

MORNING SERMON OUTLINE

CLAY BOWLS & GLORY

2 Corinthians 4:6-18

1. What are we? common clay bowls – v.7

The styrofoam cups of the ancient world – poor people's oil lamps - a picture of our lowly, weak, frail, short-lived mortality.

- afflicted ... perplexed ... persecuted ... struck down ... (vv.8,9)
- "outer man" (5:1 "earthly tent") "wasting away" (vs.16)

2. What have we been given? the glory of God in Christ – v.6

The glory of God shines

- in the face of Christ, who is *the* image of God (vv.4,6),
- & shines in the gospel of Christ (v.4),
- & it shines in the hearts of His saved people (v.6).

Yes, in us – cheap, weak clay lamps (not gold candelabras)

Believers in Christ see by faith the glory of God in Jesus (John 1:14);

AND the glory of God is shines in their hearts to *be seen*.

Jesus, the Light of the World, said to His disciples:

"Let your light [Christ's light in you] shine before men ... so they may give glory to God." (Matt. 5:16).

All glory to God, and none to the common, clay bowls.

3. How is God's glory seen in us? in our weaknesses – vv.8-10

What some have thought (and think):

For the world to see God's glory, the glory of Christ, shining in us, we must achieve power, wealth, success –

triumph over all adversity, rule over nations, build great buildings & institutions, etc.

Mighty cathedrals, champion athletes, captains of industry are needed to impress the world with God's glory.

What does the Apostles say in vv.8-10? Just the opposite.

"afflicted BUT NOT crushed, perplexed BUT NOT despairing, persecuted BUT NOT forsaken, struck down BUT NOT destroyed."

What looks like defeat & death, even death like the death of Jesus, is where the resurrection triumph & life of Christ is MOST visible in His people.

Consider James & Peter in Acts 12 - & yourself in "defeat."

Christ's resurrection glory reveals itself in the faith of suffering Christians.

4. Why do we not lose heart in our weaknesses? – vv.16-18

Our hope is not in anything in this world – which is passing away - but in the things that are eternal & heavenly. Col. 3:1ff

Pray for clearer vision of faith to see beyond this world to Christ.

Afflictions here are preparing us for glories to come!