

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – July 28, 2020

That the Lord be with you.

Hey, I wish I could sit down with you and talk with you who are listening and get to know you. Because I know you're listening today, not because I'm anyone famous, well-known, I'm not, but I know you're listening. Because you love Jesus. And here's this guy who loves Jesus too, and he likes to talk about Jesus, you and I, we had this bond between us, and that's why I wanna talk with you today about something that is so important, and that is how the power of Jesus can be released through you and me into a world that frankly is very much needing to see the power of Jesus.

I'm looking today at Paul's second letter to the Corinthian Christians, 2nd Corinthians Chapter 4. I begin reading in verse 7, but we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God, it does not come from us. Now, there's so much here, I hardly know where to begin, but let's begin where Paul says that you and I, we are clay jars. Admittedly, some clay jars are a little more fancy, a little more beautiful than other clay jars, but the bottom line is, we are clay jars containing precious treasure. In the ancient world, most people kept their treasure, they're diamonds, their robes, their gold, they kept their treasure in plain and simple clay jars, a jar was a dime a dozen in the market place, nothing special, nothing fancy, nothing that would stand out, nothing that would get a thief's attention, 'cause the purpose of a simple clay jar was to hold treasure.

Our text says that you and I, well, we're clay jars containing the treasure of the good news of Jesus Christ, containing within us the power, Paul calls it extraordinary power, the power that heals broken lives, the power that brings new life to the world. Then in the next verse, Paul describes what life as a clay jar is like. He writes, we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed, perplexed, but not driven to despair, persecuted but not forsaken. Struck down, but not destroyed. Well, you read the book of that, it's a story of clay pots containing the treasure of the Gospel, clay pots containing the power of Jesus Christ, turning the world upside down. I want you see what Paul is doing here as he describes our clay pot lives. You read the first line of what Paul says, and it's our clay pot. You read the second line, and it's Jesus power within us. Let me see if I can show you what I mean. Paul says, we are afflicted in every way. That's our clay pot existence. But not crushed. That's the power of Jesus in us. We are perplexed that's our clay pot, but not driven to despair. That's the power of Jesus in it. So you get the idea of what Paul is doing here, that in the midst of a rough-and-tumble world and all of its problems, you and I, we have the treasure, we have the power of Jesus in us. That makes the difference.

Sometimes I hear preachers inviting people to come to Jesus and all their problems will be like the way I hear them, and I wonder for the life of me what Bibles are reading or what planet they live on, No, come to Jesus, just as we are, clay pots, troubles and all come to Jesus, and it will be made clear that this extraordinary power we contain, it will be made clear that that power belongs to God, and it has not come from us. Are there are times I wish I had not made some of the mistakes I've made, or times I wish I had gone through some of the things that I've gone through? And it's... And it's like God says, hey Tim, I can use that, I can use all of that to manifest, to make known to others, that it's not about you, it's about me, to be known to others that the power doesn't come from you, but extraordinary power comes from God in the midst of our clay pots. Now, look at what Paul says

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in the next verse, verse 10. He says, always carrying in the body, the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. As Paul talks here about the death of Jesus in us... He's not so much talking about the cross, as he's talking about the death of Jesus in his day-to-day troubles, his trials, his disappointments that he experienced throughout his life, and as you and I, there is in those troubles and trials, we also share in Jesus resurrection power, the extraordinary power, that is the treasure that our play puts it to contain, so you see the life of Jesus, the power of the life of Jesus in as it comes on top of the death of Jesus.

I like how Bible commentator, William Barclay translates these verses, We are so pressed at every point, but not hemmed in, we are at our wits end, but never at our hopes end, we are persecuted by men, but never abandoned by God. We are knocked down, but not knocked out. In our bodies, we run the same risk of death as Jesus Christ did, so that in our body, the same life as Jesus lived may be clear for all to see this extraordinary power of God in a clay pot. This extraordinary power of God is the miracle. People are seeing in you how in the midst of your trials and pressures, they see that Jesus is doing something in you, Jesus is working, and people know that the only explanation can be Jesus in you, that is an extraordinary power that our world is needing to see today.

Lord Jesus, I know there are many who are listening who are feeling their clay pot existence, so they're going through trials, danger, struggles, and my heart cries out for them. And I pray, I pray that through their hardships and pain, that you will encourage them and that your mighty extraordinary power of Jesus' life will be visible in them. And released through them to the world, for thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever and ever.

Because I can't sit down and talk with you. I'd love to hear from you. It would be so great if you would go to the Water from Rock Facebook and say hi and let me know how you're doing.

I'm Tim Smith, a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening until next time.

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