

THE POWER WE CARRY

2 CORINTHIANS 4:6-18 NLT

SUNDAY 10AM CITYWEST CHURCH

6 For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

8 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9 We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. 10 Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

11 Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. 12 So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

13 But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke." 14 We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. 15 All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. 17 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! 18 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.

2 Corinthians 4:6-18 NLT

Corinth is the city in search of salvation - and the way to salvation is immediate, through legendary successful, powerful, rich people. Status meant everything. It meant your perspective was on you and what you could do to figure out your problems. And don't have problems. Avoid problems at all cost.

Paul comes in with this great letter to the corinthian church picking up these cutlural perspectives that really go against the gospel. Paul in this second letter to the corinthian church that we have is helping them unlearn the corinth culture to begin following kingdom culture.

Today - we must recognise that our power does not come from the outward appearance, but the inner working of the power from God that we carry.

1. THE POWER'S FROM GOD

6 For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

2 Corinthians 4:6-7 NLT

Paul explains that God who created light in the darkness also has the power to turn lives around. That same power is carried by you and I - the image that Paul uses for that is fragile clay jars. That sounds so impressive.

Corinth = public image was important. The outer image was what was portrayed. It defined success, power, money, status. The messenger was the snake oil sold.

7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7 NLT

You carry the treasure - the glory of God - what is that? The holy spirit, the presence of God is with you because God's presence is everywhere, you carry God himself the holy spirit, you carry the testimony of Jesus the Son, who shows us what God is like, and lived the perfect life.

The clay jar - used from everyday objects - not treasure. It would be used for water, or flour, or oil.

Our weakness is not a barrier to carrying the treasure of God in our lives - God's doesn't mind. He chose us. It creates the space for which God's pow{er comes through - maybe because we get out of the way?

The glory of God is in you too. Doing it's work in you, and through you. It's not about your skills, it's not about your experience, it's not about the time you think you might have or not have left. It's not about how healthy and young your body is.

I think that people aren't looking for polish anymore. I think theres a group of people that might want to see polish. But most people don't really want polish - they want authentic lives

Am I enough for God to use?

Young person - you don't need all the experience in the world to shine God's power

Older person - you still have breath in your lungs - get moving

Parents - Give the power to your children

2. GOD'S POWER SUSTAINS US

8 We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. 9 We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. 10 Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

11 Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. 12 So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 NLT

Paul goes on to contrast life right now with the sustaining power of God in our lives. He shows the paradox between the two:

- Pressed by troubles but not crushed
- Perplexed but not driven to despair
- Hunted down but never abandoned
- Knocked down but not destroyed

This contrast is suffering and death and the gospel sustaining us with LIFE. The challenge is that Paul doesn't sugar coat life here - these things happen.

For the corinth church this is important for them because they saw suffering as bad for the spiritual life. That you were doing something wrong.

Paul is the corinth church example, and he is our example too - he's life was a mess, it wasn't impressive by worldly standards, he was in prison ALOT.

In this life, what we suffer isn't the end. This isn't to make light of suffering - we all experience it. The power of God helps us in this time. Lean on the God and let him shine through your life.

3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. 4 And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. 5 And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

Romans 5:3-5 NLT

Sometimes we want to ask God why do bad things happen to me. Maybe we can change that to be people who say thank you God that you haven't left me to deal with this on my own.

38 And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. 39 No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39 NLT

This great reminder that nothing will separate us from God's love.

3. SHARE GOD'S POWER WITH OTHERS

13 But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke." 14 We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. 15 All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

2 Corinthians 4:13-15 NLT

Paul quotes Psalm 116 - the story of a person facing death and turning to God.

When we know the glory of God in our lives - the full hope, it is expressed in our lives - our lives become something that shares the glory out to others. It's for others benefit - to experience the same kind of glory of God we experience in relationship with God.

The resurrection gives Paul hope in his life - that none of what is thrown at him in this life is the end. But he can't keep it silent either - he has to share it - it has to come out of his life - he has to preach it.

He wants to point people to God - not himself.

Corinth had this weird honor code of self-promotion - look at me.

The gospel points people to God not ourselves. The gospel should be for others benefits - not just our own.

We're called to share our lives - this specifically is about sharing through our words.

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

16 That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. 17 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! 18 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.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NLT

1. This week, don't wait until you feel ready, qualified, or strong enough. Find one place you've been holding back because you don't feel like "enough" — and show up anyway, trusting God supplies what you don't.
2. Take the next hard thing that happens this week — even something small — and before you ask "why me," pray "thank you God that I'm not facing this alone."
3. Is there someone in your life whose eternity is still uncertain? Name them, and take one step this week — a conversation, an invitation, a prayer with their name in it.