

2 Corinthians 4:7-18 – Our Light Affliction.

I. (7-12) Treasure in clay vessels.

“The **treasure** is the greatness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the glory of God made evident through that gospel. It is the very *light* of God and the *light of the knowledge of the glory of God*, reflected in the *face of Jesus Christ*. This is the greatest **treasure** in all creation!”

“Paul simply compares the “value” of God’s light and glory and the “value” of what He chose to put His light and glory into. When you compare the two, it isn’t hard to be amazed that God has put such a great **treasure** into clay pots (us).”

“Who is *worthy* to be a “container” for God’s light and glory? The smartest person isn’t smart enough, the purest person isn’t pure enough, the most spiritual person isn’t spiritual enough, and the most talented person isn’t talented enough. We are all just clay pots holding an unspeakably great treasure.”

So that it would be evident to anyone who had eyes to see that the work was being done by the power of God, not the power of the vessel.

Hard pressed... perplexed... persecuted... struck down: Paul’s life was hard, and it was hard because of his passionate devotion to Jesus Christ and His gospel. Yet look at the triumph of Jesus in Paul’s life: **not crushed... not in despair... not forsaken... not destroyed.**

In **Acts 23:12**, 40 men conspired together to not eat or drink until they had murdered Paul.

Psalm 34:19 - *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.*

John 16:33 - *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will[fn] have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”*

Colossians 1:24 - *I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church,*

Paul externally suffered and was dying, the Corinthians and many others were being saved because of the life Jesus Christ in Him – the union or suffering.

II. (13-18) Our Light Afflictions.

We believe, we speak and we do not lose heart...

“This is a great principle – that faith creates the testimony. Paul *really believed* God had a purpose in his death-like sufferings, and *really believed* he lived and experienced the resurrection life of Jesus. Therefore, he wasn’t hesitant to **speak** about it.”

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 – *Stripes, Prisons, Beatings, Stoned, Shipwrecked, Perils of waters, 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, In weariness and toil, In sleeplessness often, In hunger and thirst, In fastings often, In cold and nakedness*

- Our affliction is light compared to what others suffer
- Our affliction is light compared to what we deserve
- Our affliction is light compared to what Jesus suffered for us
- Our affliction is light compared to the blessings we enjoy
- Our affliction is light as we experience the sustaining power of God’s grace
- Our affliction is light when we see the glory that it leads to

Psalms 116:7-13 - *Return to your rest, O my soul, For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, My eyes from tears, And my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD In the land of the living. I believed, therefore I spoke, “I am greatly afflicted.” I said in my haste, “All men are liars.” What shall I render to the LORD For all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, And call upon the name of the LORD.*

Matthew 11:28-30 - *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

Romans 8:16-17 - *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*