

“We Have This Treasure”

Lesson on 2 Corinthians 4:7–18

Text	2 Corinthians 4:7–18
Key Verse	“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us” (King James Bible, 1769/2017, 2 Corinthians 4:7).
Lesson Theme	God places <i>His Spirit</i> and the precious message of the Gospel inside weak human bodies to prove His great power comes from Him alone.

Lesson Introduction

In 2 Corinthians 4:7–18, Paul reminds us that following Christ does not mean life will always be easy. In fact, Paul writes as someone who knew what it meant to be pressured, rejected, and worn down. Yet he also knew that suffering was not the end of the story. God was using Paul’s weakness to show something greater: the power and life of Jesus Christ (King James Bible, 1769/2017, 2 Corinthians 4:7–18).

Paul describes believers as ordinary clay jars carrying a priceless treasure. That picture is simple but powerful. The jar may be fragile, but what is inside is valuable. In the same way, believers may feel weak, limited, or under pressure, but the gospel they carry is strong because it comes from God. This lesson helps us see how God can use ordinary people, difficult seasons, and resurrection hope to point others to Christ.

Therefore, believers must look beyond what is seen. The visible world includes pain, opposition, loss, aging, and death, but these things are temporary. The invisible realities—God’s presence, inward renewal, resurrection, and eternal glory—are everlasting. Faith does not deny visible suffering. Faith interprets visible suffering through the invisible promises of God.

Lesson Outline

Part 1: The Treasure in Fragile Vessels — Verse 7

- Paul says we are like “earthen vessels,” or clay jars. That means we are ordinary, fragile, and limited.
- The good news is that God is not looking for perfect containers. He places His treasure in weak people so everyone can see that the power belongs to Him.

1. When you hear the phrase “treasure in earthen vessels,” what image comes to mind?
2. Why do you think God chooses to work through ordinary and imperfect people?

Part 2: God’s Power in Suffering Servants — Verses 8–12

- Paul is honest about the pressure believers can face. He says they may be troubled, confused, persecuted, or knocked down.
- But Paul also makes the hope clear: they are not crushed, hopeless, abandoned, or destroyed. God is still holding them up.

1. **Where do you see God’s strength most clearly in your suffering?**
2. **How can a believer’s endurance through hardship become a witness to others?**

Part 3: Resurrection Hope and Eternal Glory — Verses 13–18

- Paul keeps coming back to resurrection hope. Because Jesus was raised, believers can speak, serve, and keep going with confidence.
- Paul does not pretend that outward suffering is not real. He says the outward person may be wearing down.
- At the same time, God is renewing the inward person day by day.
- That is why believers can look beyond temporary trouble and hold on to eternal glory.

1. **How does the resurrection of Jesus help believers keep speaking and serving when life is hard?**
2. **What does it look like in everyday life to focus on what is eternal instead of only what is visible?**

Teaching Application

This lesson invites believers to be honest about weakness and suffering while still holding firmly to hope. Paul does not say suffering is easy, and he does not ask us to pretend it does not hurt. Instead, he shows us that God can work through weakness, sustain His people under pressure, and renew them from the inside out. Our hope is not based only on what we can see right now, but on the eternal promises of God (King James Bible, 1769/2017, 2 Corinthians 4:16–18).

Closing Reflection

God places His greatest treasure in ordinary people so that His glory, not human strength, becomes clear. Because Christ has been raised, we can keep serving, keep trusting, and keep moving forward—even when life feels heavy and painful.

Reference

King James Bible. (2017). King James Bible Online. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>
(Original work published 1769)