

Why is there so great a Treasure in an earthen vessel?

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By Shawn Reynolds

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Grace Particular Baptist Church
5725 Imperial Lakes Blvd
Mulberry, FL 33860

Website: www.onefoldoneshepherd.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/graceparticular

Our text today will come from 2 Corinthians 4:7. We will read the text first and then ask the Lord's blessing upon it. 2 Corinthians 4:7,

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

Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art. I thank thee, O Lord, for thy faithfulness. I thank you, Lord, for bringing me and my family back here with the people of God this day. O Lord, how blessed it is to dwell with thy people, to be in a place of single mindedness, to be in a place, Lord, that thy Spirit unites thy people together. O Lord, I pray now and in this hour and the hour to come that in that faithfulness, Lord, you would bring us to thy banqueting table, that you would feed us by thy hand, that you would let crumbs fall from thy very table to nourish the souls of thy people that, Lord, you would reveal what truth is this day and what the truth is in our souls. Lord, examine us in thy word. Bring us, Lord, to thee to be nurtured, to be loved, to be taken care of, Lord, as only thou can as our Great Shepherd. Bless this day to thy glory and may you come with thy power to the souls of thy children. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

2 Corinthians 4:7 says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." How different it is, how different and how vastly different the faith of the Son of God views what treasure is than the world does. It doesn't take long when you go out in the world to see what is important to the world: the titles; the money; the gold; the silver; the earthly friendships; the things that could better a station in this life; the things that are of sense; the things that can be touched; the things that are carnal. But how different it is for the soul with an unction from the Holy One to view what treasure is. Natural man in the flesh can only love the things that perish. They can only love the things of time and sense. They can only love the things that can fill you just for a time and a period. But for the soul in the child of God, with the unction from the Holy One, the presence of the Holy One, he leads them to a much deeper revelation of what treasure is.

We see that in this passage if you would just look with me starting in verse 3. We see the sovereignty of the Lord in who the treasure goes to. He says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." I don't know how much more sovereign you can get in that. It is hid to them that are lost. Simply put that means those who are not found of the Lord. Those who the Lord has not elected. Those who the Lord's grace has not been upon. If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

Then we are told something about what we just spoke about. In verse 4 it says, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." We see that the treasures, the counterfeit treasures that are in this world, are devices of the wicked one to blind man, to get man to follow after those treasures, to entice them. They're used as instruments to blind 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." But we're told at the beginning of this that it is the sovereignty of God in election to do so. It is the sovereignty of God to reveal this great treasure to those that he has put this treasure into. That's what we want to talk about today.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts." We see that this treasure that's revealed here in 6 is this great light and has shined in our hearts, "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So one thing that we see is that the knowledge in everything that God has for his people is in the face and is in the person, is in the representation of his Son and that is the true light that John spoke about in the beginning of his Gospel. The light that lights the children of God. That separates us from the darkness that's in this world and the counterfeit light that's in this world. There is one thing, I think as you live more and more every day in this life, the Lord reveals the counterfeit of what things are. There is a counterfeit faith. There is a counterfeit love. There is a counterfeit light. And we'll walk in that light because we think that's the way to go but really what we're doing is we're walking according to the lust of our flesh. That is a counterfeit light.

Jesus tells us a little bit, well, before we go there, let's read our verse again. "But we have this treasure," this treasure that was just spoken about, this light, this Christ in us, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," and we're going to talk about that. I want to talk about three things today. I want to talk about what this treasure is. I want to talk about how and where it is housed in, this earthen vessel. And I want to speak about why. Why is it housed there. And the first thing we do and look at today is we have this treasure. What is this treasure? Well, now we start our journey through the Scriptures. We're going to turn over to Matthew 6, real quick, to see what Jesus says about treasure. These, of course, are the red words that are the words of Christ so in verse 19 of chapter 6, which is the Sermon on the Mount which the Lord instructed his people about what life in union with Christ is, we start to understand how the Lord looks at treasure and how it's revealed what treasure is. In 19 it says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," so the first thing we're told is that there are treasures upon earth. We know those treasures. We live every day lusting after those treasures. Our fallen nature wants those treasures. They desire those earthen treasures, whatever they are. And you know as the Holy Spirit is

pleased to examine us in this room today, you have a glimpse in your own soul what those treasures are. What is that thing that you fall so prey to every day? The things of time and sense that you desire so much to be a huge part of your life? The Lord says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Why? "Where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." The treasures of this earth are corruptible. The treasures of this earth are built in time. They have a time presence to them. They will end.

But in contrast in verse 20, he says, "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." So we have the treasures of earth that the people of earth have that the Lord says are not the treasures for the children of God and then we have the treasures that are for the children of God that are heavenly. They are not of the earth. What are those things? What is this treasure that's in this earthen vessel? What is this treasure that has been put into the children of God? What is this treasure and I hope as we ask this question over and over the Holy Spirit is examining you today to know whether you know what this treasure is, first and foremost, and secondly, is that treasure something that's in you? Is that treasure something that's hidden within you?

Then Jesus says in 21, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." That is a Gospel truth. Where your treasure is, what is the treasure of your heart and the treasure of your soul, your heart will be there also. They will walk hand-in-hand with whatever that treasure is. As I said at the beginning, this treasure is something that can be counterfeited. Man deals so much in treasure. They look at treasure as being what brings richness to them, whatever that treasure is and I have named a few of them this morning whether it be a title; whether you want the prestige and you want the man and how man exalts you and how he looks at you; whether it be the money so you can purchase anything that you want; whether it be the gold; whether it be the silver in this world; whether it be earthly friendships, popularity. The things in this life that will be gone in just a vapor. Solomon calls it the vanity of life because for the child of God, the treasure is Christ himself. He is the treasure. He is that which sets the child of God in a different place than the world is and that's where the examination comes in today as we examine how we run in this life and the company that you keep, in the life that you live, in the job that you're in, in the supermarket you go to. In everything that you do, are you different than the ones that you run with? And if you are not, ask yourself this day and may the Holy Spirit ask us why that is the case because the Bible clearly delineates that there is a treasure hidden. There is a treasure in the child of God that is Christ himself and that's what I want to look at today.

But this light that Christ is that was mentioned in verse 6 back in our text, this light of Christ can be counterfeited and if you don't believe me, just read on here in Matthew 6, "The light of the body is the eye." That's how we see things. That's how we perceive things. That's how things are revealed to us. That's how we see, by sight. But the eye of faith is how things are revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ to his people. It's not by sight.

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single," and that means with the mind of Christ which we'll talk about here in a few minutes, "thy whole body shall be full of light." And if you are exercised in this as I have been, experientially we live this every day. When the light is single, when it is focused upon Christ, there is peace in the soul, there is love in the heart, there is faith to be apprehended. It's the fruit of Christ in you. However, if that's not the case, you know how barren you can be. You know how ugly you can be. You know how angry you can be. You know how covetous you can be.

The two don't walk together and that's what Jesus says here in 23, he says, "But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." And that part's easy to understand. If your eye is evil and all you can see is the wickedness of your old nature and if that's what's ruling the day in you, then that's easy. It's all darkness. But it's the next part that gives us a little bit of trouble when Jesus says,

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness." How do those two things mesh? How can light be darkness? It's a counterfeit light. It's not the light of Christ. It is the light that you have illuminated in yourself because of the things that you lust for, because of the desires of the heart, because of the wickedness of the old nature.

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" This is the warfare that the child of God lives in this life and there are times that it seems like it's more than a warfare; it seems like it's a lost battle at times. At times and I can say that in absolute certainty because there have been dark times in my life that I don't see Christ. He is hidden from me because what is in the forefront of my eyes is my sin. It's the sin that's leading me. The darkness that I call light, whatever it may put on, whatever face that may be.

How great is that darkness? I'll tell you how great it is: it hides the light of Christ. The Lord gives us the warning here, he says, "Listen, don't ever think that life without me is where light is. There is no light in this world." There is a light that lights the world but it's not Christ. That's what he tells us here. It's a darkness and when I hear things like this and when I read the word of God like this, I get a shiver in my soul and I desire so much to cleave to a true light, to cleave to what is a true light in life in Christ because this old nature that we have and this wicked one that was talked about at the beginning, the god of this world that blinds the eyes and then that world itself that is so glamorous, it's so beautiful, it's something we covet, everything out there is shiny and new to us and it's something we've got to have. What has to have it? It's not Christ in you the hope of glory. Christ in you wants Christ. Christ in you wants communion with the Father. Christ in you wants communion with the saints. That's what Christ in you wants.

So today in the light of what the Lord says here in Matthew, I want to talk about what this treasure is. We have this light that is mentioned to us here that can be a false light. Man's judgments and man's intellect and man's way that they look at things, it's a light. Man's judgments can be sound. They can be sound in the way that we view things in this world. We can go before a judge and have a sound ruling. I know that's very rare nowadays but we can, but that doesn't mean they possess Christ.

So what is this treasure? It's the light that has been mentioned but it's also this light is always, always accompanied with the life of Christ and that's what John 1 tells us, "The light is Christ and the life is the life of Christ." That light and life are synonymous and that's the life of Christ in the soul of his elect. That's what this treasure is. The treasure is Christ himself. It's the seed of Christ. It's what we've talked about many times in this eternal, vital union. It's what Christ and the Father and the Holy Spirit purposed before the foundation of the world, before there was ever any thought of you and I here. The Lord purposed that this seed of Christ would dwell in his people and that light and life would be what governs them and that today is where the examination comes in because life is hard. Life is full of arguments. Life is full of getting in cross things with this world. Life is full of afflictions. Life is full of hardship. Life is full of shut doors. Life is full of the world frowning on the people of God. That's what life is but for the child of God, life is Christ in his soul and all of those things that have been mentioned and the million things that I didn't mention, they don't hold a candle to what life is in the soul. Yes, they may be perplexing. Yes, they may cast down. But this treasure, this treasure of the seed of Christ is hid in an earthen vessel.

We're going to talk about that vessel. I don't want to get ahead of myself because right now, Lord willing, I want to focus upon this treasure and is this treasure worthy? I ask the children that almost every Saturday night before the Lord's day, "Is he worthy? Is he worthy of your attention now in the hour and the hour to come? Is he worthy for you to get up and get ready to come to this place?" I can't answer that for you. I can't answer if it's a social event or whether it's the Lord drawing you here to be fed at his table. I can't answer that but what I can stand upon is the absolute truth of these Scriptures that there is a treasure and it is put into the people of God and that treasure is Christ and the life that is Christ.

Listen, there are so many things out there and people who tell you to feel things that in this life you must feel things, listen, for the child of God, the life in his soul is a feeling religion. It is feeling Christ in the soul. That's how you know he's there. If you don't have a burden of sin, you're never going to understand forgiveness. He is the author of the burden of sin. He brings it to his children to show them how they have erred. To show them their necessity of a Savior. And what about bondage? Have you ever felt bondage? Some people walk in this life and they say, "I don't even know what you're talking about. I'm happy all the time. I've got Christ in me." But the Lord in his Providence brings bondage. Why? So that when he sets us at liberty, how are we going to know what liberty is if we haven't been in bondage? We could speak about liberty all day long but if you don't experience bondage, you'll never know what it is to be set free by the truth of Christ, by Christ being in the soul. By him we groan in this life. He does, he causes grief, for the praise and glory of him. He does it and you and I, the reason why we don't get accustomed to this world and that we don't put our clutches in this world and it's for the soul, the salvation of the soul.

This life that we have in Christ Jesus is a living life if I can say that. It's not a dead life. It's an energizing life. That's what the Holy Spirit does. He brings life into the child of

God and reveals Christ as there. But do you know what else this treasure is? And some of you might not like this but this treasure is also a fear. I've heard a lot of that lately. "I fear this. I fear that. I fear this." You're right. There are a lot of things in this life to fear. There is always fear where faith is not present. Fear has torment. The perfect love of the Lord, we're told in 1 John, casts out that fear. But there is a fear that the Lord puts in the hearts of his people. There is a fear that the people of God have that they don't want to sin, that they don't want to be disobedient.

Turn with me now to Isaiah 33. Now in Isaiah 33, let's look at verses 5 and 6, "The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion," Zion is his church. "He has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness." Everything we have is from him. I hope you see that today. This treasure that is in earthen vessels, that he sovereignly put their, is for his purpose and his glory.

"The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure." There it is verbatim. The fear of the Lord is his treasure and that's a treasure that he gives to his people and it's a hidden treasure. Do you understand that? It's a hidden treasure. The fear of the Lord is something deep in the soul. It's not something that is detected by man. We don't walk around with the fear of the Lord in our face, "Oh, I fear the Lord." No, that's a fear. We let fears, carnal fears man sees but they don't see the fear of the Lord. That's deep in the soul between you and the Lord. It's the love of the Lord that constrains us, the love and the fear that work together. It's a reverence that goes so deep into the child of God that he knows that he is. He is the I AM, he is the Great Almighty One. It's that presence of the Lord in the soul. It's the treasure. It's the treasure that is manifested as light. It's the treasure that is manifested as life. It's the treasure that's manifested with the fear of the Lord.

As I said, we're going to talk about this treasure. There are many things we could have gone to because the whole word of God testifies of Christ's finished work. Everything is of him. All promises and all the gifts are of him and through him. He opens the storehouses. Galatians 5:22 tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is. What is the fruit of the Spirit? It's the fruit of Christ in the soul. It's the treasure of Christ. It's what the Holy Spirit comes and shows the children of God and applies and empowers in the children of God, it's Christ himself and that fruit is, as mentioned, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Now, just let those sink in a moment. Think about all that fruit that is in Christ that is in the people of God that must be shown and lived out by Christ himself. It's examination time again. Think about those things. Think about love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Think of all those things. Now, why don't we lay hold of those things every day? If they're gifts and they have been given, why can't we be loving? Why can't we be joyful? Why can't we have faith? It's a simple answer: we're an earthen vessel. We're going to talk about that in a minute. That treasure is put in an earthen vessel. It's not in a heavenly vessel, it's in an earthen vessel where we have this struggle going on.

But now of some of those fruits, I'd like to talk about and just hint on. Like I said, we're not going to be an exhaustive talk of all what treasure is. I hope that as we go through some of these passages and we talk about what treasure is, I hope the Holy Spirit is saying to you, "Yes, that's the treasure in my soul. That's the treasure that has been put there. Yes, that's the treasure that I have experienced." A religion without feeling and experience is a dead religion but have you experienced the Lord this way? Have you experienced his joy? And what about his faith because it's only as he gives us faith that we can then apprehend what has been said today, that we can lay hold of what this treasure is and it's the only way we can realize the things the Lord has prepared for them that love him. You say, "Well, that sounds familiar." Exactly.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 2. You might think this is an odd place to go where faith is concerned but it's not. It's the Lord describing the power of the Holy Ghost and what must we have to apprehend this? Faith. But look at chapter 2, starting in verse 9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We can't apprehend them. It hasn't entered into our minds. We can't see them. We can't understand them. We can't come to this intellectual knowledge that we like to think that we can. We cannot lay hold of Christ that way. That's what it says.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." It doesn't even enter into our heart to do it, "But God," there is that more than equalizer. "But God," the game changer, so to speak. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Revealed what? The things of Christ. "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." That's how we can understand the deep things of God, it's the faith of the Son of God. It's the Holy Spirit revealing to us. But how can we assent to believe them? How can we lay hold of them? It's by faith. It's the gift. If you can sit in that seat and assent to what's about to be read, it's because of the faith of the Son of God if you truly believe it in your soul.

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Dependency. We're dependent upon the Spirit of God. We're dependent upon Christ who is this treasure in the child of God. Totally dependent. Our sufficiency is of Christ. Is in Christ. Is of Christ.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world." Can you say that today? Can you in good conscience before God today say, "I have not received the spirit of the world. I am not led away by the spirit of the world. I don't walk after the carnal things of the world. I don't have them as the riches in my life." Can you say that? Paul says we have. The children of God can say that.

"We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It's the only way. Revelation by faith. That's how we live: the just shall live by faith. Paul said it, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." You and I will live no differently if we be in Christ. That's his plan.

"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." Have you ever found yourself speaking what the world speaks? Do you blend in that way? Do you speak the same language the world does or have you found at times that you don't? And the way you understand things and God's order of things and the way that Christ has them in your life, they are not what the world understands. There is a difference there. There is something revealing a different way, Christ's way, the way, the truth and the life. But that's where the examination comes in. Has that happened? Does that happen?

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him." And it would be great if we could stand up here and go, "See, I'm glad I'm not a natural man. Look at that, they don't receive anything of God." But we have this treasure in an earthen vessel where we do have part natural man, fallen man, struggling man and struggling the whole of us. That's the earthen vessel and that's why when we read things like this I hope you sit there and and you go, "You're right. My carnal, natural man, this old nature in me cannot apprehend Christ. It cannot see Christ. It cannot walk after Christ. It cannot love Christ. It cannot love the preeminence of him. It can't."

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." You say, "Well no, I'm judged by every man because they see this warfare in me and they think you're right, you are." But do you know what? That isn't the final judge. Man judges what he doesn't understand. Man judges what he'll never understand and he will label it something and he'll label you an Antinomian, he'll label you someone that's crazy, he'll label you something, whatever it is but in God's eyes that's no judgment at all. None. It's the spiritual man and this is the same warfare we have that our old nature, the old man in us, he judges things totally different. It's hopeless. It's carnal. It's, "What can I get for me?" It's lust. It's all of those things. But the spiritual man, he judges aright. He judges all things. And aren't you glad as you sit in that seat and as I stand before you, aren't you glad that God has pronounced the victory to be in the new man? I know I am because when I get a taste, more than a taste, of that old nature, it's the new nature that brings me to hate it.

"But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." That's what faith lays hold of: Christ, his finished work. It's the gift of Christ to his people to know what Christ has done for them. That is simply put. It's the faith that moves mountains, of all the mountains of doubt and all the mountains of whatever is facing you today. There is only one mountain mover and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the treasure.

Now, I want to speak just a little bit about hope. Let's turn over to Hebrews 6 because hope too is part of this treasure. Hebrews 6, let's start in 17, "Wherein God, willing more

abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel," I pray that he shows us all that today, the immutability of his counsel, of his will, "confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Have you fled to Christ to lay hold of the hope that is set before us? If you have, it's because there is a treasure in you and that treasure is Christ and this hope is a living hope. Earlier in this passage it said the Lord could swear by none other but himself, that's where our steadfastness is. That's where our surety is. That's why when we see this word in 19 "an anchor, Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul," the hope of Christ, the hope of glory in the child of God is what anchors him in this life. Think about it: what's the opposite? Hopelessness. That's what that old nature, old man has. That's what the world has: the high-mindedness; the despair; the hopelessness because they always have to have more. They have to have the newest this, this and this because the hope in them is to be bigger, to be stronger, to be better, to be more powerful in the eyes of man, to be looked at higher in the eyes of man. Is that you? Is that me?

The hope of Christ in the soul is the "anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." That tells us that it's Christ. He's the one that rent the veil. He's the great high priest that went in, that made it possible for you and I to come boldly before the throne. He did. We can only come by him. We can only come by his faith. We can only come with this hope in us, living hope. And I can't stress the words "living hope." It's not a fatalistic hope. It's the living hope. It's an energized hope. "I know that my Redeemer liveth. I know that my Lord has performed all things for me."

"Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." He just told us, it's our great high priest. This anchor of our soul is the hope, it's Christ in us.

The last one I want to hint on just briefly, of course, is love. We talk a lot about love and I'll tell you what, as sure as I stand here, I can say and testify that love too is a gift of God. To love the brethren and to love the Lord must be this treasure in the children of God and I mean true love. I mean the love that is spoken of as the love that he laid down his life for his friends. The love of Christ. The love of Christ that constrains the child of God. The love of Christ that is shed abroad in our hearts.

But over in 1 John 4 we read this in verse 7, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." That shows you where the love comes from. It is born of God. It is of God because God is love. The seed that he has put in his people is Christ himself and that's the love that constrains us.

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." That's love. Sacrifice. Laying down his life.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." To absorb the wrath for our sins, the sins that we commit right

now in this hour. The sins that we commit when we go out to our vehicles and we go home today. One stood in our place and absorbed the wrath of God, the just wrath of God, for those sins as a substitute for you and I if we be in Christ. That's the love that is in this treasure that's in the child of God. In 19 we are told we love him because he first loved us. Don't ever, ever think that you have the ability to love the Lord without the Lord being in you because that would produce the counterfeit love.

So I hope through this little journey that we just went that what we now have looked at briefly is the treasure. But our text says, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." In an earthen vessel and I sit and I think about that a minute and it seems so unsuitable, doesn't it? This great treasure that was just talked about and put forth in the word of God, how great, how magnificent and it is put in an earthen vessel. It's put in something that earthen means clay. It means of the earth. And that reminds us first that it's common. You say, "What do you mean common?" Well, there's nothing in it. There is nothing in this vessel that would attract the treasure. It's all of grace. And I think used as an earthen vessel and I think of back in that time, you know, they put everything they thought was valuable in clay and the porcelains and the china and things like that were highly regarded but they kept things in clay because they thought that the clay pots would preserve things. In fact, that's how the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. A child was playing, threw a rock into a cave, the rock broke the earthen vessel which was the clay, and inside were the Dead Sea Scrolls. They put them in there to preserve them.

That's the way we are. We think that this earthen vessel is something's strong, it's something that's always going to keep things but that's not the case. The Lord has put this treasure in this earthen vessel. It's so common. It reminds me when I say those words, it reminds me of the Lord's birth, of how he was born in a stable and how he was born in a cow trough. Common. But as the Lord went first, he brings his people to see that too and, you know, commonality of how the Lord makes the child of God and how he shows him that we're just an earthen vessel, it's a humbling thing. That's where the humility of Christ is and there is nothing in this earthen vessel that redeems us to the world either. You know, the world doesn't look at this vessel and go, "Oh now, there's something that possesses something great." It's common. It's humbled by the hand of God.

But it's not only common, it's frail. Have you ever felt beaten down by the Providences of God? Yeah. We are frail. This vessel that the Lord put this treasure in is a frail vessel. It shows us how dependent we are of the one to keep us together, the one to give us the strength each day, the one to give us the healing each day just to do the normal things in life. It's dependency. Very frail.

But it's also corrupt. That's what clay tells me. That's what the earth tells me. And that reminds me of this fallen nature. I told you and hinted on earlier, it reminds me, as I said, the whole point about this earthen vessel is what an unsuitable place it is for such a great treasure and that's the part that astounds me, that in God's salvation plan, that in the way that he saves his children and the way that this warfare is. I think about that as being a treasure in itself because I see that is hidden to man. You start talking to people about warfare, they are going to think you need to be on the seventh floor somewhere. That's

the way it is. The people of God understand that because that's what they are taught in the school of Christ and that's what they are taught in the life of Christ, of how corrupt they are but how great this treasure is. And what a merciful Lord to put this treasure in something like me and listen, y'all only get a glimpse of how wicked I am. I know how wicked I am. I only get glimpses of how wicked I am, how much I sin, how much I fall short to the glory of God. And for him, by grace, to put a treasure of Christ in a vessel like me seems very unworthy. It is very unworthy but it's the design of salvation and the great plan of salvation.

The last thing that I'd like to say about this earthen vessel is that it leaks. How often have you had a sweet frame, you know, a really good mood, really happy, peaceful in the Lord and then it's gone. How often have you felt the love of the Lord and then it is gone. Because, you see, this vessel is an earthen vessel. This isn't heaven. We're reminded of that when the Lord chose this, when Paul said, "We have this treasure in an earthen vessel." This treasure that Christ living in the people of God is while they are living here in this body on this earth. And what a promise of the life to come when he raises this earthen vessel to a not corrupted vessel, a perfect vessel, a vessel fitted for the kingdom of heaven. I'll tell you, the depth in that, if the Lord ever led you just to sit and think about that because we are all decaying every day. I know y'all know it. We're all getting a little bit older and starting to move around a little slower and maybe you kids haven't felt it yet, you will.

But what a great, merciful Lord and we sit here and we have to ask, I know I have to ask, "Why? Why in an earthen vessel?" Well, that's where the rest of this verse comes in, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." You see, if it was a golden vessel, we'd look to ourselves. We talk about how strong we are. We talk about how great we are, how shiny and how beautiful and valuable we are. But we're not. It must be all of him. It must be Christ in all. It must be Christ who has performed all things for me. It must be that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. You see, I love the Scriptures because as the Holy Spirit reveals them to the child of God, he takes this creature totally out and he exalts the Lord, the King, where the crown is on the rightful head. Our sufficiency is of him.

The last place we'll go before we come back to our text is in Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Man's glory is not in himself. Man's glory is not to be seeking of self. The glory of the child of God is his Lord. Let him that glory, glory in the Lord. Paul said over in 1 Corinthians 2:5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." My prayer for you today as the Lord reveals what this treasure is, that he does indeed show you how frail and how common and what a great plan of salvation the Lord had to humble you and I before him to show his magnificent glory, to show that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. And may that be written upon our hearts and souls this day for the glory of him.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, add thy power and thy clarity for thy name's sake and for thy glory alone. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.