

Treasure in Clay Jars

Key Verses: “*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*”
—**II Corinthians 4:8,9**

Selected Scripture:
II Corinthians 4:2-15

IN TODAY'S LESSON, PAUL asserts his responsibility and that of other servants of Christ to set forth the Gospel with clarity, honesty, and consistency as reflected in the Word of God. Faithfulness to this commission requires believers to avoid presenting speculations, human traditions, or pleasant sounding words to entice others to become committed followers of Christ.—II Cor. 4:1,2

In verses 3-5 of our lesson, we read, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”

Most in the world have been blinded to the truths contained in God's Word, and to a correct appreciation of the gospel of Christ, by the deceptions of the Adversary. It is only by God's power that the hearts of his children have been illuminated to appreciate the wonderful plan of salvation contained in the Bible. His gift of the Holy Spirit is likened unto a treasure that

finds lodging in our frail human bodies so that our new minds are able to grasp the realities of his Word. Indeed, God's plan is comprehended only by those who have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of divine truth.

Paul reminds us of our feeble frame in verse 7 of our lesson, saying that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This is to be a continually humbling thought to the Lord's consecrated people. The truth of God's Word is a great treasure, and though by nature we are weak, earthen vessels, our Heavenly Father, by his power, has entrusted us to be stewards and ministers of his glorious plan of salvation.

Our Key Verses remind us that following in the footsteps of the Master will take us into a path that is contrary to the spirit of the world. This will result in opposition from those who would persecute or spitefully use us because of our consecrated lifestyle. As brethren in Christ, we are not to think it strange that we will experience fiery trials because of our fidelity to truth and righteousness. Just as the Master during his earthly sojourn endured much suffering, all who will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. Godliness implies that we are to be activated by the principles of righteousness and demonstrate justice and kindness, not because of what others may think of us, but rather in an attempt to follow the divine standards.

How privileged we are to be intimately associated with our Redeemer. He left us an example to follow as we develop characters that will enable us to become part of the sympathetic High Priest. If faithful in so doing, we will, together with Jesus our head, bless the human family during the forthcoming reign of righteousness on earth. ■