

II Corinthians: Lesson #25 – The Temporary and the Eternal

Notes for Parents to Study with Their Children

For Sunday, July 13th

Read II Cor. 4:7 – 5:11 (a simplified explanation of the text is supplied at the end of these notes).

Memory Verse: II Cor. 5:7 “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”

The Treasure of God’s Word in a Clay Pot

- Paul wanted to make it clear that the men that preached God’s Word were not nearly as important as God’s Word itself. The greatness of His Word was that it came from God, not from men.
- But God did give His Word to men like Paul. God told them what to say and what to write. God used men to spread His word. God’s Word today is in the Bible, but preachers must still teach it to others.
- Paul calls God’s Word a great treasure, something more valuable than gold or money. But that treasure has been put in an earthen vessel. An earthen vessel is a pot, or jar that was made from clay out of the ground. Paul means that people are like earthen vessels (or clay pots). Remember God made man out of the dust of the ground.
- Clay pots served a purpose. People used to use them to store things in. But a clay pot can easily be broken. Human beings are the same way. They have their faults. And they can get sick and get hurt. They can grown old and die.
- It is amazing that God chose to put His Word into clay pots. By that I mean God chose to have the gospel, revealed through men like Peter and Paul and John. God put His wonderful treasure in them to share with us.
- Suppose you were looking inside a clay pot and saw that on the inside there was \$1,000 and some gold coins. Would you get excited that you found a clay pot, or would you get excited that you found the money and the coins? It would be the money and coins that we would get excited over.
- That’s God’s point. He put His gospel treasure in human beings, so that we would see the real treasure. The real treasure wasn’t the men that taught it, but the truth God was teaching.
- It’s not wrong to admire people like Paul who taught God’s Word, but the most important thing was what they taught us about God and His Son.

Looking at Eternal Things

- Paul and many Christians during his time were given lots of trouble because they served Jesus Christ. Some people hated them just because they were Christians. At times they did terrible things to them. [You might want to read a list of the troubles Paul went through in II Cor. 11:23-28.]
- It must have been hard to live everyday with people treating you in such a mean way. Paul explained how he was able to put up with it – He looked at things that were eternal. Eternal means forever and ever.
- Things on this earth are temporary. When we get a new toy or some new clothes, sooner or later they get old and wear out. It breaks or tears or gets messed up and we

can't use it anymore. Sometimes we just throw it away. A few things on earth, very few things have lasted a long time (things like the pyramids), but even they are gradually wearing down. One day God will bring everything on earth to an end.

- But things God is preparing for us in Heaven are eternal, they will last forever. We've seen people whose bodies are very old and they can't work or do things like they used to. But we are told the body God will give to His people in heaven will never die. Our home in heaven will never fall apart or get old.
- Paul said that when he thought about his eternal home in Heaven, it didn't bother him so much that he had to go through some hard times right now. He just looked forward to the day when he could have his new house in heaven.

We Walk By Faith, Not by Sight

- We can see things in this world. For instance, we can see that toy or those clothes we were talking about. But remember we said those things wouldn't last forever. So we see things that are only temporary, they only last for a while.
- You can't see Heaven or Jesus or God can you? But we believe in them because God's Word tells us those things really exist. The heavenly eternal things will always exist even though we can't see them right now. One day we will see them.

When Our Tent Gets Torn Down

- Have you ever gotten inside a tent? When you were in a tent, the tent was just the place you stayed. Maybe you spent the night there. But the tent wasn't you, it was just the place you were staying.
- Our spirit, our soul, our inner person is the real us. It's who you really are. Paul says the real you isn't just your body, but you live in that body, like a person staying in a tent.
- Like we were talking about earlier, sooner or later our bodies can get old and die. Paul says that is like your tent getting torn down. But when that happens God has a plan to give you a new and better body to live in.
- No one wants to die, but its good to know that when we serve Jesus, God has something better prepared for us when we move out of our tent.
- One day we can go to heaven and be in our new home with Jesus forever.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

- As you get older and learn more about God and His Word, God will expect you to become a Christian. He will want you to be saved from your sins.
- One day every person who is old enough to be judged, will stand before Jesus Christ. The Bible says this will happen at the end of time, when the world comes to an end.
- Jesus will judge how we lived our lives on the earth.
- It would be a terrible thing to have never paid attention to Jesus, never have loved and obeyed Him while we lived, and then on that day have to look Him in the face. Wouldn't that be so sad?
- We want to live our lives for Jesus knowing that one day He will judge us.

Simplified Explanation of the Text

Treasure in Earthen Vessels. [Paul had been talking about how he preached God's Word.]

II Cor. 4:7 But we have this treasure in vessels made of clay so that extreme power can clearly be seen as coming from God, not from us.

8-9 Troubles push down on us from every side, but we have not been crushed.

Uncertainty about what will happen next perplexes us, but it doesn't drive us to give up in despair. Persecution follows us, but we have not been abandoned. We get thrown down, but not destroyed.

10-11 In body we always carry about the same things people did to put Jesus to death so that the life of Jesus can be demonstrated in our body. Those of us who live are always delivered into death for the cause of Jesus, so that Jesus' life can be shown in our frail fleshly bodies.

12 So then death works in us, but life in you.

13 In the Scripture it was written, "I believed; therefore, I spoke." We have that same spirit of faith. We also believe; therefore, we also speak."

14 Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us up also through Jesus and will stand us together with you.

15 All these things being done for you so that God's overflowing grace will cause a great number of people to offer many words of thanks to the glory of God.

Paying Attention to Eternal Things.

16 That is the reason that we don't let all our troubles of life discourage us: Even though our outer person is being destroyed, yet the inner person is renewed day by day.

17 For the troubles we go through are light and only for the moment; and these will in time accomplish for us a glory that has great weight and is eternal.

18 Our attention is fixed not on things that are seen, but on the things that are not seen; for things you can see are temporary, but the things you cannot see are eternal.

A House Not Made With Hands.

5:1 We know that if our earthly house, our tent, were to be torn down, we have a house built by God, not built by human hands, a house eternal in the heavens.

2 And while we are in our current house, we groan and sigh, because we long to be clothed with our house from heaven.

3 Since once we have been clothed with that house, we will not be left without proper clothing.

4 And while in we are in our tent, we groan because of our burdens. But we don't want to leave this earth in death having our body stripped off of us. No, we want to be clothed with our eternal clothing – we want this part of us that can die to be swallowed up by life.

5 Now the God who made all this possible has also given us the Spirit as a pledge and guarantee that this will happen.

6-8 So we take great courage. Of course, we know that while we are at home in the body, we are living away from the Lord (for right now we must walk by faith, not by sight). But our great courage comes from the fact that we would be much more pleased to be living away from the body and be at home with the Lord.

9 So because of our love of honor, whether we are at home or away, we live to be accepted by Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

10 The reason we want to be accepted by Him is because we will all be seen for what we really are before the judgment seat of Christ. There everyone will have to carry away things done by the body, all the things they practiced, whether good or bad.

11 Because we know the terror of the Lord, we strive to persuade people. We know that we are seen for what we really are by God, and I hope that in your consciences, we also are seen for what we really are.