



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Corinthians 4: 7-15

Spring 2025

"Treasure in Pots"

TRANSCRIPT

Well, good morning. We are continuing this morning our studies in the Book of 2 Corinthians, and we are in chapter 4. We looked at verse 6 last week—and now we begin verse 7, and we'll go through verse 15;

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸ *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death works in us, but life in you.

¹³ But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak, ¹⁴ knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. ¹⁵ For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4: 7-15

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Father, what a great privilege it is to be here with Your people, with the saints and opening Your Word, Your inerrant Word—reading it and then spending time in the next hour considering the meaning of Paul's words; the greatness of them and then reflecting upon Your glory and how, 'That is the chief end of man'.; and as we make that our chief end, then we truly live.

We magnify You...and, *in so doing*, we carry out a helpful ministry to one another. Help us to see that; help us to see the importance of living for You and the importance of Your glory—it has priority in everything. But the practical benefits of that, the witness that that is in our life, (in affliction and in obedience), is a witness to those around us and praise to You.

So LORD, we look to You to bless us and give us an understanding of the things we've read and we pray that the Spirit of God would open our hearts to that and apply these things to our lives. Make us good witnesses to Your goodness and glory.

LORD, we pray for the needs that we have. We're reminded in our text how weak we really are; and then we come to our prayer requests, (and we don't have all the names listed this morning, but there are many others that need to be prayed for), and that reminds us how weak and frail we really are. We are transient, and so we need prayer. We need to look to You continually for blessing and nourishment—physically and spiritually, so we pray for that. Remind us of the importance of living every moment of our life to Your glory, because we're not here long. — 'We are just a vapor'. And so, with that in mind, LORD help us to understand this text, to rejoice in the greatness of Your glory, and to live for it.

We look to You to bless us in this hour. We pray that You'd build us up in the faith and be glorified in it; we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) In my study at home I have a lot of old stuff—stuff I've accumulated over the years, like old books. Nothing of value, but some things of interest. One is, 'a clay pot'. It's not attractive, just the opposite; it's crude and colorless—gray mixed with the brown soil of the Mississippi valley where it was found. It's small; I can hold it in

the palm of my hand. It's old—maybe 500 years old. It's brittle and cracked, and whenever I look at it I think, "That's me!" [*Laughter*]... because in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verses 7 through 15, Paul described us all as nothing more than 'clay pots'.

Not a flattering description, but Paul's purpose is not to put down man but rather to lift up God. In fact, his instruction is encouraging to us; it is that, 'God's power is so great that it overcomes all our weaknesses, to make us useful.' That's one of the major themes of this passage...but maybe it's the entire Book of 2 Corinthians: 'God's power perfected in our weakness.' (2Cor 12:9). There's no boasting in that—all the glory goes to God. And that's the point; Paul makes the point here by contrasting, 'priceless jewels with earthen jars'.

The contrast is indicated by the word, "*but*", that begins verse 7. Paul just spoke in verse 6 of the splendor of the Gospel that we have; "...the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." Now he writes, "But we have this treasure...", (that is, 'that Light', 'that knowledge'), "...in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;" (vs7).

There's no greater contrast than that between *divine glory*—and human weakness. People are just 'clay pots'. Fragile and common; that's true of the best of us. It's a way of describing the weakness of human nature. Mentally, we're all weak. Mentally, we make mistakes. Physically we experience fatigue, weakness. We are vulnerable to disease and injury—and ultimately we all die and turn to dust. So 'people', (you and I, and Paul included), are just "earthen vessels."

And yet Paul said, 'Into these clay pots, that we all are, God has placed His greatest treasure...the truth of the Gospel.' Or, to put it more broadly, 'the knowledge of God in the gospel of Christ.'

The picture Paul had in mind may have been the Roman Triumphal procession, when the triumphant general would parade through the capital with all of the spoils of his victory. —And oftentimes it was customary for the gold and silver that were obtained

and won in the battle to be carried, "in earthen vessels". In fact, Phillip Hughes, in his excellent commentary on 2 Corinthians, quoted the Roman historian Plutarch, who described a parade celebrating Rome's victory over Macedonia, where, "3000 men followed wagons carrying silver coins in 715 earthen vessels."

The picture there may be Roman, but the idea is biblical. Paul followed the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah in describing God as 'the potter', and man as 'the clay'. And that idea came straight out of Genesis chapter 2, verse 7; "Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life..." Now that is, 'A clay vessel with a divine treasure', "the breath of life."

But here Paul has in mind the Gospel truth, "the knowledge...of God", (vs6), and this is true of every Christian; and we are equipped, every one of us to share it, to speak it, to give it to others. In fact, it is our weakness that shows all the more clearly God's grace and power in us. So, it is no accident that God uses weak, fragile, clay jars. He does that by design, so that, Paul says, "...the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves...", (vs7b). So that, 'the surpassing greatness of His power', not be confused—so that we know exactly where it comes from.

No one can take credit for the blessings that we have received—it is all of grace. Not one of us has the power to lift himself or herself out of his or her spiritual powerlessness. —It's all from God. And any effectiveness that we may have, (and we certainly will have effectiveness, every one of us, as we live obediently, as we seek to minister to one another, as we seek to serve the LORD in ministry), every one of us will have effectiveness, but it will all be due to Him—to God's grace, and grace alone. That is clear from the kind of servants He has...just "earthen vessels"; and the best of His servants are that—'clay'.

A good illustration of that comes from the Book of Judges, the well-known incident and event from the life of Gideon. With just a handful of followers he routed the Midianites, (their hordes that would sweep through Israel once a year, like locusts

that would cover the land and devour everything), and he was able to route them, defeat them with 300 men. 300 men against 135,000. —A great victory...and all of God.

And I think it's interesting, (as you are probably well aware of), one of the weapons that was given to this small band of soldiers, not necessarily skilled soldiers at all, but one of their weapons was lamps, (or torches), hidden in clay jars. And it was when, at the right time, at the right signal, they cracked-opened the clay jars and the light shone that the Midianites were discomfited, (completely confused), and turned their swords against one another. —Now that's the power of God. And that's what He uses, 'Clay pots with light within, torches within'...and that's really what we are. And what a great illustration from that judge, Gideon, and his men of what God does.

Christian strength is in weakness. Sounds ironic—it is, I guess, but it's what we see throughout this passage. Christian strength is in weakness...

In knowing that we are weak and not leaning on ourselves and our own abilities,
But leaning on God, Who is 'more than sufficient'
For every circumstance of life,
For every opportunity in life,
For every challenge in life,
For every trial in life,
And, Whose strength makes us rejoice in our weakness.

Paul illustrates God's strength in verses 8 and 9, by giving four trials that show what fragile earthen vessels we are, and how God preserves us through the exercise of divine power working within us. Paul speaks here from experience; that the life of service, the Christian life, is not an easy life; it's full of challenges, not just for preachers and teachers, but for all of us. We're all involved in the ministry and in the Christian life; and as we engage in that, we meet with challenges—and it's full of challenges and difficulty. Paul's experience was one of continual difficulty.

And each description here, (*in verses 8&9*), reflects the 'combat' that he went through. He had the combat of a gladiator, of a soldier in battle; he says,

"...*we are* afflicted in every way..." (vs8a). This maybe Paul and his band that was with him, or Paul and the apostles—but certainly as we look throughout this book, and particularly when we come later, in chapter 11, we see that this is certainly true specifically of the apostle Paul. But he says, "we". "...*we are* afflicted in every way...perplexed...persecuted...struck down...." (vs8-9). And as I said, that was not an occasional experience for Paul; he describes it here in the present tense, which is to indicate that this was typical of his life. It was one of continual conflict.

Now some would look at this and say, 'Well, Paul is obviously a defeated man. There's no triumph in his life. Something's wrong with him—with his theology or his life, his behavior...it's always a trial...', or, '...He, (Paul), is always being rejected.'

And there are people today who think like that—and preachers who promise a path of power, and peace, and prosperity as though that is all that God wants for us—that, 'That's what He's promised us.' 'That's the Christian life—health, and wealth, and victory, and triumph.'

I think the false teachers in Corinth, that Paul has to deal with here, may have been teaching something like that, a kind of '*Triumphalism*' in a formula of works of some kind, and victory in life without any setbacks, and without any heartbreak.

But Paul gives us a window on reality. The Christian life, which is a life of obedience, a life of challenge, (challenge to our faith), will always be one of conflict, hardship, and opposition. Understand that. —That's very important that we get a sense of reality and we understand what the Christian life is. And for Paul it was a continual experience.

But not his only experience, because after each one of these four problems that he mentions, he adds a, "but not." Verses 8 and 9, "...*we are* afflicted in every way, *but not* crushed; perplexed, *but not* despairing; persecuted, *but not* forsaken; struck down, *but not* destroyed;" Each difficulty shows that Paul is just a clay jar...but each, "*but not*" shows that God's power within him is greater than the pressures outside of him. —And that enabled him to withstand them.

I mentioned that small clay pot that I have at home. I, if I wanted to, could hold it in my hand...and crush it to dust. (Well maybe I could have done that some years ago, but), *[Laughter]* But that's how brittle it is...turn it to dust. —And that's what we are. But there's something inside of us that's not inside that clay pot—and that is the power of God to strengthen us so that we are able to withstand the great pressures against us, the satanic attacks that we undergo; the world and the flesh that's against us...we have the power of God within us.

So, we shouldn't think that if we are faithful to God we will never experience trials—but also, we can be assured that God is always faithful to bring us safely through those trials. Paul is proof of that. He was like a gladiator; he was like a soldier on the battlefield. He was like a boxer; in fact, he likened himself to one in 1 Corinthians chapter 9, verse 26.

Boxing is an ancient sport. A bronze statue was discovered under the rubble, in Rome, of what had been the baths of Constantine. They recovered this bronze statue and it's now called, *'Boxer at Rest.'*

It's impressive, (at least it's impressed me, and I think I've probably mentioned it before). The boxer is seated, probably between rounds; his face has cuts and bruises. It's something of a masterpiece because this is bronze, and yet you can see the artist was able to bring out all his cuts and bruises in this bronze piece of sculpture: His nose is broken, ears are battered, he's missing teeth...and from the appearance, he's exhausted. He's looking up over his right shoulder at something, or someone, (maybe it's the crowd), and he appears dazed...maybe he's deciding whether or not he should go back into the ring and continue this brutal fight...maybe he should just quit. It's poignant; it's moving; it captures something right there that really is vivid.

I saw this sculpture in the Getty Museum in Los Angeles some years ago; and as I studied it, (I looked at it very carefully), I studied it...and I thought, *'That's Paul! He went back into the ring!'* —Paul, "...crushed, but not despairing...struck down, but not destroyed." When the enemy seemed to have him in its power, when it seemed that the devil had him, *'on the ropes'*, God strengthened him—and delivered him.

And that happened often and showed that the power of God was working in him, and working for him. That's the only way to explain Paul's escape from these impossible situations. He mentions one that is kind of sketchy, and we wonder what he was referring to exactly, 1 Corinthians 15, verse 32; "I battled wild beasts in Ephesus." Well, did he really go into the arena and fight literal lions, or is this a metaphorical way of describing his spiritual enemies? —Probably the latter, but he was delivered from it.

It was not his own resources. It wasn't his inner strength, or smartness, or skill. I think Paul was a brilliant man, but that's not what he attributes anything to; a very wise man also, but he doesn't attribute it to that either.— It was all divine intervention.

Now eventually Paul was struck down, and Paul was not delivered. According to an old tradition, he was executed in Rome, (just like many others were put to death), for the testimony for Christ.

But that wasn't a failure in this principle of God's deliverance— because for the Christian, death is not destruction; it is entrance into Christ's presence, an everlasting blessing and reward. And it's only *temporary* because the soul and body that are separated at death, will be reunited in the resurrection to come.

Heaven is temporary. But if we think, 'That's it, heaven is eternal life!', *that's incorrect*, heaven is a temporary situation for God's people until the day of the resurrection...and then we're reunited with glorified, indestructible bodies.

So ultimately, the Christian life is indestructible. That fact gives courage to press on against great difficulty, knowing that, (one), there is purpose in it, and, (two), that this is not the end. Regardless of what happens, this is not the end. —The glory is to come.

John Chrysostom, 'The golden tongued preacher', was driven from the church in Constantinople by his enemies and made to flee into the wild regions of Armenia, where he finally died of fever. But his dying words were, "Glory to God for all things." He didn't consider his death a defeat or failure—it wasn't. In everything in this life, even death, "we are more than conquerors." (Rom 8:37).

Paul makes that point further in verses 10 and 11, where he sums up and explains the significance of his sufferings...and it's a very important point that he's going to make. There is significance in everything we suffer as believers in Jesus Christ—and opportunity in it to be a witness that will help each other and be to the Lord's glory. But he takes up that significance; he describes the four afflictions as, 'carrying around in our body', (the afflictions that he has just described in verses 8 and 9), 'carrying around in our body the dying of Jesus.' (vs10). Martyrdom for Paul was not limited to the moment of death in Rome; it was a daily experience for him. He was continually being opposed, just as Christ had been in His earthly life. He spoke of this in his other letters, of being, 'in danger every hour', and 'dying daily'. (1Cor 15:30-31).

Few, if any Christians have suffered for their faith to the degree that Paul did; but we do have these experiences to some degree, all of us. If we are living an open and obedient Christian life, we're going to have difficulties. You may be ostracized from family or friends because of your witness—or fail to get a promotion, or even lose a job for being godly, and honest, and not willing to bend the rules. This is what Paul means by, "...carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus." (vs10).

Opposition and persecution are the world's attempt to kill Christ again—and kill Him wherever they see Him. And we're vulnerable to it because these "bodies" are just "earthen vessels". There's little we can do to protect ourselves; we are weak creatures.

But the hardships are not pointless suffering. They happen, Paul says, "...so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies." (vs10b). —Meaning, 'We suffer in order to show that Jesus Christ is truly alive—alive within us, alive at the right hand of the Father.' We serve a living Savior, and deliverance from trials is proof of that.

So, the treasure of the Gospel, the "Light" that was put in Paul, (a 'clay pot' pressed in on every side, persecuted and cast down), was so that his deliverance would be seen as the proof that Jesus lives—that this "Light" within him is real. —And that the Savior is real; He's not a dead leader. The Lord is not a martyr;

He was crucified and buried,
But He rose from the grave,
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father at this very moment, and
He is governing and preserving us at every moment.

He doesn't only preserve us through His providential care, He is also with us in our labors and give us effectiveness in the LORD's service...He gives us success. And in those trials, we show the life of Christ by God's grace, by God's grace alone, as we are able in affliction and heartache to say with John Chrysostom, "Glory to God for all things."

That is a real and an important ministry to other Christians and helps us see that Christ is alive and ministering to us. The way you respond to the trials of life ministers to those around you—and gives glory to God. It encourages us, as we face trials, that we're shown how to live by others—and to have seen them go through it, it helps us go through it...it shows us how to live.

Still, trials are hard and challenging to our faith. I don't want to seem to be making light of the challenges that we face, they are 'crushing'. That's the way Paul uses that word; they 'crush our souls'. In verse 11 Paul speaks of, "constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake..." Phillip Hughes thinks Paul had in mind the picture of a man being thrown alive to the wild beasts in the arena, (which happened to many of those early Christians).

But again, the purpose in these trials is to manifest the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh, in these weak "earthly vessels", when He delivers us from the trial or the enemy who have struck us down. We're weak, but we survive, we triumph! That's the power of God within us.

Many times Paul was delivered out of, 'the jaws of death'. I've said that already, and we've spoken of that, but one of the more remarkable examples of that is what happened to him on his first missionary journey when at Lystra. There was a hostile mob that turned against him when they found out he wasn't a god, and they stoned him and they dragged him out of the city—and they left him for dead. But Paul was raised up and restored to strength and vitality, (we find it in Acts chapter 14). It was a miracle, a great miracle.

The enemy had struck him down, but the Lord raised him up. It happened because the Lord had further use of Paul's service, but also to show that the life of Jesus is in him—proof that Jesus lives now at God's right hand and to show that to the young believers, (the young saints there in Lystra), that this is a real Savior we have. He's there, 'at the right hand', but He's within us, to nourish us and raise us up, and to enable us to persevere through the greatest of trials.

'The Christian life...', as I often say, (and I say it with good reason), '...is a *supernatural* life'. God's constantly watching over us, and promises that as we walk by faith, (and we'll consider that in chapter 5), that's how we live; we live by faith. 'We walk by faith, not by sight'; but as we do that, as we trust Him and don't succumb to the circumstances, He delivers us. In fact, if we don't succumb to the circumstances, it's because He enables us to be strong through them; beginning to end, it's all of God.

God delivered Christ from death in the resurrection. Well, since He had done that, He can certainly deliver us from every situation and every trial. They may '*crush*' us—but not completely, not ultimately; God won't allow that. So, when life is hard in the home, or at work, look to Christ. —He's alive; He's watching; He is acting.

Trials serve a purpose. They are an occasion to demonstrate the LORD's existence, to demonstrate the LORD's power, to demonstrate His grace. The LORD has entrusted you, as a believer in Jesus Christ, with 'the treasure' of the Gospel. —And through you He will work to manifest Himself and His grace and His power in your life, which will be a

witness to others—a witness to those who are near, (to friends, to believers), but also to the unbelieving world.

That's what happened in Corinth. Paul's suffering worked for the benefit of the Corinthians. He wrote in verse 12, "So death works in us, but life in you." Paul sacrificed and suffered much to bring the Gospel to them, and was a witness to them, and a teacher in the midst of opposition, weak as he was. And God worked through him to bless them.

For Paul, the suffering was well worth it. God uses us, weak as we are, fragile clay pots that we are, to carry His 'treasure of the Gospel', to bear His Light of truth into the darkness. And in so doing, bring that Light and give life. Don't think that He can't use you. The Holy Spirit within you can and will make you effective, as you *give* and *live* the Gospel. So don't be discouraged, you possess a great treasure—share it, and you possess great power.

Discouragement, though, is understandable. All of the experiences Paul describes here, the conflicts, the heat of battle—all of that was designed to cause despair, not by the LORD, but by the enemy. And being the *earthen vessels* we are, we are prone to that; we are prone to discouragement, despair.

But Paul did not despair, at least not ultimately. He's had struggles, (he mentions those at the beginning of the book). First, he did not despair because of, 'the power of God' within him. (This is what enables one to overcome the struggle that we have. And we're going to have these struggles, these doubts...the momentary despairs.) But that power within him surpasses all of the pressures outside of him, as he has explained. But Paul also did not despair ultimately, because he had *faith* and *hope*; and these motivated him in the ministry to keep, 'pressing on'—to keep fighting on. (Phl 3:14).

In verses 13 and 14 he spoke of his *faith*, the *resurrection*, and our *future appearance* before the LORD. These greatly encouraged Paul in the ministry. Like David who wrote Psalm 116, Paul had faith, and cites David's words in verse 13 to affirm it.

"But having the same spirit of faith...", (the same spirit of faith that David had),
"...according to what is written, 'I believed, therefore I spoke', we also believe, therefore we also speak..." (vs13).

Psalm 116 is about affliction and rescue. David had been in difficult straits.
"The cords of death encompassed me...", (vs3), he wrote. But he, 'called on God who heard him and delivered him.' Even in the midst of affliction, David's faith did not fail. He looked to the LORD, relied upon God's promises, and declared his complete confidence in God's goodness.

And that was Paul's experience. He was put to the test, but also kept his confidence in the LORD...continued to rest in the LORD's promises. We walk by faith, not by sight; we live by the promises that God has given us and the instruction that He's given us, even though that may seem to be contrary to the circumstances. Nevertheless, that's what Paul did; and he continued to minister and speak by faith.

One of the promises that encouraged him to continue speaking was the resurrection. "...we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus...", (vs13b-14a). Now, that's our hope. Regardless of the difficulties we have, it will all end gloriously when we are raised up at the end the age. —We will triumph! We are ultimately, indestructible.

Now that, 'Hope of the resurrection', is only for those who are joined to Christ. Paul says that we, 'will be raised up with Jesus'. (vs14). He means that we will be raised up because of our union with Him. Every believer is united with Christ, and we have His life in us; and that life extends to the body as well as to the soul. It affects the physical as well as the spiritual.

And because we are joined to Christ by faith, we will share His future. We will participate in His eternal destiny—body and soul. That is our hope, and that is a *certain* hope—His resurrection proves that. We will triumph; that is our future. These bodies that are weak, fragile vessels of clay, just dust, will be raised some day—and glorified.

But that's not all. Paul also says that when God raises us with Jesus, He, "will present us with you." (vs14). Meaning that, 'The Christian will be presented, all of us together, before Christ, the King of kings.' The Father is going to "present" us, (as Paul says in a parallel to this, in Ephesians 5:27), '...present us to Christ without spot or wrinkle, as His bride.'

That's what Jude describes at the end of his brief letter, in verse 24. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy..." —And He will do that; that's our future:

Not eternal clay pots...we have glory to come.

We will be whole.

We will be clean.

We will be happy.

We'll be full of joy and glory.

We don't have words to express it, for we really can't elaborate greatly on it because our minds are not large enough to comprehend what is to come— what awaits us. But this is what sustained Paul during his trials; and it has sustained multitudes throughout the ages and given them peace in very troubling times.

And the resurrection of Christ is 'the *pledge*' of that future glory; it gives us certainty that it will happen. Our resurrection and presentation to the LORD our God is based on the resurrection of Christ. And I like what Charles Hodge wrote, "No event in the history of the world is better authenticated than the fact that Christ rose from the dead." I think that's true. So, weak as Paul was, as we all are, Paul was nevertheless fearless in the ministry. He did not lose heart, because he knew that whatever happened, God would raise him up to glory.

But it wasn't Paul's personal glory that was the great motivation for his life and his ministry. —It was the glory of God. That above all else is what gave Paul incentive to serve the Lord and suffer for Him. That's what he speaks of in verse 15. He says, "For all

things are for your sakes..." (meaning all that he has suffered, he has suffered for their benefit), "...so that grace..." would increase to them so that they would hear the Gospel; they would be saved; so that they would be sanctified; so that they'd be transformed.

He suffered all these things so that that would happen—and through them it would spread to others with the result that "more and more people" would be saved and "give thanks" to God for His grace, which would be to the greater praise of "the glory of God". —And he, (*Paul*), was seeing that; multitudes were coming to know the Lord.

Well, that's the sense of verse 15; "For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God."

That gave Paul missionary zeal. He wanted to win souls because he cared about people. He loved the lost; he wanted to lead them to Christ. But even more than that, he wanted to honor God; Christ had suffered infinitely for his sake, so Paul was glad to suffer for Christ's sake—for the sake of Christ's people...for the Corinthians—but mostly for Christ's glory.

It is in human nature to seek self-glory—to promote *self*. But that is really the road to the opposite; that's really the road to ruin—not glory. Man was made to worship and glorify God...and he or she can only be fulfilled by doing that.

The irony is, 'the way down is the way up'; 'the smaller we get, the greater we become'; 'the less we think of ourselves, and the more we glorify God, the happier we become.' And ultimately the result will be, 'the more glory that we will have throughout all eternity'—glory that will only continue to shine brighter and brighter in the Light of His glory forever and ever.

So our motto ought to be the hymn that the angels sang in Luke 2, verse 14, before the shepherds at the birth of Christ, "*Glory to God in the Highest*." That should be our goal in life.

And that will be our desire, and our hymn, the more we understand, 'The treasure we have in these earthen vessels.' The more we study and understand the knowledge of God in Christ, the better we will know God, the clearer we will think, the more we will serve Him, and the better we will live. It is all very practical to seek to glorify God.

But, do you have that treasure? Do you know Christ as your Savior? If not, I'll be very frank with you, I'll be blunt: 'You are lost.' You're lost, and you're facing an eternity of judgment. You're just fragile clay.

But there's hope, and there's a remedy. There is a way of escape—and that is through Christ who died, and rose, and obtained eternal life for all who put their faith in Him.

So believe. Join yourself to Jesus Christ through faith and faith alone—and in doing that, join yourself to His indestructible life.

May God help you to do that, and help all of us to live to His glory.

(Closing Prayer)

Father, we're just clay vessels—brittle, frail, clay vessels,
And yet, we're in Your hand,
And You will hold us fast,
What a great promise that is!

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless,
With great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority before all time,
Now, and forever,
Amen. (Jude 24-25)

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