



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – June 1, 2024

The Lord be with you.

Do you ever give your all in service to the Lord and then feel it wasn't enough, you gave it your best and it just didn't seem good enough to you. You think of all the ways that you might have done better. You tried, but you felt you came short. Maybe you were leading a home Bible study, serving at the food pantry, talking to a friend about Jesus. You just wish you could have done better. You, you wish you could have been more effective. I often feel that in preaching of sermon, writing an advent devotional teaching a class. I mean, I so wanted to give God my best and I felt I came up short. Then it bothers me.

I'm gonna share with you a brief passage of scripture that I come back to again and again, that that encourages me to keep going and to believe that God does bring his very best out of those times that we can feel so inadequate, so ineffective, so unequal to the great task.

I am looking at the apostle Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Christians. Second Corinthians chapter four where in the first three chapters, Paul has talked about his struggles in doing ministry and the weaknesses that he has felt. And then in chapter four, verse seven, Paul reflects and he says, but we have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us, the treasure that Paul speaks of here.

Well, he explains it in previous verses as it is the treasure of the Gospel. It is the good news of Jesus Christ that Paul and you and I are wanting to spread to others and notice Paul says, we have this treasure of the Gospel. We have it in clay jars in the ancient world of Paul's Day. Clay jars were common cheap dime, a dozen breakable of little intrinsic worth, but they were often used to store precious treasure. People would put gold coins, silver, precious jewels and just plain simple clay jars. And so you get Paul's Point as Christians. Well, we are light jars of clay, fragile, easily broken. We are in bold contrast to the precious treasure of the Gospel that we carry.

Paul says, but we have this treasure in clay jars so that so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. So we see here that it is in our human weakness, our vulnerability, those times that we wish we could have done better that the power of God is most evident. It is made clear.

Paul says that this extraordinary power belongs to God. So the focus is, is not on us as the container, the clay jar, but the focus is on the treasure, the treasure of the gospel that you and I carry so that no one is ever going to confuse the priceless treasure with us as it is in our weakness, our Brokenness that, that God's power is most evident. So in days of our weakness, our Brokenness, our vulnerability, the power of God is most



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seen. This is actually going to lead Paul over in chapter 12 of the same book in which he talks about the thorn in the flesh.

Second Corinthians chapter 12 verse nine, Paul says, the God's power is perfected in our weakness, the weaker, the more inadequate that we feel, the more we lean on God and the more we lean on God, the stronger we discover God to be. And, and we learned that the Christian life and Christian service, it's not about our human ability, but it is about God's power and grace as our weakness, our inabilities where there are no obstacles for God, but opportunities for God's power to be seen. So those times that, that I feel so inadequate in preaching a sermon or writing a devotional God. God reminds me not to take myself so seriously, but to take him more seriously. It's not about me a clay jar. But it's about God and the treasure of the gospel that we carry as a clay jar doing, ministering.

I often think of the words of the wise Teresa of Avila who said, God writes straight with crooked lines that God takes our imperfections, our weakness, our Brokenness and God uses it to carry out his purpose that no matter how broken or crooked, God works it for good into something beautiful for Him. Let the words of second Corinthians 47 speak to you. But we have this treasure in clay jars so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us.

Loving Father, we embrace our Brokenness, our weakness, knowing that we are but jars of clay, fragile, breakable imperfect and we rejoice in the incomparable treasure of the gospel that we get to carry, help us today to remember that our strength, our sufficiency comes from you alone. And when we feel so weak and inadequate, remind us that your power is made perfect in our weakness, fill us with your spirit that we may serve you faithfully today despite the challenges and trials we may face. In the strong name of Jesus we pray, amen.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.