

**Ministry of The Holy Spirit  
Treasure in Earthen Vessels  
2 Corinthians 4:1-12**

Last time...we are

- the epistles...living love letters...of Christ
  - reflections of Jesus
- in a world stumbling in the blinding darkness of unbelief

This time...treasure in earthen vessels

Whereby we know

- our place in the world
  - our way in the world
- in these perilous times of mounting discrimination preceding persecution

v1 Therefore, being the

- fragrance of God in this world (Ch 2:14-16a)
- living epistles of Jesus' love for sinners (Ch 3:2-3)
- reflection of Jesus Christ in this world (Ch 3:18)

we have this ministry...and everyone has at least one ministry in which to serve  
Jesus Christ the Lord and our Master...

- husband/wife
- father/mother
- grandpa/grandma
- son/daughter
- brother/sister
- uncle/aunt
- friend
- co-worker
- neighbor

as we have received mercy...because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, since our  
righteousness apart from Him is like a filthy rag...

we faint not...we do not wear out, do not ever "punt", we do not give up,  
because we have the indwelling power of God from on High, the Holy Spirit

Is 40:28-31    Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Gal 6:9           And let us not be weary in well doing (believing, obeying): for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (more than conquerors walking in the Spirit vs in the flesh, being Spirit-filled and Spirit-led)

v2           As the children of God (John 1:12-13), we have the Father's philosophy of ministry

1. have renounced (turned from) the hidden things (in man's darkened heart) of dishonesty (disgrace/shame)

Eph 2:1-6           And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

We have decided to follow Jesus in the Light rather than Satan in the dark!  
We have turned to the Truth and away from lies and deceit and hypocrisy

Our ministry (v1) is in a world and a nation that increasingly knows no shame, as was Jeremiah's ministry

Jer 8:12           Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

2. do not mishandle or adulterate the precious Word of God to deceive others for our personal gain or exaltation

Not Ch 2:17

Not 2 Tim 4:3-4           For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

But 2 Tim 2:15           Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (Scripture interprets Scripture, not man)

John 7:18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

3. put the Truth (John 14:6, John 17:17) on exhibit by walking the talk, standing openly before man (both man-kind and Jesus-kind) and the all-seeing God Acts 20:18-32

v3-4 We preach the Good News of Jesus Christ in how we speak and act  
But not all receive/believe it, just as Jesus taught (Matt 7:13-14)

If the Gospel is hid/covered, it is hid to the lost...those whose minds/thoughts/reasonings are blinded/darkened by the devil, having chosen to

- believe the lie instead of the Truth
- believe the testimony of Lucifer and to not believe the testimony of the Living God
- follow Satan in the darkness rather than follow Jesus in the Light
- taken captive by the devil instead of set free by Jesus
- continue perishing (spiritual death, eternal death, the 2<sup>nd</sup> death into the Lake of Fire)

As Jesus said to self-righteous hypocrites who did not believe Him,

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good (believe/trust Him), unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil (not believe/trust Him), unto the resurrection of damnation.

John 5:37-38 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

Basic question: Who is Jesus the Christ, per the testimony of God?

The image of God, the representation/presentation of God to man

Col 1:12-19

Heb 1:1-3

John 1:1-4

John 3:16-21

Next Basic question: What is the Gospel/Good News of Jesus Christ?

1 Cor 15:3-4

Gal 1:4 Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father

2 Cor 5:17-21

Because of death, the fruit/consequence of sin, man-kind has a heart/being/nature that is

- dead
- dark
- lost

separated from God Who is

- Life
- Light
- Love

And man-kind has a very powerful enemy...Satan, the destroyer...

who HAD the keys to death

But God...but Jesus

Heb 2:14-15 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Rev 1:17b-18 *Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

For whosoever chooses to believe the testimony of God

To believe not, to receive not, the Gospel of Christ is to be dead and blind (in darkness), without hope in the world...alone before God without a Mediator for all eternity

Making your way in the world today

Takes everything you've got

Taking a break from all your worries

Sure would help a lot

Wouldn't you like to get away?

Sometimes you want to go

Where everybody knows your name

And they're always glad you came

You want to be where you can see

Our troubles are all the same

You want to be where everybody knows your name

The ONLY people for whom those lyrics are true are those “in Christ”  
The ONLY place those lyrics are true are in the kingdom of God

v5 The ministry, our philosophy of ministry, the mercy, the strength, the Truth, the Gospel:

- ALL about Jesus Christ
- none of it about
  - ourselves
  - Calvary Ahwatukee or any other church/fellowship
  - any denomination or brand

The Light of the Gospel is not about being a follower of

- Martin Luther
- John and Samuel Wesley
- John Calvin
- Jacob Arminius
- Pope whatever
- etc as rebuked by the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor 1 (divisions vs unity)

but being a follower of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, the image of God, is preached

Our preaching is Christ-centered, NOT self-centered or man-centered...

what Jesus said and did, not some rabbi or John Calvin or a pope or a false teacher

Man is the fallen (dead and darkened) image of God in need of salvation/Life/Light

Rom 3:10, 23

Jesus Christ is Light and Life

John 6:33     the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

John 6:35     I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:40     And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:63     It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

In the greatest demonstration of Love, and at the greatest price possible, Jesus has purchased us, redeemed us from the hopeless bondage to sin and death

We are not our own (1 Cor 6:19-20)

We are willing servants of a Wonderful Master, the Servant of God!

Matt 20:28     the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Phil 2:8-11     And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

We are now and forever blessed to know Jesus and to make Him known!  
Because...

v6     God said twice, "Let there be Light!"

Gen 1:1-3     In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

John 1:1, 14

John 1:4-5     In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Luke 1:35     And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that **holy thing** which shall be born of thee shall be called (Jesus, the Son of the Highest) the Son of God.

Through the Incarnation, God shined the Light of Jesus Christ into our darkened hearts (Jer 17:9) that we would "be illuminated" by His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, as He had promised

Ps 18:28b     the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

Ps 112:4a     Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness

v7     But, we have this treasure in earthen vessels (these bodies of dust that return to dust)  
What is the treasure within us?

The Light of God, Who is Light (1 John 1:5)

The Life of the Living God

The Holy Spirit of God/Christ

Rom 6:22     But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

Eph 4:23-24     be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

By the work of God, we are "in Christ", our High Priest

Ex 28:36     sealed with "HOLINESS TO THE LORD"

What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

The holiness...*hagios*, an adverb meaning “separated from sin and consecrated unto God” used of

- God the Father (Luke 1:49, John 17:11)
- God the Son (Luke 1:35)
- God the Spirit (Matt 1:18)

of the Holy Thing (Son of God, Luke 1:35)...our High Priest (Heb 3:1) entered into the Most Holy (Heb 9:12)...*hagion*, the adjective form of *hagios*, meaning “the sanctuary of God” with the ransom for our sin, whereby we are made holy (Rev 22:11)...*hagiazō*, a verb meaning “to be made holy”

The holiness of the Son of God, Who entered the Most Holy with His sinless blood on our behalf, has made us holy...separated from sin and consecrated unto God

We...dead and darkened sinners  
are made holy...a completed act of God, now and forever  
by grace thru faith...the faith of Christ, the Holy Thing of God

Because we have believed the testimony of God of His Son, we have been sealed by and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God

Eph 1:13b sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise (of the Father)

We have the holiness of God in these clay pots!

We are separated from sin, we are consecrated unto the Holy God...as His sanctuary (*hagion*) on earth!

1 Cor 3:9b ye are God’s building

1 Cor 6:19 your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit

All God’s doing

Accordingly, the excellency beyond measure of the power (resurrected life, the power to make alive that which is dead) is of God and not of us

We get no credit or praise or glory

ALL glory and praise and honor is the Lord God’s!

1 Cor 2:1-7

v8-9 In the perilous times in which we have been appointed to live,  
our place in the world: holy, to be as we are – holy  
1 Peter 1:16

our way in the world: Follow Jesus, the image of God, the Holy Thing of God  
John 14:6

Which means we are:

troubled/afflicted on every side by the world (we cannot avoid it)

Phil 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

but not distressed in Christ (not hemmed in with no escape)

1 Cor 10:13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

perplexed in the world (at a loss about and perhaps overwhelmed by what is going on around us)

but not in despair in Christ (not despondent because we know Who is sitting on His Throne)

persecuted by the world

John 7:7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you

2 Tim 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Matt 5:10-12 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

but not forsaken by Jesus

Heb 13:5b I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Matt 28:18-20 All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (Therefore, Rom 8:31?!) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world.

cast down (as if we were garbage)

1 Cor 4:13b we are made as the filth of the world, *and are* the offscouring of all things unto this day.

but not destroyed (we will NEVER perish)

2 Cor 7:6 God, that comforteth those that are cast down (by the world)



- Ps 37:23-24 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.
- Ps 42:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.
- Ps 43:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.

v10-12 And, sometimes in these perilous times, our place in the world and our way in the world also means bearing the marks of the world's hate for Jesus...so the world might see the life, light, and love of Jesus

Acts 7:59-60 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Saul of Tarsus being an eyewitness)

Acts 9:15-16 But the Lord said unto him, *Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

Gal 6:17 From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Heb 13:5b-6 will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

2 Cor 11:23-28

Phil 1:12-14

Phil 1:20-24

*Foxe's Book of Martyrs*

Smelling like Jesus and reflecting Jesus (Ch 3) in every situation in this world, we

Matt 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Consequently, facing death in the world, we live unto God!

Gal 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law (by which is the knowledge of sin and declares the whole world guilty before God), that I might live unto God.

Rom 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Life has conquered death for those who trust their lives to Jesus Christ

Light has defeated darkness for those who trust their lives to Jesus Christ

We have the Most Holy-ness of God indwelling us...

treasure in earthen vessels, treasure the world cannot take away

With the Most Holy-ness of God indwelling us (the sanctuary of God on earth), we can

- know our place in the world
- finish well our way in the world

in these perilous yet glorious times

- of mounting discrimination preceding persecution
  - from without
  - from within
- when Israel's return to the Land for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time is a sign of God's coming judgment upon the nations (Is 11:11-12)
- before Israel is the witness of Jesus Christ (Is 43:10-12, Is 44:8) and the Church no longer is (Rev 3:10, Rev 4:1)

Noteworthy news this week:

- The Saudis are pleased Netanyahu is back in power (Ezk 38-39)
- Putin gave the green light to Netanyahu to bomb the Damascus airport where Iranian arms shipments arrive (Ezk 38-39)
- USA and the world condemned Israel for a visit to Temple Mount by an Israeli Gov't official (Zech 12)
- Biden Admin: Muslims only on Temple Mount (Zech 12, Joel 3)
- Palestinians claim Israel is training cows to spy on them!

The Light of the Gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God,

The Light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus,

The indwelling holiness of God that has made us holy,

The treasure in these earthen vessels,

make sure we know our place and our way in the world in these perilous times