

# This Treasure in Earthen Vessels

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**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 4:7  
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The scripture reading this evening is 2 Corinthians 4. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, the second letter in scripture, chapter 4. The text is verse 7 but we'll read the whole chapter first. We'll touch on the context in the preaching, but just so we understand it from the beginning here, Paul is reflecting on his ministry and his calling as a minister. So, he's talking about his work as a minister.

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 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. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. 8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; 14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at

the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

So far we read God's holy and infallible word.

The text is verse 7. We will be looking at verse 6 as well and the context, but the text is verse 7.

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4 is one of the great chapters of the Bible, especially for ministers. In my time off the pulpit these last weeks, my mind has repeatedly been going back to 2 Corinthians 4, and especially that phrase "earthen vessels" from verse 7 because that's what we are. That's what all of us are, and that's what I am too. And that's obvious. We know that but sometimes in our pride, we don't like to admit it or we ignore it but that's what we are, and that's what I am also. We are earthen vessels. And so this phrase "earthen vessels" has been coming back to my mind over and over again and that's what is leading me to preach on this tonight.

This passage is mainly focused on who Paul is as a minister of the gospel; that's the immediate context. And God has given this passage of scripture for the encouragement of ministers but God has also given this passage as an encouragement for all of us, because we are all earthen vessels, and we all experience the weakness of our human condition and that's especially what I want to emphasize near the end of this sermon, the application of this passage for all of us. So we look at this passage this evening, we take as our theme, "This Treasure in Earthen Vessels." This treasure in earthen vessels and we look at that theme under three points. First, we look at the meaning; second, we look at the reason; and then third, we look at the broader application.

Paul writes, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." What does Paul mean? And first of all, what does Paul mean when he says "this treasure"? What is this treasure of which Paul speaks? Well, children, of course, the Apostle Paul is not speaking about a treasure of gold or a treasure of beautiful gems or jewels. The apostle here is speaking of the gospel. The gospel is the treasure and what is the gospel? Well, the word gospel means good news, and the gospel is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. That's the treasure. The treasure is the good news that there is forgiveness to be found with God. The good news is that for us who are sinners, there is a way of escape from the punishment of sin and the misery of sin. And the good news is that God has sent Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, 2,000 years ago, to die on the cross to bear the punishment for all the sins of God's people. And the good news is that Jesus Christ not only did that, not only did he bear the punishment for all our sins, but he also lived a perfectly obedient life for his people. He died for his people and he lived for his people. He died for them, bearing the punishment, and he lived for them, living a righteous life that could be imputed to them, reckoned to their account. And the good news is that after Jesus died on

the cross, he also rose again to show that he made the full payment for all the sins of his people, that he has obtained eternal life for his people, and by his Holy Spirit, he also imparts that eternal life to his people through the bond of faith. And the good news this evening for all of us, the good news is that all who believe in Jesus Christ, all who call on the name of Jesus Christ, shall not die, but have everlasting life. That's good news. That's the gospel. The good news is that God is not only the God of exacting justice, a God of unapproachable light, but that God is also the God of grace and mercy, and he has provided the mediator through whom one can approach him and he is the God who delights to save. That's who the Creator is.

If we want to go back to verse 6 for a moment, we should notice how Paul himself describes the gospel. Notice verse 6, and especially the last part, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." God, who is the Maker of heaven and earth, who said at the beginning, "Let there be light," and there was light. God, who is that awesome, almighty God, he has also shined into our hearts so that we know the glory of God not just through his creation, but we know the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We know Jesus. We know Jesus' work of salvation. We know how Jesus has fulfilled the promises of God. We know how Jesus has fulfilled all the types and shadows of the Old Testament and that Jesus is God himself come in the flesh. Jesus is the image of God and we see God in Jesus Christ and we see the glory of God in Jesus Christ. There we see the riches of God's grace, we see the riches of God's mercy and the riches of his love. This is who the Creator of heaven and earth is. He is the God of grace and mercy and love and that is his glory, and he has revealed this great glory to us through Jesus Christ and through the gospel. And that's what the good news of the gospel is all about, it's all about showcasing the glory of God. We have a Creator who is not just almighty in power in the creation, but we have a Creator who delights to save sinners, who delights to show mercy and who has done that through Jesus Christ, and that is especially what reveals the glory of God. That's the treasure that the apostle is speaking about in the text. That's the treasure. That good news.

Now, to explain this passage a little more fully, let me also add something else here and what we need to notice is that the Apostle Paul here is talking about how glorious it is to be a minister of the gospel, and he's talking especially about how much more glorious the New Testament is than the Old Testament. We'd have to read chapter 3 in order to get the bigger picture here. We didn't do that. But what Paul is saying is this. Yes, the Old Testament message of salvation was glorious, God bringing his people out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and showing his glory in that work of redemption. God at Mount Sinai. Think of Moses at Mount Sinai, even when he received the 10 Commandments. And you remember, Israel sinned, they built that golden calf, and Moses went back to God, and Moses said, "Show me Thy glory." Remember how God answered Moses. Moses said, "Show me Thy glory," and God said, God put Moses in the cleft of the rock and God passed by and remember what God said, "This is my glory," God said to Moses and then he spoke and he said, "I am the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." And you see, that was God's

glory. That was God showing Moses his glory by showing Moses his grace and his mercy. And then remember when Moses came down from the mount and remember his face was shining and the people couldn't even look at Moses' face because his face was shining so brightly and Moses had to put a veil in front of his face. And the Apostle Paul says in chapter 3, that was glorious. God revealing his glory in the face of Moses, that was glorious. The Old Testament message of salvation and of who God is as the God of grace, that was glorious. But the thing is this, that Old Testament message emphasized especially the law, and that Old Testament message had a way of emphasizing that the law still needed to be fulfilled, and that Old Testament message then had a way still of emphasizing that the people still needed a Savior. In themselves, they were sinners. They couldn't keep God's law. That was brought upon them again and again. They needed a Savior. And so as glorious as the Old Testament message was, the people were still always looking ahead for a Savior. Still looking for salvation. They had the types and shadows, but they didn't have the fulfillment. And so in one sense, the Old Testament gave a word of condemnation, "You still need a Savior," and so the great glory of the New Testament, the far greater glory of the New Testament is this: the Savior has come and the Savior has done his saving work, and that Savior is Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth. He is the one who is the great mediator of the covenant. He is the one who is God himself come in the flesh. Oh yes, we've seen the glory of God in the face of Moses but you look at Jesus and there you see the great glory of God in the face of Jesus, and you come to have a knowledge of just how glorious God is when you look into the face of Jesus Christ.

That's the end of verse 6. He is the exalted Lord, seated at God's right hand and we've seen God's glory in Jesus Christ, and now what Paul says is this, "I, as a minister of the gospel, get to preach this great news. I, as a minister, get to preach Jesus to the people." This is a glorious message, a glorious gospel and for a world enshrouded in darkness, and for people who know this world to be a valley of tears, it is indeed a glorious thing to get to preach Jesus who is the light of the world, to the people. He who satisfies your every need, he who is our all in all, to preach that, this is a treasure. The gospel is a treasure, and the preaching of the gospel is a treasure. That's really an important part of the meaning here in verse 7, "But we have this treasure," because in the context what Paul is emphasizing is this, he's talking about the preaching. How does one come to know this treasure? How does one come to find this treasure and value this treasure? Well, it's only by God sovereignly and graciously shining in the hearts of his people by the operation of the Holy Spirit. But how does he do that? Through the preaching. How does God shine in our hearts and give us the light of the knowledge of God, of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? How does he do that? Through the preaching, through the power of preaching, through the power of the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified and risen again. Paul says this is a great treasure. The gospel is a treasure and the preaching of the gospel is a great privilege because it is through this preaching that that treasure is brought to God's people.

So that's what Paul means, that's all that Paul means when he writes "this treasure" in verse 7. Now before we move on, a question we need to ask ourselves is this: is this gospel a treasure to us? And I mean practically in my day-to-day living, in the humdrum

and busyness of our lives, is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ a treasure to you? That you can look at creation and you think of the God of creation, and you know that God of creation to be a God of mercy and grace in Jesus Christ, is that a treasure to us? Well, what is a treasure? Children, you know what a treasure is. A treasure is something that's very valuable. It's very precious to you. A treasure is something that's very rare. That's what makes it valuable. And a treasure is something that makes you rich so that you also protect that treasure and you guard it. You really protect it at all costs. That's why it's a treasure. And the question that comes to us is this: do we honestly view the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ as a treasure?

Jesus has those parables about a man finding a treasure, hidden treasure in a field, or that pearl of great price, or that coin that that woman has lost in her house, and she searches her whole house for it because that's a treasure, that hidden treasure. That's the gospel. In this world of materialism, where for many people their treasure is very really their cottage, or their boat, or their money, and that's what they guard, that's what they value, and you know, these things are not wrong in themselves, these are things God gives his people also to enjoy, but do we guard and value the gospel as our treasure so that I protect it? So that, if I may put it this way, we dote upon it? We just enjoy the gospel? We just enjoy it? And I'm jealous of it in my own personal life. Is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ the joy of your life? Is the reality of the free forgiveness of all our sins in Jesus Christ what makes us truly happy in life? Is that my treasure? Is that where my heart is? Where my treasure is, that's where my heart will be also. You know, if you're taking notes this evening, this is something to write down and think about later: is the gospel the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, what I truly treasure in my life? And for me as a pastor, do I treasure the privilege of being able to preach that gospel? Think of Paul, for someone who said, "I count all things but dung that I may know Christ," for someone like Paul, there's no doubt as to what his treasure was.

That's the treasure, "this treasure," but now to move on in the text, notice what Paul writes. He writes, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." And again, context here is important for our understanding. What we need to understand is that in the church at Corinth, there were those who were challenging Paul and that comes out later on in the letter, chapters 10, 11, and 12. For example, in chapter 10, verse 10, Paul shares some of the things that were being said about him in the church. In chapter 10, verse 10, we read, "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." There were those at Corinth who were mocking Paul's physical appearance; evidently, Paul was an ugly man. And there were others who were mocking his speaking abilities. Some people today even say that Paul maybe was a short hunchback. Others complain that Paul didn't speak with the kind of worldly wisdom that the philosophers and the educated in the world speak with. Some say that Paul was a man who lacked charm, he lacked persona, he lacked good looks, and the objection that Paul is anticipating in the passage here is this, "If the gospel you preach is so glorious, if the good news of salvation you preach is even so much greater than the Old Testament, then why does God use such an ugly or ordinary person, such as yourself, to bring it? If the gospel you preach is so glorious, wouldn't God package it in someone a little more attractive than you?" And what Paul is saying here is this, "Yeah, you got me. That's

exactly right. I admit it. The gospel, while the gospel is glorious, I am not." That's what Paul says. "Yep. All I am is an earthen vessel." That's the meaning of the word "But," right? He's making a contrast. The gospel is glorious, but, so we don't misunderstand, let's understand we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

Now, what's an earthen vessel? Children, what is an earthen vessel? Do you know? A clay jar or a clay pot. When I think of an earthen vessel or a clay jar, I think of one of those brown pots that you might put outside to hold a big plant; one of those heavy-duty pots, right, that's hard to move. In Paul's day, clay pots were used for all kinds of things. They were used in the kitchen, in the pantry, to store grain, store oats. They were used in the bathroom as a toilet bowl. They were used for all kinds of things. Today, we might think of Tupperware. Tupperware is the same kind of thing today. You can use it for all kinds of things. Interestingly, in Paul's day, clay pots were also where you would store your valuables. Again, think of Jesus' parable of the man who finds that hidden treasure in a field, and we might think about that parable, why would a man find hidden treasure in a field? Well, because that's where people buried their hidden treasure to keep it safe. That was their safe, their safety deposit box. Get a clay pot, put your treasure in there, put a lid on, find your own special place in the field and bury that pot. You bury your treasure there.

So an earthen vessel is a clay pot and the point is it's something ordinary. It's something cheap. It's made of worthless clay. It's like Tupperware. It's a simple container for holding something. That's its purpose and its function only. Right? When you're handling Tupperware, you don't even think about the container, unless maybe someone special is coming over and you're like, "Oh, we're not going to use Tupperware," but the point is you don't pay attention to the Tupperware, you pay attention to what's inside. What does that Tupperware container contain? And Paul says, "That's exactly what I am. I am an earthen vessel. I am nothing flashy. I'm ordinary. This is all I amount to. I am a clay pot." And Paul means not just my body, but my whole person and my whole being, right? The Bible speaks elsewhere of who we are as vessels, who I am as a vessel. I'm nothing but a clay pot and the point is, what I am doesn't matter. What matters is the message that is being brought. I am only a container. What matters is what that container brings. The vessel doesn't matter. It's the treasure inside that matters.

And this is why this passage came to my mind these last few weeks because that is what ministers are. They are clay vessels. They are nothing of themselves. They are outwardly unimpressive. That's the reality these last two months. They are mere men. And oftentimes weak men at that. Men who need breaks. Men who get burned out, who break down. Men who make mistakes when it comes to their schedules. Men who maybe lack personality or charm or a pleasant appearance. They are ordinary Tupperware. That's who I am. It's a glorious treasure. It's a glorious gospel. And my calling is a glorious calling. It's a privilege to be able to preach the gospel, to be used of God in that way. Young men, it's a glorious calling to be a minister. We might be discouraged, even our own pastor needs two months off, and maybe that's another discouragement. We see other things. It's a glorious calling but the reality is this: a minister himself is nothing but a clay pot. He is no superhero. He is no one exceptional. He is no unique personality. He is a clay pot.

Paul writes, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." The question that comes next is why? Why does God do it this way? One might say, why did God pick Paul, right? God specifically set Paul aside to be the preacher to the Gentiles, to be used in such a great way. We, I think, are inclined to think of Paul with admiration and honor but in the eyes of many, Paul was viewed with contempt. Why would God pick someone like Paul? Right? His appearance is weak and his speech contemptible. The text gives the reason. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," why, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Why Paul and why ordinary men as ministers? So that when you and I experience the power of the preaching, and when we see and experience, even within ourselves, the transforming power of the preaching of God's word, the power of the gospel, we might all be fully aware this is not because of a certain man here or there. This is not because of what man is. This is because this is the power of God himself.

Paul writes the excellency of the power and Paul is talking there again about the gospel. The power is the power of the gospel. Paul writes in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it," the gospel, "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." The gospel and gospel preaching is the power of God unto salvation and it is an excellent power, the excellency of the power. The idea is it's a surpassing power. How powerful is the gospel? How powerful is the preaching of the gospel? The gospel, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, of course, the gospel has the power to deliver a person out of the kingdom of darkness and bring them into the kingdom of light. What kind of power is like that? This is an excellent, surpassing power. The gospel has the power to make someone a new creation. The gospel has the power to enlighten and illumine so that someone who was blind in their sin is, through the gospel, brought into the light to know God, to know his sin, and to love God from the heart. The gospel has the power to free sinners from sin and sin's condemnation. The gospel has the power to forgive sins so that a person knows that in Jesus Christ, when he hears that gospel, he knows his sins are forgiven and the gospel gives that peace that passes all understanding. And the gospel has the power to radically transform lives. Some of you have already expressed that, that the gospel preaching is transforming someone's life. Paul knew the power of the gospel. Look at how his own life was transformed. He's on the road to Damascus, ready to kill Christians, and then Christ caused him to know the gospel, that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus is the Lord, and he came to know the good news that in Jesus Christ, and not in my works, but in the righteousness of Christ alone, there is salvation. And his life was radically changed.

And the gospel is also powerful in this way: it sustains God's people, and that's what's happening on Sundays. That's what's happening today. Through the preaching of the gospel, God is strengthening you to persevere and endure in your Christian walk. You may have many responsibilities, many callings, hard stations in life, difficult ways, but child of God, Jehovah is your Savior. The Creator God Almighty is your heavenly Father. You have the hope of the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Your sins are forgiven. And this Valley of Tears is a pilgrimage that is leading you to glory because of what Jesus has done. Believer, this is for you. And that strengthens us to know who I am

in Christ, that gospel, that good news, so that though you are troubled on every side, you are not crushed. Though you are perplexed, yet you are not in despair. That was Paul's experience, "The gospel is this power that sustains me so that though I am persecuted, I know I'm not forsaken because I know," what does he say? Verse 14, "I know that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall also raise up me by Jesus." And the point is when you are encouraged through the preaching, and the preaching strengthens you and gives you hope, and then you see that it's through a mere man and a weak man, sometimes a broken man through whom that preaching comes, an earthen vessel, then you know this is of God. It's not man's eloquence. It's not man's attractiveness. It's not what I bring to the table. It's not man's wisdom. It's all of God. Salvation itself is all of God, and even the preaching and the power of the preaching of that salvation is all of God.

When I think of this passage, I can't help but think of Gideon. We just read it in Family Devotions. Remember Gideon had those 32,000 men that were ready, at least many of them were, to go into battle against the Midianites and God said, "Gideon, that's too many. 32,000 is way too many. Even 22,000, way too many because if you go with such an army into battle, you might still be tempted to say that it was your own hand that got you the victory." And God said to Gideon, "300 men. That's it. Against a huge, huge army, hundreds of thousands of soldiers, 300 men so that everyone might know, I was the one fighting for you. I was the one who got the victory. I was the one doing it."

Congregation, that's the reason why God does it the way that he does with everything. You look throughout the scriptures, over and over, you see God uses weak means so that the excellency of the power may be of him. Really, this is the whole story of salvation, isn't it? Just look at Jesus. Jesus, born of a young damsel, a Nazarene. Born in a manger on the edge of the world. Born into poverty. Look at Jesus, despised and rejected of men, a root out of a dry ground. "He hath no form nor comeliness." He didn't have any form or comeliness, "and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Look at Jesus riding on a donkey. Look at Jesus nailed to the cross between two hardened criminals, arms stretched out, and people walking by wagging their heads at him. Look at Jesus all alone, no help from anyone, forsaken by all. That's not the King I would have chosen. And it is just that way, so that when God changes our hearts and causes us to see Jesus and willingly bow the knee to him, even there we see that the reason we're bowing the knee to Jesus is because this is of God. This power even to have my knee bent to bow to King Jesus is of God.

How does Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 1? "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not," things which are nothing, "to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. That, according as it is written, He that glorieth," he that boasts, "let him boast in the Lord." And that's the reality with ministers. That's me, beloved, and still this is a lesson that we all have to keep learning over and over again, don't we? The power is of God. Even the power to live and to walk, to carry out our calling day by day, to do anything. The power is of God so that the glory might go to God and God alone. God could have an angel come here and speak



to us. God could maybe even directly speak to us himself. God uses ministers, weak men, the foolishness of preaching in the eyes of the world so that we might all see that the surpassing power of the gospel is God's and not man.

And now, to make broader application, I need to say this. Yes, this is all true for me as a minister, and it's true for all ministers, but this is also true for me as a husband. This is true for me as a father. This is true for me as your brother in the faith. And this is also true for you in your callings and your stations in life. You, too, are but an earthen vessel. You're an elder sitting in the elders' bench and the work grows weary. You are an earthen vessel and you feel it and it's hard because you want to be strong, doing the right thing, leading God's people in a good way. You're reminded you're an earthen vessel. You are a husband who wants to serve your wife. You know she is a treasure that God has given you but you get sick, you get hurt, you're off work, you're laid up on the bed of suffering. You're an earthen vessel. You're a wife seeking to please your husband. He's a treasure that God has given you but maybe you have these inner battles that you struggle with, or anxiety, and you just feel who you are as an earthen vessel. You are a parent, and you want to do your children good, but you grow weary, and you're not perfect in how you deal with your children. You know that they are treasures of the Lord but sometimes it's just wearisome. You have your calling and station serving the Lord and you set high goals. Maybe you are ambitious in your Christian life. You sincerely plan your days so that you can be a steward of your time to the utmost. But at the end of every day, you're tired and worn out and you didn't get everything done that you wanted to get done. And there's still those meetings at night, and they're long, and it's tiresome, and we are reminded we are but earthen vessels. How many times have you wanted to do something, but you were prevented from doing it because you are an earthen vessel? You go through a time of being down in the dumps. You go through a time of heartbreaking sorrow. You get burned out, and you can't be everything to everyone. Why does this happen? Or you see other people making mistakes, even leaders disappoint you and let you down. You were expecting them to be something, to do something, and they showed you that they were but earthen vessels. Why do these things happen? They happen so that in the end, when you are rejoicing, and you see how it all works together for good, and you have that reason to rejoice, and you see God's blessings, and you experience God's faithfulness, and when you have strength and success, you remember, you look back at it all, and you remember, and you confess, "It's of the Lord. It's the Lord's doing. It's his power. He's doing it for his glory."

And then we can also take comfort in that, beloved, and we can recognize our weaknesses as Paul says in this very same letter, he's got that thorn in the flesh and he asked God to take it away, whatever that may be. Maybe it was his physical appearance. Maybe it was his stuttering. Some people make those suggestions. And then we understand God's strength is made perfect in our weakness because then you don't look at the vessel. It's not about the vessel. It's about the treasure. And it's about the God of that glorious treasure, the God of the gospel. Recognize how God even uses your fragility and your brittleness as an earthen vessel to bring the glory to his name, even in your own personal life, to drive you to him that he might be your hope. Recognize God is wise in everything he does, and he's doing it for his glory, and then I can humble myself, and

then I can recognize it's okay to be ordinary. God is mindful of our human frailty. Just to be a vessel, just to be a vessel of mercy and even to go through those experiences, to be used as a Tupperware container that might more fully showcase God's power more clearly in and through me, that's what I want. That's what satisfies the new man in me. I want his name glorified and however he wants to use me as an earthen vessel for his glory, I truly am satisfied if I am but used to further show his grace and his power. That's the confession of Paul. That's the confession of the child of God. Amen.

Let us pray.

*Our Father in heaven, we thank Thee for the freedom we have in Jesus Christ, that we don't have to be our own, we don't have to insist on being our own, and we must not. But we belong to him. We are safe and secure in him and what Thou hast fashioned us to be in him, Thou dost have Thine own purposes with it for the glory of Thy name, and even to show us Thy goodness, and to show us Thy glory through Jesus Christ and in our lives. Give us the strength of faith to rest in that, and then to order our lives accordingly. We thank thee for this preaching, this passage. We pray that we might experience its power to our comfort and strengthening, and to thy name's glory and honor. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*