



2 Corinthians: Triumph in Trials

Week 6: Treasure in Clay Jars

2 Corinthians 4:1-12

Feedback from last week: Be Transformed

Has last week's passage and session changed you in any way this week? Has God shown you any areas where he wants to transform you in this season?

Share your stories

We also want to encourage each group member over Lent to use the 'Lent Daily Prayer 2024' which can be found here: <http://www.standrewsandallsaints.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Lent-Daily-Prayer-2024.pdf>

You might even like to start with that this week at your Life Group Meeting.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-12 (twice preferably!)

Questions (choose some from):

- 1) Is there anything that specifically spoke to you from the Sermon on Sunday?
- 2) Dave spoke about the emphasis in 2 Corinthians so far on 'What does Godly Leadership look like in comparison to the World's way of leading?' What have you picked up so far in answer to that question from the first 3 chapters of 2 Corinthians?
- 3) Dave highlighted 3 'cultural shifts' for leadership:
 - a. Secrecy & Deceit → Transparency & truthfulness (v2a)
 - b. Manipulation and 'Distorting' the Word of God → Preaching Truth (v2b) [see also 2 Timothy 4:3]
 - c. Promoting Ourselves → Promoting Jesus (v5)
 - d. Personal Power & position → Servant heartedness & humility (v5b) [See also Philippians 2:5-8]

Go through each of these 'cultural shifts' and reflect on what Godly leadership compared to the world is for each one. How can the Devil use the 'worldly ways' to cause division and destruction within a church, families and organisations?

- 4) v4. What does it mean that the 'god of this age has blinded the eyes of unbelievers'? What does that lead us to pray?
- 5) Why do you think Paul uses the analogy of a 'clay jar' in v7? How does he see himself as a 'clay jar' compared to the 'Super Apostles' who had caused trouble for him?
- 6) What does this image of a 'clay jar with treasure inside' convey to you? What does God want to say to you through this a) as an individual b) for us as a church?

Respond and Encounter:

Some suggestions:

- 1) Pray for leaders – in your group, in our church and nationally that they will lead in a godly way and not in a worldly way. If there are key leaders in your group, particularly pray for them together.
- 2) Give out post-its to everyone and ask them to write down the name of someone who does not yet know Jesus and pray that 'their blindness' from the 'god of this age' will be taken away and that they will know God's truth and come to faith.
- 3) Find an earthenware pot and put it in the centre of the room, perhaps with a candle inside to illustrate our key verse. Play some worship music (Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me?) and invite people to meditate on that image and for God to speak to them through it. Share any reflections together and then pray for each other to know God's empowering to go out this week into the world to be 'clay jars with treasure inside.'

Key verses to meditate on this week:

'But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us' (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Put up the Shuttering and let God fill it

an analogy of how God transforms us.

Larry Christenson in his book *The Renewed Mind* uses the following analogy to describe the process of transformation. He describes it as being like putting up a concrete structure. Before the concrete can be poured in, wooden frames ('shuttering') are put up which form the shape that the cement will take and act to hold it in while it is setting. After the concrete has set, the wooden structure is taken away and the concrete remains.



This wooden framework he says, represents *our role*. We are to construct the outward form of Christ, the 'outer temporary framework' into which God will pour his enduring work of transformation (the 'concrete') by his Spirit. We construct this temporary structure by choosing to go God's way (e.g. choosing to 'put on' patience, love compassion etc. and choosing to follow the way of the spirit and not our sinful desires). But it does not end there, for if it did, when we did not keep it up it would all fall down again and we would have to start from scratch. No, into this temporary framework that we 'put on,' God pours his spirit to transform us from the inside in a permanent way. He transforms us and gives us a new heart and new desires (Ezekiel 36:26-7) aligning them with his.

Therefore being transformed to the likeness of Christ is about us co-operating and working together with the Holy Spirit. ***We are called to do the temporary outer work (imitation), for God to pour his grace in, and bring the inner and lasting work of transformation.***

Live it out...

Using Larry Christenson's analogy

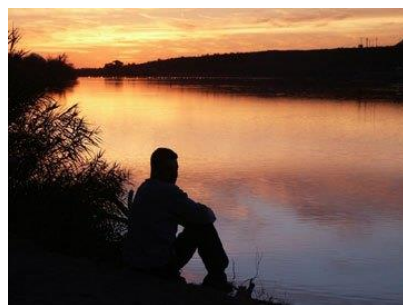
- a) Identify a specific issue that you want to ask God to bring transformation in.
- b) Identify four things that *you* could intentionally do (this is the "wooden shuttering") e.g. pray blessing for my difficult neighbour, speak words of affirmation to my spouse, put on a worship CD when I am tempted to view internet material that is unhelpful etc. and seek to live them out.
- c) Pray each day for the specific 'grace' that you are desiring e.g. 'I pray for the grace to be patient with my neighbour and to love them as you love them.'

Reviewing your day

Find 10-15 minutes to still yourself and be silent and attentive to God.

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you ‘play back your day with God.’

- What have you to be thankful for? What has been good about your day? Spend time thanking God now.
- Where have you walked closely with God today? Where were you ‘in-tune’ with God’s spirit?
- Where were you ‘out of harmony’ with God’s spirit? Where did you feel negative feelings? What is God saying through these feelings?
- Is there anything you need to confess or ask God to heal and transform in you?
- Ask God for his ‘graces’ – for his strength and help for the day ahead, and any specific fruit of the Spirit you need to live differently tomorrow.



“Create in me a pure heart O God and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10)