

# Below the Surface: Jars of Clay—God's unlikely treasure box.

## Sermon Notes

February 11, 2018

### Review.

- Being near Christ we begin to smell of him, and the Holy Spirit work through us makes us competent ministers.
- We radiate Christ because of the transformative work of his Spirit in us.
- Only in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit can we remove the veil that keeps us from understanding and receiving the Gospel.
- The glory of the Law pales in comparison to the glory of the Cross—condemned by the former and made righteous by the latter.

### The ministry of the glorious gospel. **2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

- "This [kind of] ministry." (1)
  - A confident ministry. (1b)
  - Brings life. (3:6)
  - Brings salvation. (3:11)
  - Declares us righteous. (3:9)
  - Transforms us to be like Jesus. (3:18)
- This ministry is transparent. (2)
  - Hidden agendas or deception are not practices of this ministry.
  - Manipulating the Scriptures is not a tool of this ministry.
  - Accountability is both before people and God. (2b)
- The adversary's ministry is in direct contrast to the ministry of the glorious gospel. (4)
  - His ministry is to keep people blinded to the glory of the gospel revealed in Christ.
  - His ministry avoids the light of transparency.
- The ministry of the gospel proclaims Jesus not ourselves. (5)
- God uses vessels once darkened to now be the lamp by which people see the glory of Jesus. (6)

### Unlikely treasure boxes. **2 Corinthians 4:7-12**

- Jars of clay with treasure in it. Why Us? Why do we get to be the carrier of this incredible message and ministry?
  - Nothing this glorious could come from you!
  - Ultimately, we prove and point to the glory of God!
  - God creates us for a purpose to help others see him. (7)

**Romans 9:21, 23** *"Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use...What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, who he prepared in advance for glory?"*

- Just as a clay pot's value lies mostly in it's contents, so also our value is great when the treasure of God is in us.
- God uniquely shapes us for purpose, but each of us contains something so much greater than what we would be as a vessel with **potential but no content**.
- Trials and struggles in this ministry are not removed. (8-9) That is why chapters 3 and 4 are being written, to encourage and strengthen.
- Our sufferings and our successes in this ministry are in alignment with the daily experience of the death and life of Jesus. (10)
  - Our hardships create opportunity to brightly glorify the life of Christ in us. (10b)
  - The reality is our suffering may be to the betterment of the ministry of Christ—"Jesus sake." (11a)
  - "Always dying, but never lifeless," EBC (12)

### **How to not lose heart in ministry.** <sup>MH</sup> **2 Corinthians 4:13-18**

- Take hold of the spirit of faith! (13)
- Hope in Jesus' promise to raise us up. (14)
- Look not upon your trials but upon the lives being changed by the ministry of the gospel to the glory of God. (15)
- Rejoice in the growth of your transformation and do not fixate on the external challenges or sufferings. (16)
- Fix your eyes on the 'prospect' of eternity and not on what you can see that is so temporary. (17-18)