

We are clay jars containing treasure

Most of you are aware of the recent issues our pastor, Bob Felts, has been facing with lung cancer. It has been so great to hear the encouragement and support from the community. This week, I am joining you as his guest columnist again because he has had yet another surgery. However, as difficult as this surgery may have been, we are glad that it seems all the cancer has been removed. As great as it is to be able to share with you through this article, I look forward to Bob being well enough to be back doing this on a regular basis.

To be honest, I had no idea what I was going to write about when asked. When I need to think through something like this, I usually go to my father-in-law, who has been my spiritual mentor. I told him I wanted to share something deep that would leave readers with a need to think about the truth of what was written. Without hesitation, he pointed me to 2 Corinthians 4:7. In this verse, the Bible says that “we now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves (NLT).” Considering the “brokenness” our pastor has experienced in this time, it seemed more than appropriate.

In ancient cultures, valuable things such as expensive perfume were often kept in plain containers that kept the value from sight. This comparison says that followers of Christ are like a container carrying a valuable treasure. That treasure is, of course, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, so many read that verse and find encouragement from it but never really grasp the full measure of truth spoken to us here.

The verses that follow verse seven paint a picture of suffering that we are guaranteed we will see in this life. Paul says that we will experience many difficulties as we follow after Jesus Christ. Though God walks through these trials with us, the truth in God’s Word tells us that we still must go through them. Paul says that we will get knocked down but not be destroyed. In our suffering, we will continue to share in the death of Jesus Christ so that his life will be seen in our bodies.

When the woman approached Jesus with the jar in Mark 14:3, she had to break the jar for the treasure of perfume to pour out. The broken jar resulted in a fragrant offering at the feet of Christ. As “fragile clay jars,” when we are broken physically and emotionally that the treasure that God has placed within us can pour out and his love becomes evident to those around us.

As followers of Christ, we must live as we say we believe. God has a plan and a hope for our future (Jeremiah 29:11) and he works all things together for good for those who love him (Romans 8:28). When things happen and we can see no reason, we must

simply trust in God's plan for us (Proverbs 3:5). God is not obligated to share the blueprint of his plan with us. Instead, he leads us step by step through life as we develop dependence upon him. When we willingly walk through the trials of life in faith, the fragrance of God's love is found by those who are close to us.

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