

**"Suffering in the Will of God"**

**Part 2**

**2 Corinthians 4:8-18**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study we looked at how we have a TREASURE within our earthen vessels and the TREASURE is the Light of the life of Jesus Christ. We were given the Holy Spirit when we were saved and it is the Holy Spirit Who produces the life of Jesus within us.

**Ephesians 1:12-14**

<sup>12</sup> *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

<sup>13</sup> *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*

<sup>14</sup> *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

**Romans 8:9**

<sup>9</sup> *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

We can see from these verses that we have been given the Holy Spirit as a down payment and if anyone does not have the Spirit they are not saved. Jesus spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in John 16.

**John 16:13-14a**

<sup>13</sup> *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.*

<sup>14</sup> *He shall glorify me:*

Jesus told His disciples when the Holy Spirit was sent to indwell the believers He would glorify Him. So this helps us to see that the Spirit of God is within us so that Jesus will be glorified in our lives. This "LIFE OF JESUS", produced by the Holy Spirit, is the TREASURE in our earthen vessels.

In our study last week we talked about how God allows us to be broken at times so that the LIGHT OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST can shine out for others to see. This is pictured in

Judges 7 when the 300 men of Gideon's army had the lights within the earthen vessels and they broke the vessels before they attacked the Midianites. It was when the vessels were broken that the light was able to shine out and God was glorified through the victory. So it is the same in our lives and it was the same in the life of Paul.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:8-9**

Paul often found himself under great pressure, in situations where he did not know where to turn, he was persecuted, and he was cast down but in all of this he was never without hope.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:10**

Paul understood that he was a member of the body of Jesus Christ and so he had become a target of the enemy. But while he was a target and he was attacked the attacks were permitted by God to break the clay pot which in turn allowed the life of Jesus Christ to shine through. This is what happens within our lives. God permits us to go through times of suffering so that we will be broken and when we are broken and we are controlled by the Holy Spirit then the Light of the life of Jesus Christ is seen in us.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:11**

Here in this verse we see that Paul was ALWAYS delivered unto death so that the Light of the life of Jesus Christ would shine forth from his life. It is interesting here that Paul states that this "death" which he was delivered unto was for Jesus sake.

What does Paul mean by this?

When we face the "graves" of life in which we are to die to the flesh and allow the Spirit to live the life of Jesus Christ through us it is then that Jesus Christ is magnified in our lives and it is then that Jesus is glorified. It is His resurrection power that is then seen in our lives.

**2 Corinthians 4:7**

<sup>7</sup> *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

**"Broken Vessels"**

**Part 2**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:12**

This verse is very interesting for we see here the spiritual Truth that LIFE COMES FROM DEATH. Let me show you what Jesus said in John 12.

**John 12:23-26**

<sup>23</sup> *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

<sup>24</sup> *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

This was speaking of His Own death but it also applies to our lives. Jesus needed to die and be buried and be resurrected so that we could have LIFE. In our lives we do not die physically but we die to the desires of the flesh. We set our own hopes, dreams and interests aside which is "dying to self". When we do this others then are permitted to see the LIFE of Christ within us. To die to self is to SURRENDER TO THAT WHICH GOD HAS PERMITTED TO COME INTO OUR LIVES. Let me show you an example.

**1 Peter 5:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

<sup>7</sup>  *Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Let us notice how Jesus continued in John 12.

<sup>25</sup> *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*

What does Jesus mean when He says that he that loves his life will lose it?

He is saying that the person who loves his life in this world so much that he will not die to his own personal dreams, desires, and rights will lose everything he gains here for the things of this life will all pass away. But the person who hates his life here, meaning that they do not live for this world but they live for spiritual riches, that person will have great gain in eternity.

<sup>26</sup> *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.*

We are to follow Jesus and we are to NOT live for this world but we are to DIE TO OUR PERSONAL DREAMS AND DESIRES it is then that from our lives others will see the LIGHT OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST. [Except a corn of wheat falls to the ground and dies it

abides alone]. The application is: except we die to our own personal dreams and desires we have very little impact on the lives of others.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:12 again.**

Paul is saying here that surrender to the will of God and death to the flesh is a huge part of our testimony. When we are controlled by the Spirit of God others are able to see Christ in us.

**Galatians 5:22-24**

<sup>22</sup> *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering[Patience but not the ability to wait but how we act while waiting] gentleness[kindness], goodness, faith[faithfulness],*

<sup>23</sup> *Meekness[power under control], temperance[self control]; against such there is no law.*

<sup>24</sup> **And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:13**

The spirit of faith here is the attitude of faith. Paul now quotes from Psalm 116. Let me show you the verse.

**Psalm 116:3-10**

<sup>3</sup> *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.*

<sup>4</sup> *Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.*

<sup>5</sup> *Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.*

<sup>6</sup> *The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.*

<sup>7</sup> *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.*

<sup>8</sup> *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*

<sup>9</sup> *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.*

<sup>10</sup> **I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:**

The psalmist was in great distress because of his enemies. He prayed and God answered his prayer. Then in verse 10 he tells his readers that he believed God answered prayer and this is the very reason he prayed.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:13 again.**

This is exactly what Paul is saying. He believes the message of the Gospel to be absolutely true and therefore he cannot remain silent. He preached the Gospel because he believed that if someone does not get saved they will go to hell. He believed that everyone was a sinner and they needed a Savior and Jesus Christ is that Savior.

The critics would have cried out, "Paul, why do you continue to preach the message which has caused you so much tribulation?" Paul would reply, "Because I believe it to be the ABSOLUTE TRUTH!"

Application:

When I look at what Paul writes here it is a reminder to me of how important it is to study God's Word and draw nearer to Him. This deepens our faith and the greater our faith in the Word the more we will speak with conviction. This is greatly needed in our churches today! People need to be rooted deeply in the Word and then preach the message of the Word with confidence and conviction. There are many today who will not take a stand on certain issues and the reason is because they do not believe what the Bible teaches.

**Illustration:**

If God revealed to me that you would be injured in an accident if you took a certain road, I would not hesitate to tell you to take a different route. If I did not believe what God said I would never say a word. I might brush it aside by saying, "It is your life and your car so you can go any path you desire."

When we TRULY believe the Word of God it will be impossible to remain silent. This is exactly what Paul is saying. The message he was preaching was one that cost him dearly but he believed it to be the Truth so he refused to back down. We will pick this up again next week

Let me leave you with the words of MacDonald.

*"In order for Paul ever to go to Corinth with the gospel, he had to suffer untold hardships. But it was worth it all, because they had trusted in the Lord Jesus and now had eternal life. Paul's physical suffering and loss meant spiritual gain to others. Robertson says, "His dying was working out for the good of those who were benefited by his ministry." Oftentimes we have the tendency to cry out to the Lord in sickness, asking Him to deliver us from it, so that we might serve Him better. Perhaps we should sometimes thank God for such afflictions in our lives, and glory in our infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon us."*