**2 Corinthians ABC 4 28 March 2021**

**Ministers of the New Covenant 2 Corinthians Chapter 4**

Introduction

The Preacher v1-4

The Preaching - Jesus Christ v5-6

The Power v7

The Persecution v8-12

The Perspective v13-15

The Perseverance 16-18

Conclusion

Applications

Introduction

The Preacher v1-4

 Spiritually Courageous (faint not)

 Morally Sound (not walking in craftiness)

 Intellectually Honest with Integrity

 Limitations acknowledged

The Preaching - Jesus Christ v5-6

 Preaching not ourselves

 Christ Jesus the Lord

 Light in our Hearts

 Glory of God

 Face of Jesus Christ

The Power v7

 Treasure in earthen vessels

 Excellency of Power of God

The Persecution v8-12

 Down but not out v8-9

 Manifest Jesus in our body v10

 Death for Jesus’ sake

 Life in those who receive the message

The Perspective v13-15

 In the resurrection power of God v13-14

 Grace and thanksgiving v15

The Perseverance v16-18

 Outward vs Inward v16

 Light affliction vs Weight of glory v17

 Seen vs Unseen v18

Conclusion

Applications

INTRODUCTION

Whereas 30 years ago the key assets churches were looking for were a man of integrity, a man of prayer, one who would study and teach well and love people, now the focus is much more on leadership issues– coaching, mentoring, teamwork, motivational skills, articulation of vision, and management ability, etc. (Michael P. Andrus)

The Apostle Paul uses the metaphor of treasure in clay pots in our Scripture text today. He says, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” What is the treasure, and what are the jars of clay he is talking about? Well, we’ll get to that, but let’s start at the beginning of the chapter and work our way there.

The rebels charged Apostle Paul –

Not impressive with looks

Not eloquent

No credentials

Not charging for service

Being punished by God etc

2 Questions

1. Are those blinded by Satan excused from punishment by God?
2. Are we excused from not sharing the Gospel to those blinded by the god of the world?

The response of some to the phenomenon of Satanic blindness is to focus on new techniques and new methodologies, better marketing, new paradigms of worship, or a new approach to the culture. These things may increase the audience, and that’s valuable and worth doing, but since Satanic blindness is supernatural, only a supernatural power can remove it, and that power is in Jesus Christ. That is why Paul says we much preach Christ, not ourselves.

Satan blinds.

We proclaim.

God turns on the light.

We are not responsible for turning on the light, only for sharing the truth.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace

So often, in our time, power is used to tear things apart, to blast, or explode, or crush. But this transcendent power unites, gathers, harmonizes. It breaks down walls of partition and removes barriers. It does not make superficial, external adjustments, but works from within, producing permanent transformations. Do you know any other power like that? It’s absolutely unrivaled.

Ray Stedman, *Authentic Christianity, 124.*

Taken together, these four images tell us that Paul was a hard-headed realist with no romantic illusions about his service for God. Far from depicting himself as a spiritual superhero blazing a trail of success like a comet across the first-century sky, Paul portrayed himself as a groggy fighter reeling from a succession of near-lethal blows, surprised to find himself still on his feet and sure that if he was still standing, it was only by the grace of God.

J. Philip Arthur *Strength in Weakness: 2 Corinthians Simply Explained*

As Paul experiences “the death of Jesus” (suffering), he reveals the life of Jesus to unbelievers. Paul expresses the same idea in three consecutive sentences in verses 10-12. Each begins with death and ends with life.

The essential point Paul is making in each of these statements is that the servant leader is destined to undergo trials, decay and death.

These trials, decay and death, however, can be spiritually productive in the lives of others.

Maybeline Tay and Benson Chia were sweethearts who met in church as friends before marrying in 2000 and raising a family together. In November 2020, Benson lost a six-year battle with cancer but not before touching the lives of many with his testimony. All photos courtesy of the Chia family.

*Salt & Light*

Do you ever complain to God that He hasn’t given you a better clay pot? Are you ever jealous of the style or color or shape of other pots you see walking around? I think God wants us to get our eyes off the jars of clay and onto the treasure we carry in them. He has given us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, and He wants us to share that knowledge with others.

Whatever that is seen or external will someday going to be left behind, and eventually it’s going to go up in smoke. But the spiritual realities are lasting and eternal–love, worship, faithful ministry, lives touched, kindnesses done, generosity expressed.

**Comparing the Old Covenant and the New Covenant**

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| --- | --- |
| Old Covenant | New Covenant |
| Letter | Spirit |
| Stone | Heart |
| Condemns | Liberates |
| Death | Life |
| Glorious | More Glorious |
| Righteousness by Works | Righteousness by Faith |
| Law | Grace |
| Moses as mediator | Christ as Mediator |
| External | Internal |