

Covid Church: Overwhelming Power

II Corinthians 4:6-9

++Since August 2nd, we've been in this series on Covid Church.

++How does the church operate and do ministry in light of all these fears, restrictions, and chaos?

++The church is facing its Gideon moment right now!

++Judges 6:1-24

-Gideon hiding in a winepress

-The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!

-But how?

-I will be with you

-Gideon builds an altar "Yahweh Shalom"

++In the midst of all this chaos and uncertainty...there are two things for certain: His light is shining in and through us and He is our peace!

++II Corinthians 4:6-9

++God's light shines into the darkness

++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.

++This statement by Paul bridges the initial creation "Let there be light," with New Creation "light shines in our hearts"

++Why?

++So we could **know** the glory of God (gnosis=experientially know, knowledge applied from experience)

++This glory/light/peace is gained by experience. By trusting in Him daily in all things.

++Kenzie and learning to swim

++Life is much more fulfilling when we are living out trust in God - that His purpose, plan and power far exceed our strength.

++In the "face" of Christ, the *person* of Christ - that is how we understand the glory of God...what He is like.

++It is into us that He has placed this light shining **into...**

++God's light shines out of our hearts

++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.

++It goes far beyond that...much more!

++First...the light is shining in our hearts, but (contrast) it is in us as fragile clay jars. (lit. earthen vessels - tools of usefulness, made from earth, dust) Easily broken, easily soiled, easily shattered - except that they aren't...what is placed inside these earthen clay jars?

++The light of Christ

++It's not the vessel or its vitality that gives it any value, but what you put in it.

++Paul says that this is a great treasure (thesaurus-storehouse, overwhelming supply) of Christ is shining out of us into the dark world

++We are fragile and failed, but yet a great treasure is placed inside of us...

++**This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.**

++great power (hyperbole *dynamios*) --- excessive strength, explosive might, surpassing brawn, **overwhelming power**

++Whose great power is it? (ours), where is it from? (Him)

++We are given this great power in the midst of trial, pandemic, uncertainty, and fear...not to wield as a weapon, but to shine as a lantern the hope of Jesus Christ to the world.

++God's light shines through it all

++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.

++Notice that we are *pressed*, not *crushed*

++This phrase in Greek literally means "we feel hemmed in by circumstances that skew our perspective, but we are not restrained from tapping into the power of the Holy Spirit"

++Have you honestly tapped into the power of the Holy Spirit (I've had to a lot this week - I preached this sermon to myself as I prayed with my brother who was suffering in a hospital bed)

++Notice that we are *perplexed*, not *driven to despair*

++This phrase literally means, "We are at a loss sometimes, holding our hands in the air and

completely unsure of what to do, but never without a source of power.”

++That’s what that Greek word *exaporeó* means: to be utterly without resource

++It’s the idea of feeling completely left on our own, up a creek without a paddle, all hope is lost...to have no other way out.

++But with the light shining in our hearts into these earthen clay jars we find a power that is supernatural, not from us, but from God that sources us with a supernatural power from God to sustain and make us thrive under the harshest of conditions.

++We are *hunted down*, but never *abandoned*

++”We are chased *after*, but always rescued as God swoops in to win the day because He’s already won for us!” The verb “not abandoned” is passive “it’s done to us - we don’t have to figure it out, it’s His job to do for us!”

++You are more than a conqueror, *in and through* Christ Jesus!

++We get *knocked* down, but are not *destroyed*

++”We get put on our knees by the enemy, but are never ruined or see destruction.”

++It’s the enemy’s biggest mistake: to put us on our knees. It’s when we are on our knees that we find our greatest strength: “calling out to a God that is all powerful that fights your battles for you!”

++What the enemy meant for evil (putting you on your knees), God turns it for good, always!

++In June 1936, Louis vs. Schmelling (Louis lost)

++Two years later, Joe Louis fought Max Schmelling again.

++Before the fight, Schmelling said, "He'll always be afraid of me, down deep inside. He's the kind who always holds a man who has beaten him in some sort of superstitious fear."

++That’s the only hold the satan has over you in any circumstance, “*some sort of superstitious fear.*”

++When the bell rang, Louis unleashed a torrent of lefts and rights, haymakers, uppercuts, and jabs. In 2 minutes and 4 seconds, Schmelling was knocked out...done!

++Church - that’s how we end this series...with an exclamation point...not a period, not a comma, not a semi-colon as if there is more to the story...it is

finished.

++Let’s let the final word of this message be this:

++II Cor. 4:16-18 (MSG) So we’re not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace. These hard times are small potatoes compared to the coming good times, the lavish celebration prepared for us. There’s far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can’t see now will last forever.