

## Not Seen

### 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

- If we believe in Christ, we preach Him, not ourselves
- Because we are servants for His sake
- And we preach at His command
- Just as His glorious light has shined in our hearts
- We want to reflect that light to others around us
  
- Those are the thoughts in the context of our passage of the day
- Which encourages us to consider what we are
- And how "what we are" influences our ministry
  
- It goes on to discuss our vision
- How we should avoid a fixation on the temporal
- And strive toward those things that are "Not Seen"
- Which is our theme
- From 2 Corinthians 4:7-18
  
- It's a longer passage than usual today
- The text covers a lot of ground
- From our status as earthen vessels
- To our persecution for Jesus' sake
- To the resurrection power of Christ working in us
- Concluding with our eyes being set on the eternal
  
- The Apostle Paul speaks to the church at Corinth here
- It's his second letter addressed to their church in the New Testament
- There's a lot of theological detail in this letter
- But we'll also find it quite practical
  
- Let's take it section by section...

### 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.

- Believers understand their place in God's work reading this
- The passage calls us jars of clay
- Just earthen vessels
- But God has chosen to place His great treasure within us
- His Spirit, His word, and His gospel message
  
- But having this treasure in jars of clay works to our benefit
- In that, we see for ourselves, that anything eternally done is by His power

- It cannot be of us
- Certainly enduring hardship is not of us...

#### 2 Corinthians 4:8-10

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

- This is a weighty, but encouraging three verses
- Weighty, because they remind every disciple of Christ that persecution is near
- Whether directly on our doorstep, like those in this text
- Or on the horizon, like many who live in free countries such as our own
- The encouragement is in knowing that this persecution does not destroy us
- His power remains within these earthen vessels
- And God remains in control
- We may be troubled
- We may be perplexed
- We may be persecuted
- We may be cast down
- But God continues to use us
- And we go on
- The severity of these trials may be great
- They certainly were for Paul
- But remember, our Savior suffered a violent, unjust death
- And it's possible (often likely) that His followers will face similar
- He displayed His power in the resurrection
- And we have the hope of the resurrection as His children
- There is more...

#### 2 Corinthians 4:11-14

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

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

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

- Let's read a restatement of this passage from the ESV...

"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. Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' 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."

- Believers in Christ were facing relentless persecution
- Some were put to death for their faith in Jesus
- Paul himself bore marks in his body that were not so unlike those that Christ bore
- From stonings and beatings he endured
  
- The constant threat Paul, and some others were under, resembled the threat Christ faced
- Yet they continued speaking for Him
- Because the power that raised Christ was also at work in them
  
- In all these hardships, Paul and others reflected Christ
- Glorified Him in how they lived and how they responded to the threat of death
- The next two verses expand on this...

#### 2 Corinthians 4:15-16

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

- So much in this section is counter-intuitive and counter-cultural
- How can men, in constant danger and under constant threat
- Often facing the harshest punishments
- Remain hopeful and undeterred?
- Not fainting (that is, losing courage or becoming weary)
- Instead, being renewed inwardly every day?
  
- It must be because they knew the facts...

#### 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- Whatever the persecution, it was temporary
- Whatever the hardship, it was nothing compared to the glory upcoming
- Knowing the wonder of eternal salvation
- Knowing the riches of heaven
- To be with Jesus
- And knowing the rewards that await the faithful

- There was perspective to be gained
- Believers must look ahead to that which is not seen with the eyes
- To that which is beyond
- That which can only be seen with eyes of faith
- Eternal things that await us in heaven
- That are a result of God's grace
- And God's empowerment to endure, continuing to preach the gospel
- No matter the earthly cost

*Christopher Harper, **Take Note** 2022*