

Homework #6 - *Clay Pots Hold God's Treasure*

II Corinthians 4:7-18

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."--II Corinthians 4:7

Day One:

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read II Corinthians 4:7-18. What are the key words in this passage?

Contrasts in Corinthians: What contrasts can you find in this section?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

2. What is a "treasure"?

What do you think "this treasure" is referring to, in verse 7? To help you discover the meaning, reread 2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

3. Read Genesis 2:7 and Psalms 103:13-14. Of what building material are humans made?

In Genesis 2:7, what created life in the first human being?

In Psalms 103:13-14, how does God relate to us and why?

4. What is Paul's illustration of a human body in verse 7?

What are the characteristics of a clay pot?

How are these similar to human qualities?

5. Read Isaiah 53:2-3. How was Jesus a clay pot, just like us? How was He also an example of verse 7?

Page 2

6. How does Paul describe God's power in verse 7, and what do you think this means?

Read I Corinthians 2:1-5. How did Paul approach people and why?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

7. What determines the value of your life or your ability to serve God? How does this passage change your perspective?

What do you treasure? Do you see the message of Christ as your greatest possession? How does this perspective change the way you view your life?

Day Two

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read II Corinthians 4:8-9 and write the appropriate words under each heading:

Hardship

The Evidence of God's Power

2. What promise is given in Romans 8:35-39?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. Reread II Corinthians 1:8-10. What does Paul say he has learned from his troubles?

How does this passage relate to II Corinthians 4:7-9

4. Read Psalms 34:17-19. How is this Psalms an example of Paul's words in II Corinthians 4:7-9?

5. In the following passages, what should be our attitude under "trials" and why?

James 1:2-4, 12

I Peter 1:6-7

I Peter 4:12-14

6. Can a clay pot be used before it is fired in a kiln?

How does this relate to God's work in us as human vessels? Explain how the fires of our own "trials" prepare us for God's use:

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

7. Can you identify with any of the words on the above "Hardship" list? Can you also be encouraged by the corresponding "Evidence of God's Power"? How have you gained a greater understanding of God's love and power through a difficult time? How can this apply to any hardships you are experiencing right now?

Day Three

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:10-12. What does Paul always carry, as a vessel of Christ? (Verse 10)

What is "revealed" as a result?

2. What is at work in Paul and his fellow ministers (2 Corinthians 4:12)?

What is at work in those they serve?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. What do you think it means to "always carry around in our body the death of Jesus"? See also I Corinthians 15:30-31.

4. Read Matthew 16:24-26. What does Jesus say we must do in order to "come after" Him? (Verse 24)

How do we find real life, according to Jesus? (Verse 25)

What two values are contrasted in verse 26?

Page 4

Which do you think is more valuable and why?

5. Read John the Baptist's words in John 3:30 about Jesus. What dynamic is happening in John's life?

How do these words relate to this passage in 2 Corinthians or Jesus' words in Matthew 16:24-26?

7. What do you think it means to have "the life of Jesus revealed" in one's physical body? (Verse 10)
8. According to 2 Corinthians 4:10-12, who benefits from our decision to take up our cross and follow Jesus' example?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

9. Can you imagine a community in which every person looked for ways to share Christ and His love with others, even sacrificially? What would that look like?

Do you think serving Christ and others is more fulfilling than just serving yourself? Explain:

How does understanding Jesus' love and sacrifice on the cross allow you to love others more freely?

Day Four

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read II Corinthians 4:13-15. What two actions are connected in verse 13?
2. What does Paul believe, according to verse 14?
3. Again, who benefits from Paul's faith and actions in verse 15?

Who ultimately gets the credit for the "grace that is reaching more and more people"? (Verse 15c)

Page 5

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

4. Read Philippians 3:10-11. What do you think it means to experience "*the fellowship of sharing in Christ's sufferings*"?

How do you think we also experience the "*power of His resurrection*" in everyday life?

Why do you think both these aspects of knowing Christ are important?

How does this passage relate to the verses in II Corinthians 4:13-15?

5. Read I Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-20. In verse 14, how important is the resurrection of Christ to our message and faith?

Read I Corinthians 15:42-22, 50-55. How does Paul describe our own resurrection?

Read I Corinthians 15:58. What is Paul's "Therefore" or conclusion, because of the resurrection?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

6. Are there any areas in your life that need to be "raised up" by the resurrection power of Christ? Does the promise of the resurrection encourage you to trust God today for a new beginning? Explain:

Day Five

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What is happening to our physical body, "outwardly", in verse 16?

What is happening inside us and how often?

2. How does Paul describe this world's "troubles" in verse 17?

How does Paul describe what is to come?

3. How does Paul describe this physical world in verse 18?

What should we remember about the spiritual world?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

4. Reread 2 Corinthians 4:1 & 16. What point is Paul emphasizing in both verses?

What additional insight do you now have, from verses 16-18, about why this is true?

5. Read Romans 8:18. What does God plan to share with His children?

How does verse 18 fit in with 2 Corinthians 4:17?

6. Read Isaiah 40:6-7. How does this passage describe the "glory" of our earthly life?

Think about the messages our society sends us. What is it we are told is valuable and important in life?

What have you learned today that argues against this perspective?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

7. What do you think it means to "fix our eyes on what is...unseen"?

How can living with this view change your life today? What difference does this make? For example, how will this impact your priorities, or your thought life, or your view of a problem? Can you say with Paul, "Therefore, I do not lose heart"? Write down your thoughts: