

The Greatest Christmas Treasure

2 Corinthians 4:7-11

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brian Fannin / Dec 15, 2019

How do you begin to understand the treasure of Jesus in your applications?

I. You live as a jar or clay for a reason.

2 Corinthians 4:7 “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."By facing being fragile and facing suffering, you learn to live dependent—a testimony of God’s sustaining grace.

2 Corinthians 12:9 “But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’”

II. You can face suffering with the knowledge that God limits the extent to which it reaches in your life.

2 Corinthians 4:8-10 “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.”

Each of Paul’s examples is great difficulty but not utter collapse:

- “Afflicted but not crushed”
- “Perplexed but not driven to despair”
- “Persecuted but not forsaken”
- “Struck down but not destroyed”

The normal Christian life is repeatedly a cycle of dying and rising with Jesus. You can learn to face it as Jesus did:

- He always knew who He was.

John 8:42 “I came from God...I came not of My own accord, but He sent me.”

- He always trusted the Father.

Matthew 6:10 “Your kingdom come, Your will be done...”

Luke 22:42 “not my will, but Yours be done.”

- He saw beyond the right now.

We must keep eternity in view.

John 14:1 “Let not your hearts be troubled...”

III. The living you must do, in the suffering you will face, can produce something greater in you and for others, beyond your imagination.

Christians will face an ongoing parade of mini-deaths, all of which can test your faith and may cause others to wonder what is happening? But when you respond in trust, knowing and declaring that God is faithful, never forsakes and He is with you, the treasure of hope and resurrection shows. That kind of joy is not based on circumstance, but on the reality of new life from the mini-deaths. And ultimately, even actual death will not hold you because Christ is in you, and resurrection power abides in you.

The resurrection power of Jesus transforms life. It allows you to live with no fear of what others will do to you as you risk it all to glorify God—to make the goodness of Christ known. And as you give your life over in these mini-deaths, it produces blessing for others.

Whatever comes at you must pass through the Father and through Jesus. All of it is filtered through God’s loving hands.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT) “That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”