

Having the Glory of God in an Earthen Vessel

by Zac Poonen

The glory of God is the only real treasure that we can have on earth, and it shines in an earthen vessel that has been broken for it to shine.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:6

Topics: "Brokenness", "Glory Of God"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that the true treasure of the gospel is the glory of God, which resides in our earthen vessels despite our weaknesses and limitations. He illustrates how the Apostle Paul, an unimpressive figure, was used by God to turn the world right side up because of the glory within him. Poonen draws parallels with Gideon's army, highlighting that just as their earthen vessels had to be broken for the light to shine, so must we undergo breaking to reveal the life of Jesus in us. He encourages believers to embrace their weaknesses, understanding that it is the glory of God within that truly matters. Ultimately, the breaking of our outer shell allows the divine light to shine forth, fulfilling God's purpose in our lives.

Transcript

In 2 Cor. 4:6 Paul begins to explain what the gospel is. Many people cannot understand the gospel because Satan (the god of this world) has blinded their eyes so that they cannot see it. Paul speaks here about the glory of God as the only real treasure that we can have on earth (v.6). Just as God commanded light to shine way back in Genesis 1, He has also shone into our hearts - and this light is in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7). Till the end of our lives, we will all be only earthen vessels. The only attractive thing about this vessel is that it contains the glory of God.

In the Old Testament, Abraham and David were materially wealthy. That was an earthly glory - because all human beings glory in wealth. But in the New Testament, God used a man like Paul, who was both poor and unimpressive. Tradition tells us that the Apostle Paul was only 4 feet 11 inches tall, bald, having a hooked nose and sick for much of his life. When he stood up to speak, he was not a very impressive personality. But this was the man God used to "turn the world upside down"- because he was anointed (Acts 17:6). Paul was actually turning the world "right side up", because the whole world has been upside down, ever since Adam sinned. He was a weak earthen vessel but one that contained the glory of Christ inside. It's what's inside you that really counts. Many people today are impressed by so-called great servants of God who stand on platforms like film stars. But that's not the picture we get of a true servant of

God from the apostle Paul. He was not a golden vessel. He was an earthen vessel. So don't get discouraged if you find many human limitations and weaknesses in you. Ensure that there is a great glory inside - that you walk with a clear conscience before God and live under the anointing of the Holy Spirit all the time. That's what really matters.

The light in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:6,7) reminds us of Gideon's army of 300 soldiers who had an earthen vessel each, with a light inside. These 300 were selected from a larger group of 32,000 by God, and are a type of the overcomers in the last days. When they go to battle against Satan, like those soldiers, they have a sword (which is the word of God). But they also have an earthen vessel with a light inside. Gideon's soldiers were told to break their earthen vessels so that their lights would shine out. If you put a candle inside a pot, you will hardly be able to see its light. But if the pot is broken, the light shines forth. Paul tells us how his earthen vessel had to be broken for the life of Jesus to shine forth. He had to go through affliction, perplexity, persecution and being struck down, without despairing (v.8-12). Thus his earthen vessel was broken and people could see the light (the life of Jesus) clearly in him. Many believers don't understand this, and they are not interested either. But this way of the cross alone is the way of life.

When you sow a grain of wheat into the ground, its hard outer shell cracks open. Only then can the life within be released. Even in us born-again Christians, there is the hard outer shell, of our soulish personality and our flesh, which has to be broken. Only then will the light of the glory of God shine forth from us.

This is a principle that we see right through Scripture. When a woman brought an alabaster vial of perfume to Jesus, there was wonderful perfume inside. But no-one in the house could get the scent of that perfume until the vial was broken. In the same way, God has to take us through various circumstances where our outer life is broken. Then we will no longer be attractive to people. You may want to come across to others as a very smart person. But God says, "Let Me break this desire of yours." Man comprises of spirit, soul and body. There is a tremendous glory that dwells in our spirit when Christ comes in. But our soul life hinders that glory from shining forth. That's why God allows many a breaking in our lives - so that we fulfil His purpose.

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