

## The Surpassing Power of God

Second Corinthians 4:7-18

### I. Wisdom from a \_\_\_\_\_ – a profound coincidence of opposites

*“But we have this treasure in jars of clay” [7a]*

A. Anthropology: we are jars of clay – a metaphor for \_\_\_\_\_ in the ancient world

1. A metaphor for fragility--we are a \_\_\_\_\_

*“My days pass away like smoke” [Psalm 102:3a]*

2. A metaphor for fragility – *“our outer self is wasting away” [16]*

B. Theology: God has given us treasure in these clay jars!

1. God is not fragile!

a. He is \_\_\_\_\_ --*“From everlasting to everlasting, you are God” [Psalm 90:2b]*

b. He does not waste away over time – He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of life [Psalm 36:9a]

2. The treasure is the \_\_\_\_\_ [Matthew 13:44]

The saving knowledge of God’s glory in the person of Christ

C. This gives us crucial \_\_\_\_\_

1. Left to ourselves, we are not \_\_\_\_\_

2. By God’s grace, we have not been left to ourselves!

*“We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” [7]*

### II. Our weakness is the occasion for God’s power

A. We can not only survive but flourish \_\_\_\_\_ our struggles

1. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed – “squeezed but not \_\_\_\_\_”

2. Perplexed, but not driven to despair--vs. \_\_\_\_\_, but a deeper affirmation

3. Persecuted, but not forsaken

4. Struck down, but not destroyed – knocked down, but not knocked out

B. *“Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus” [10a]*

We echo the life and death of Jesus on this earth – we \_\_\_\_\_ it

C. This is all because God’s \_\_\_\_\_

*“If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness” [II Corinthians 11:30]*

D. *“An eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison”*

*“Those who have a ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' to live, can bear with almost any ' \_\_\_\_\_ '.” [Viktor Frankl]*

E. The power of the Gospel

### III. Help for the road: we do not lose heart

A. There is great \_\_\_\_\_ for clay vessels

B. Live for the line, not the dot

*“The present form of this world is passing away” [I Corinthians 7:31b]*

C. A life well-lived is a life lived for \_\_\_\_\_ --*“Death is at work in us, but life in you.”*

*“Death is the operational principle of the Gospel” [Hughes]*

D. It is all for God’s glory--*“As grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.” [15]*