



Lesson 24: *Jars of Clay* 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

2 Corinthians 4:1-18

4:1 Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

4:13 It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. 15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

This is an honest ministry

- ▲ *Our ministry is a privilege*
2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.
- ▲ *Our ministry is plain and principled*
2 Corinthians 4:2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.
- ▲ *Our ministry is painstaking among the perishing*
 - ▼ *There is darkness and disconnect in this world*
2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.
 - ▼ *There is a deceiving devil at work*
2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

This is a humble ministry

- ▲ *Our emphasis is not our own*
 - ▼ *We preach the Savior*
2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord,
 - ▼ *We practice servanthood*
2 Corinthians 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.
- ▲ *Our enlightenment is not our own*
 - ▼ *God shined light into history*
2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” [Genesis 1:3]
 - ▼ *God shined light into our hearts*
2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. [Genesis 1:3]
- ▲ *Our empowerment is not our own*
 - ▼ *This is a great power*
2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.
 - ▼ *This is a God-given power*
2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

This is a hard ministry

- ▲ *We prevail despite pressures and persecutions*
2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.
- ▲ *We persevere despite pressures and persecutions*
 - ▼ *Our ministry struggles identify us with the redeeming death of Jesus*
2 Corinthians 4:10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus,
 - ▼ *Our ministry successes identify us with the resurrection life of Jesus*
2 Corinthians 4:10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.
- ▲ *We persist despite pressures and persecutions*
 - ▼ *We are bold in faith*
2 Corinthians 4:13 It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. [Psalm 116:10]
 - ▼ *We are bearing fruit*
2 Corinthians 4:15 All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

This is a heavenward ministry

- ▲ *We are being renewed regularly amidst these temporary trials*
2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.
- ▲ *We are being refocused regularly toward our eternal triumph*
2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

This is a hearty ministry

- ▲ *We refuse to lose heart*
2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.
- ▲ *We really refuse to lose heart*
2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart.



Down but not out

2 Corinthians 4

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Our difficulties

- ▼ *Pressured and pressed*
⁸ We are hard pressed on every side,
- ▼ *Persecuted*
⁹ persecuted,
- ▼ *Punched and pummeled*
⁹ struck down,
- ▼ *Perplexed*
⁸ perplexed,

Our declarations

- ▼ *We're not in darkness*
⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
- ▼ *We're not deserted*
⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned;
- ▼ *We're not in despair*
⁸ perplexed, but not in despair;
- ▼ *We're not defeated*
⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; — ⁹ — struck down, but not destroyed.

Our decisions

- ▼ *We'll grab onto God*
⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.
- ▼ *We'll go on for God*
 - ▶ *We will comply with our calling*
¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.
 - ▶ *We will conduct ourselves carefully and candidly*
² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
 - ▶ *We will continue to communicate Christ*
⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.
 - ▶ *We will count the cost and carry our cross*
¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.
- ▼ *We'll give the glory to God, gladly*
⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. — ¹⁰ — so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ — so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.

God will get the glory — when we persevere — when we produce — when we prevail