

The Treasure in Earthen Vessels II Corinthians 4:1-7

Thank you for joining me once again for "It's a Good Life." Today we're want to look in II Corinthians chapter 4. In verse 1, it says,

¹*Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;*

²*But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

³*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:*

⁴*In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

⁵*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

⁶*For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

And now, I call to your attention verse 7: ⁷*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Well, the heavens indeed declare the glory of God, but they do not show us how we may glorify God, much less how we may be glorified with Him. Here, therefore, where natural reason and natural religion leave us at a loss, as we've read here, the Gospel of Christ takes us up and shows us the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus where it shines clearer and stronger and brighter and with more satisfaction than it does in the face of the whole creation. You see, it declares God. Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Have you trusted Him today as your Savior?

Notice verse 7 once again. It says there, ⁷*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels....* Well, what is the treasure spoken of here? The treasure spoken of here is the Gospel of Christ. And why is this? Well, the Gospel is a treasure because it consists of an abundance of that which is of inestimable value. Treasures of wisdom, treasures of knowledge, treasures of comfort, treasures of joy, treasures of grace, and treasures of strength....all of these things are contained in the Gospel. It's a tremendous treasure chest of all these things.

The Gospel is a treasure because there is no end to it. It's not only good for the soul now, but it's going to last as long as the Gospel lasts. In Mark chapter 13 and verse 31, it says, *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.* No matter what man tries to do to destroy the Word of God, it's always going to be. No matter what we think of the Word of God, it's always going to be. No matter what we think of the Gospel, it's always going to be. Why? Because the Gospel is the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He came into the world to seek and to save those who were lost. He gave His life. He shed His blood on the cross of Calvary that you and I can go to Heaven.

The Gospel...the treasure...the Gospel will never end, because Jesus will never end. Jesus, according to the Word of God, is God. It says in John chapter 1, in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And if you read on, it says that Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Who became flesh? Jesus became flesh. Jesus... God...became flesh and dwelt among us. He's always been. He will never cease. He is the Gospel.

The Gospel is a treasure, which glorified saints will be living by plentifully and pleasantly throughout all eternity. We have the Gospel today to help us

understand that we're lost and without Jesus, we are on our way to a devil's hell. But with Jesus, glory to God, we have eternal life. It's through Him and Him only that we can claim salvation.

The Gospel is a treasure because of its universal use. It's a treasure of food for all those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. It's a treasure of arms and ammunition for our spiritual warfare. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and the rulers of darkness of this world. On our own, we have no power, but it's through the Gospel...through the power of the Gospel...through the power of the Word of God that we have this ammunition for our spiritual warfare. The Gospel is a treasure.

The Gospel is a treasure because it furnishes us with the answers to every temptation, and with the whole armor of God, we can withstand the fiery darts of the devil that he throws at us and tries to get us to throw in the towel and quit. Thanks be to God, the Gospel allows us to carry on as the children of God with the whole armor of God.

The Gospel is a treasure in the heart of every true believer. If the Gospel of Christ has the innermost and uppermost place in our lives, we are rich toward God.

If the Gospel is a treasure, what about the earthen vessel? Christians are the earthen vessels spoken of. They are the only vessels. They can give only what they have received. We are the candlestick. He is the light. In John chapter 8 and verse 12, Jesus said, *I am the light of the world.* We are to be as John the Baptist when it comes to the light. In John chapter 1, verses 4-6, it says, ⁴*In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* ⁵*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* ⁶*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.*

Well, why was John sent? John was sent for a reason. What about you? Have you been sent? In

John chapter 1 and verse 8, the Bible continues on by saying John was not that Light, and neither are you nor I that Light, but John was sent to bear witness of that Light. That Light was Jesus Christ. You and I are to bear witness. We are to foretell. We are to forth tell. We are to give forth. We are to be the reflection of Jesus Christ. We are to be the witness of the Light as John was.

Saved people...Christians...are earthen vessels. Believers are compared to earthen vessels here because they are made of the same mold as other people. There's no difference. Oftentimes in respect to their outward condition, they are of small account, men of low degree. God has chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. Christians are subject to many infirmities. Some are weak and some are strong. They are what God the Father makes them. They are vessels of service. They are oftentimes despised and trampled on by men. They are frail and mortal and dying and on that account, earthen vessels.

Why does God place the treasure in earthen vessels? I'll tell you why. It's to magnify His power. It's divine power. Acts chapter 1 and verse 8 tells us that God has given us the power to strengthen us. We need this power to preach Jesus. After the Holy Spirit has come upon us, we receive power. After we're saved, in other words, we receive the power of God to be witnesses unto Him both where we are and into all the world. It makes no difference where we are, we have the power to preach Jesus by the Holy Spirit. We are to make vigorous attacks on the strongholds of the devil. We can't do it ourselves, but it's through the grace and the power of God through the Gospel that we are able to attack the strongholds of the devil. The old saying is, "Ready to attack hell with a squirt gun." Not because of our power but by the power of God. We receive the power to gather a harvest of souls, of telling other people about the love of Jesus, to bring a harvest in for our Lord.

Divine power has been given to us to support us in our hardships, as well. God chooses men, women, boys, girls who are often despised in order to magnify His own power. When we're pressed out of measure above strength, sometimes to the despairing of life, we are not to faint, but be borne up by the power of God who raises the dead.

Jesus Christ, resurrected from the dead, through the power of God the Father by the Holy Spirit, by Himself, by God he was raised. That's powerful. And we have that power at our disposal today because those of us who have trusted the Lord are able to go out, and through these earthen vessels, we're able to take the treasure that's spoken of here, the treasure...the Gospel...and give it out to this lost and dying world.

Divine power has been given to us to ensure success. The world is to be enlightened and enriched with the treasure that is lodged in earthen vessels. That's us who name Jesus. It is not what we do but what God does through us. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. It's because of God's power Paul could say, in II Timothy 4:7, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*

Do you know Him today as your Savior? Have you trusted Him personally? Have you taken advantage of receiving this treasure, the Gospel, into your heart? The death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Why not ask Him to come into your heart right now, and then you, too, can be the vessel, the earthen vessel that carries forth the good news that Jesus died, was buried and resurrected on that third day, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father right now to make intercession. He's there to save all those who will trust in Him as Savior. Why not ask Him to come into your heart right now?

If you are saved, you need to be taking the message, the treasure, to those people in this lost and dying world and helping them to understand

that they, too, can have Jesus as their Savior. Commit your life to Him today if you are saved. Let Him lead you and guide you and take your life and do what He would want to do with it today.

May the Lord bless you.

Let me invite you to look at our Website today, www.LRWM.org. You can leave a message on there and I'll be glad to pray with you. There's a place where you can leave prayer requests. You can also download a transcript of this program. You can also download this program and listen to it again. Bible study helps can be found there. Write to me: Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731, and I'll be glad to send you free of charge a transcript of this program and other programs of "It's a Good Life."

Until the next time when you hear me say, "It's a good life," may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.