

God's Power in Our Brokenness

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

We are vessels of God's treasure (Clay pots)

We live in a world that prizes strength, perfection, and durability. We want to have lives that are sturdy, unbreakable, and perfectly put together. Social media portrays perfect lives, yet, if we are honest, most of us feel more like the Apostle Paul describes himself in 2 Corinthians 4:7: we are "jars of clay"—fragile, easily chipped, and ordinary. Paul tells us that God has placed the most magnificent treasure—the gospel of Jesus Christ—inside of these breakable, earthly, fragile jars, Us (you and me)! Why? **"To show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Cor. 4:7)**. This morning, we are going to examine 2 Corinthians 4:7-18 to discover how to find hope when we feel broken, strength when we are weak, and purpose in our suffering.

I. The Paralyzing Reality (vv. 8-9)

Paul begins with a brutal description of his ministry life, which mirrors the struggles of the Christian walk: Listen to verses 8 and 9. ***"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;"***

Note the contrast that Paul uses. Paul does not pretend that being a Christian means a life without pain. He is *afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down*.

We will be afflicted (pressed) yet not **crushed**.

We will be perplexed (confused) yet not in **despair**.

We will be persecuted (hunted) yet not **abandoned**. 2 Timothy 3:12 ***"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,"***

We will be struck down (knocked down) yet not **destroyed**.

As Jesus said in **John 16:33**, ***"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."*** Paul's confidence wasn't in his ability to avoid pain; his confidence was that Christ was stronger than the pressure that was upon him. You may be in a season of being "pressed on every side," but because you are in Christ, the enemy cannot "crush" you. We will look at this in chapter 12 of 2 Corinthians in a few weeks, if the Lord tarries, but for now listen to 2 Cor. 12:9-10 ***"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. 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."***

II. The Purpose of Our Pain (vv. 10-12)

Suffering serves a purpose:

- a. Pain reminds us of the sufferings of Christ. (v.10)
- b. Pain reveals the power of Christ within us. (vv.11-12) When you are squeezed, you see what truly comes out!

Listen to 2 Timothy 2:11-12: ***“The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;”***

III. The Perspective of Eternity (vv. 16-18)

Paul encourages enduring difficulty by focusing on eternal renewal rather than physical weakening. Paul contrasts present suffering with future glory, a perspective we also see in Romans 8:18 ***“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”***

What should we do?

- a. Fix Your Eyes on Christ. (Hebrews 12:1-2) ***“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”*** Endurance comes from focusing on the unseen and eternal power of Christ. God uses our weaknesses to show His strength!
- b. Keep Enduring for Christ. (Galatians 6:9, Isaiah 40:31) Gal 6:9 ***“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”*** Isaiah 40:31 ***“but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”***