

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

1 *Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Therefore looks back to what Paul has previous said...that his ministry not based on credentials issued by man but the testimony of changed lives.

Ministry on basis of God's *mercy* (not getting what we deserve) We lose heart when think of past sins (Paul killed Christians) If what we do for God is by law we should die. Paul's ministry-Covenant of grace. Has greater glory than past covenant of law--he once held to--It ministered condemnation yet had glory--**now** greater glory ministry of Christ & righteousness.

Saved sinners relate to God by *grace* w/ continual fellowship. Law(Moses) a mirror-sin-guilt- continual sacrifice. But Jesus said this is my body sacrifice for you..New covenant in my blood.

Forgiven once for all not by works but by faith in finished work. If according to law then *how am I doing?* Good days, bad days—feel up, feel down—wobbly, unstable emotions but He author & finisher, stable & steady as abide in His word & finished work. This was Paul's ministry.

Not lose heart – wasn't easy for Paul--revival or riot as Jews dogged his ministry--saw him as *traitor* an enemy of Judaism. Lived w/ threats.

*Renounce things hidden...craftiness....*no twisting of scriptures to make it say what he wanted. False apostles did who sought to discredit Paul. We see today w/ *Sinless perfection movement* 'live life free of sin as Jesus'

Can you not sin 1 minute, 5 minutes, 1 hour.....see you can if you will to.

1Jn 1:8;10 *If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*

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*CH Spurgeon in a conference where a preacher taught **sinless perfection** in a self-important manner & even claimed to have reached a state of perfection himself. Spurgeon didn't challenge him at the moment. Instead, the next morning he poured a pitcher of milk over the man's head, to which the man responded w/ rage & hostility, the kind you'd expect from a sinner. Sinless perfection disproved*

Exegesis is pulling out of scripture what is there. **Issegesis** putting in the text what I see. *"Glorious things in the bible I see all of them put there by you and by me".* We don't make the bible say what we want, *twist it. Health & wealth doc-prosperity gospel.* Paul is not dishonest or deceitful but careful.

James 3:1 *Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment. Lk 12:48..... And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.*

Great responsibility to stand & declare God's word to God's people. Not hard when no ulterior motive or agenda....let it speak for itself...*when plain sense makes common sense seek no other sense.* Just believe as it says. God not hiding truth w/ secrete meaning that only initiated can know.

Commending to conscience – Our first audience is God Himself for we will answer to Him. We are not to teach beyond what the passage says. I'm often asked '*possibilities*' in the scripture—I can speculate or give opinion but if the bible is silent we can't be dogmatic.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Veiled 3:14,15 hard hearts play into hand of enemy & fall out of favor w/ God **Heb 3:8;11** *'harden not your hearts as in the rebellion....as I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest'* Satan binds and blinds he is god of this world **Jesus** calls him prince of the power of the air the spirit now working in sons of disobedience.

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2 Corinthians 4:1-7

God made earth for man—Adam & Eve be fruitful multiply and fill earth have dominion over fish, birds all living creatures..**Gen 1:26**—When Adam sinned he forfeited **trust deed** of earth--God originally gave him over to Satan who has ownership since.

Rom 6:16 Do you not know that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

God's plan of redemption was Christ death-burial-resurrection *w/o the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. Heb 9:22*

Devil took Jesus to high mountain showing Him all the kingdom of the earth..*I will give you if you bow down to me*...Jesus didn't dispute. When he told disciples of His suffering & death in Jerusalem. Peter wasn't going to let it happen.

Matt 16:22,23 And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You." 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

Devil wants worship not cross *he god of this world*. Redemption of world & people is only by blood of Christ. Jesus said pray *'Thy kingdom come Thy will be done....'* And soon it will...*on earth as it is in heaven. Rev 5* we see it after Rapture...scroll **trust deed** of earth...back to God...then judgment to cleanse earth finally Jesus returns.

Devil binds & blinds so that these things stay hid from hard hearted souls who are lost. We ask God in prayer to pull back veil so they see.

People get angry & irrational when talk about Jesus....sin, guilt, answerable to God—moves them out of comfort zone. Blinded to what sin is doing to them now & eternal future.

2Tim 2:26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

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5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves;

We created in image of God but marred because of sin. God's purpose to restore us back by faith in Christ & work of Holy Spirit conforming us to image of Christ. When off track He convicts gets us to get back on track. Day by day as yield to Him change takes place from glory to glory.

1Jn 3:2 Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Preach ourselves-God forbid we take center stage & use Jesus to promote ourselves or our minister **but** we're to serve Gods people as servants of Lord

Matt 20:25 But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. 26 "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

*Light shine out darkness.... Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be **light**"; and there was **light**. 4 And God saw that the light was good;*

Our life before Christ is formless & void because of sin until light of God shines in & God says *it is good*

*Jn 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the **light** of men. 5 And the **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it...9 There was the **true light** which, coming into the world, **enlightens** every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

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God's light illuminating those dark areas--now repented of & forgiven--what was dark & sinful turned to glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We now see how blessed we are--no longer in darkness, in world that is hopelessly lost, blinded under Satan's power but we are now in the light.

Treasure in earthen vessels—Gospel, good news, eternal life in us, earthen vessels or clay pots. Value of vessel is what's in it, a priceless treasure.

The treasure w/in gives our life its worth....price paid blood of Christ.

Ps 49:7 No man can by any means redeem his brother, Or give to God a ransom for him 8 For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever 9 That he should live on eternally; That he should not undergo decay.

Price paid for treasure is reason that all glory go to God—if vessel is Gold studded w/ precious gems people attracted to vessel but we **clay pot** that power of God and His glory all go to Him.

When Leonardo da Vinci had painted his immortal 'Last Supper,' he asked a friend for an evaluation. The friend heaped praise on the masterpiece & especially pointed out the wine cup by the Lord's hand looked so real as if it jumps off the canvas. At that point, Leonardo blotted out the cup and said 'Nothing should distract one's attention from Christ'

Paul still referring to the ministry implying that no one is to draw attention away from Christ & onto themselves. ***Taste & see that the Lord is good. Ps 34:8***

Vinegar or fruit punch Malolo plastic w/ water—taints pureness of water

Danger vessel getting glory, tasting of minister instead of Christ.

Teaching needs to taste of Jesus Christ and nothing else