamental truth: What makes a person valuable and really beautiful is what is on the inside.

A) Our society by its actions is saying the opposite.

Aa) Our culture places so much emphasis on the outside – on appearances it is ridiculous

B) Get this Americans spend \$18 Billion a year on Cosmetics, \$24 Billion on Skin care, \$38 Billion on hair care products

1) 5 Billion a year on exercise and Fitness – equipments and gym memberships \$64 billion on weight-loss products & services

C) \$13.2 Billion on Cosmetic surgery – \$162 Billion dollars on looking good

D) Problem though – we also spend \$134 Billion on fast food and \$175 Billion on Alcohol.

1) We are messed up aren't we?

Here is the facts – A lot of people who look good on the outside are down right ugly on the inside.

A) When the Pot gets broken for some reason – you see the contents on the inside – you realize – that is not very attractive at all.

B) Or when the Pot gets broken- you see just how superficial someone is.

C)But the opposite is true in the life of the person who is living for Christ

1)Brokenness reveals a beauty – a glory that is inside of them.

This whole section in v.6-15 is framed by the same statement used twice in this chapter

V.1 Therefore we don't lose heart – We don't lose heart when pp are not responding to the message – when they are blinded – keep preaching

D)V.16 Therefore We don't lose heart when our bodies are being beaten and broken down – Outward man is perishing

We are not going to lose heart when we our vessel gets broken – because God is doing something.

A)Paul would not lose heart in spite of all the suffering he went through because he realized it was accomplishing something **of eternal significance**

B)He mentions 3 things in this chapter!

#1 God's Power is manifested in our weakness !

A)This is one of the most amazing things to me –
Seen it often. {**God's power in our weakness**

B)Take a person committed to Christ a person who might seem average or nothing special on the outside. –

D)Something happens – they get broken – tragedy strikes – suddenly – the glory of God in them is revealed

1)God's glory and power are seen in the midst of their weakness in their brokenness

In our times of weakness – God strengthens – Evident – the power was of God and not of us.

A)Paul illustrates this from his own life

V. 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--

Here we see the weakness of the Pot but also the Power of God!

A)Notice the weakness of the "pot" Paul says *"We are hard pressed; we are at Preplexed or*

at our wit's end, we are persecuted, we are knocked down."

B) On the other hand, notice the Power of God *"We are not Crushed ; we are not in despair, we are never forsaken or abandoned & we are never destroyed – never knocked out."*

C) What Paul is saying is that whenever we go through hard times, there is opportunity for God's Power to shine forth thru the breaking of the vessel .

D) Brokenness is sometimes the means of God getting out of us – what He has put into us!

1) Or it is the means thru which he gets us going in His direction.

Damian Kyle – *It is simply my will being broken to God's will – My ways being broken to God's ways.*

It is Ironic that most things lose their Value once they are Broken/ less Value when they are Cracked – But not so w/ the Christian

A) God puts a Premium on Broken things – especially on Broken People

Psalms 51:16-17

“For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;

You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.”

B) Brokenness leads to humbleness and dependency – two traits that are attractive to God! He resists the proud but gives grace to the Humble.

Psalms 34:18

*18 The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.*

Isaiah 57:15 *15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place,*

With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

C) Paul understood that It takes weakness in order to have the strength

1) that is the place where we struggle. That is what we do not like.

D) We all want to see the power of God in our lives, but we want it to come out of untroubled, peaceful, calm, circumstances.

We want to move through life protected from all the dangers and all the difficulties.

A) Like a ride at Disneyland a little adventure – a little frightened – but we come out untouched

B) But that is not the way that it works – Brokenness is a part of the Christian life

1) It is a means through which God's Power is Revealed

C) And we are not even permitted to the method of our brokenness.

D) God doesn't give us a Menu - *"Well, I'll take a few afflictions, but I don't want to be knocked down."*

1) We get what God sends. Whatever He allows

E) But we are never Destroyed / Never Knocked out { that is the Point

1) His Power is manifested in our weakness – for His Glory

Christians can get cancer, Christians can have financial collapse, Christians can go through difficulties, family separations, divorce,

A) We are not hidden from Life – we like anyone else encounter problems of every sort. **But we don't go thru it ALONE**

B) How did you get through that? **Answer it was God!**

1) So we do not lose heart #1 because God's power is being manifested in our weakness

#2 Because God's Son is exalted in our daily dying!

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

A) Notice that the **"life of Jesus"** always rests upon the **"death of Jesus."**

B) We must have, in our experience, the **"death of Jesus"** in order to have the **"life of Jesus."**

C) Talking about that process of daily dying to self

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.

A) Paul clearly understood that the More that Paul died the More that Paul was Broken the More opportunity – Jesus had to be Seen

B) Every new city was an opportunity – each day for Paul to present himself to God as a

living Sacrifice

C) Paul understood something – that we need to understand – that in & of Himself – he had nothing to offer to those in bondage / darkness / in need

D) John the B said – I must decrease so that He can increase

Jesus said that if anyone wanted to be His disciple he needed to pick up His cross daily follow Him.

A) Picking up the cross is to assume a life of dying to self.

B) So much of the Christian life hinges on the death of self. – Jesus is seen in us when we die.

**C) To love the unlovable or the undeserving Death to self comfort and self preservation.
1) In that the love of Christ is manifested.**

D) To show forgiveness to those who have hurt you.

1) Death to my rights: “I have a right to be mad to be bitter-

E) I have to choose to die to all that { my rights}

1) In doing so the forgiveness of Christ is manifested

Paul understood the more that He died – the more Jesus was seen in Him!

Galattians 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

A) I die daily not a complaint or a sacrifice but a Mantra a necessity

B) The Light of Jesus shined brighter when Paul was broken – Story of Gideon

So we do not lose heart #1 because God’s power is being manifested in our weakness

#2 Because God's Son is exalted in our daily dying!

#3 Because others are made alive!

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

It was piano craftsman Theodore Steinway who said that it is the forty thousand pounds of pressure exerted on the 245 strings of a piano that creates beautiful harmony.

A) Sometimes, it is only the pressure, the persecution we undergo that causes a song to resonate in the hearts of those with whom we share.

B) Paul knew this. That is why he could say, The sufferings we go thru are producing death in us – but life in you!

C) The sufferings that Paul encountered brought a credibility to His message.

1) beaten/ stoned/ jailed/ etc – He kept coming back with the same message. **JESUS**

This is, of course, the great principle of the cross. A) Christ died that we might live. The great exchange of the gospel is: Christ's life for ours.

B) And those who are used most to spread the good news of Christ embrace death as the operational principle of ministry.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.” (John 12:24–26)

When we allow God to plant us – which will include death to us. Our plan/ comfort/ - result is fruit

A) The result is life to others!

Now, in verse 13-15, Paul brings it all together – by sharing what sustained him to keep going / keep preaching.

A) Faith Hope and Love

B) V.13 Faith: Paul cites a brief line from Psalm 116:10, the heart of Psalm 116: **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**

C) For Paul, a brief reference like this served as a pointer to the full context of the Psalm upon which he based his statement of faith.

D) Psalm 116 describes a time when the writer (King David) almost died but God delivered him from death David “believed” that God had delivered him and **therefore he spoke of it!**

As this statement from Ps 116v 10 is the center and pivot of the Psalm, it places faith at its very heart.

A) The Apostle Paul felt a spiritual kinship with King David because, like him, Paul had been also delivered from death numerous times

B)Paul had likewise believed, and so he also spoke He preached the word with Boldness
1)Believing that he was spared for that purpose.

C)It is from this platform of faith that Paul spoke with unflinching certainty and power.

This being said, we must understand that while the foundation of Paul's faith was in the past,

A)Paul now goes on to show that the focus of his faith was on the future.

B)A Future Hope – In the reality of heaven. V.14

14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

C)Paul was living for that Day – Stand before Jesus receive a reward for His faithful service.

Heaven was more than a destination it was His motivation

V.15 Love

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.

A)It was His love for others and His love for the glory of God that kept Him going –

B)Impact on the Church.

So we can see that what Paul believed about the future had everything to do with the way he lived.

And more, the difference between Paul and many Christians lies right here