



A Letter of Grace 2 Corinthians

God's Glory in Jars of Clay
(4:7-15)

1

Introduction

- Previous section's focus on glory, and especially the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ
- With all this "glory talk", what does ministry in Jesus' victorious Name look like in the life of Paul?
 - Success? Spectacular overcoming? Positive thoughts, impressive resilience, and magnificent success?
 - Paul's life and ministry seems to be a contradiction to an idealized perspective of the glorious King's Kingdom - how is this so?
 - Does the victory of Christ mean His followers will experience overwhelming and evident success in this world? Living with a dream-like confidence over difficulties?

2

The Display of God's Power (7)

But we have *this treasure* in *jars of clay*,
to show that the *surpassing power* belongs to God
and not to us.

3

Carrying the Death and Life of Jesus (8-10)

We are afflicted ^(hard-pressed) in every way, but not *crushed*;
perplexed, but not driven to *despair*;
persecuted, but not *forsaken*;
struck down, but not *destroyed*; (also 1:8; 11:28, 12:7, 9)
always carrying in the body *the death of Jesus*, (Phil3:10)
so that *the life of Jesus* may also be manifested
in our bodies.

4

Manifestation and Outcome (11-12)

For we *who live* are ***always*** being given over *to death*
 for *Jesus'* sake,
 so that *the life* of Jesus
 also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
 So *death* is at work in us, but *life* in you.

5

Faith and the Resurrection (13-14)

Since we have the *same spirit of faith*
 according to what has been written,
 “*I believed, and so I spoke,*” (Ps116:10)
 we also believe, and so we also speak,
knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus
 will *raise us also* with Jesus
 and bring us *with you* into his presence. (5:10)

6

The Purpose of It All (15)

For it is *all for your sake*, (Col1:24)

so that as *grace extends* to more and more people
it may *increase* thanksgiving, *to the glory of God*.

7

Application

- We don't have to be tough - Paul's self-description is afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, despairing, anxious, harassed, weak
 - God's power in us is what sustains us, not our own inner strength
 - What sustains us in the midst of discouragements, failures, church politics, cover-ups, power-grabs, money mongering, criticisms? - our *eschatology*
 - It is for us to believe and act in the power of God looking to the future resurrection and judgment, not in our present sight of things
- The church is not meant to be about power, manipulation, and control - but rather loving service and, if necessary, suffering for the the good of others in spreading the Good News
 - In evangelism, discipleship, service, love, marriage, parenting, serving our community, worship - not self-fulfillment, but Christ full-filled-ment
- For the non-Christian... understanding the "terms of agreement"

8