

2 Corinthians 4:7-14

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹ 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. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you.

¹³ 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, ¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

—2 Corinthians 4:7-14 (ESV)

v 7 But we have this treasure...

What is the "treasure"? – the glorious gospel of Christ

Who is "we"? – specifically the apostles, but also, to a large degree, applying to all of us

"jars of clay"

The cheapest, most ordinary, earthenware pots or vessels—used for menial, even unsanitary, uses

Paul was not just (or even mainly) referring to their bodies—but to their lives, to who they were—or at least, who they were perceived to be by the world

²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. —1 Corinthians 1:26-29

God does not need endorsements from Hollywood.

God does not need the approval of wealthy and powerful people.

God does not need to consult with the "movers and shakers," with the influential people

And even more to the point, God does not make his servants become celebrated, admired, "connected," powerful (in a worldly way), influential—unless He has specific reasons for doing so.

God—made—the—world... and everything else that has been created. He doesn't need the devil's support (cf. third temptation of Christ).

By using what (even whom) the world considers of no value, God shows that the power of His work comes from Him and not from sinful, worldly practices and endorsements

vv 8-10 – We are afflicted in every way...

We are afflicted...crushed...persecuted...struck down...carrying around the death of Jesus

God allowed, and allows, this to show that life—what really matters—is all from Him and none of it from ourselves

But he does not abandon us—He limits what we have to endure

We are (all is in present-participle)

being hard-pressed in every way—but not being crushed!

being perplexed—but not despairing!

being persecuted—but not being forsaken!

being struck down—but not being destroyed!

Always the death of Jesus carrying around in our body, so that also the life of Jesus should be manifested in our body.

It is a testimony to the world that our joy and security and thanksgiving is in Christ and because of Christ—not due to worldly prosperity and problem-free circumstances

“Now thank we all our God”

“It is well with my soul”

v 11 For we who live...

more lit. – For, unceasingly, we the “living to death” are being delivered through Jesus, so that also the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The deliverance we receive from endless hardships and suffering is so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in them.

A person—even an apostle—can only proclaim this victory if he cares more about the glory of Christ than he does his own circumstances.

v 12 – So death is at work in us...

The apostles’ suffering results in spiritual blessings of life to the Corinthians

The enemies of the apostles were attempting to get the people to look down on them because of their circumstances and their lack of worldly respect

v 13 – Since we have...

Here Paul is quoting Psalm 116:10

He is quoting the Septuagint, which varies slightly from the Hebrew text

I believed, even when I spoke -or- I believed, indeed I spoke (Heb)

I believed, therefore I spoke (Septuagint)

NT quotes of the OT are often from the Septuagint

This helps us to understand: “Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.”—

2 Timothy 2:14

Paul’s concluding statement of certain hope and unity

We are proclaiming and living what we know through faith

Our eternity is secured in Christ

God will bring us “with you” (!) into his presence!