

TRANSFORMATION



Fingerprints of God *Small Group and Individual Study Guide* Week 6

The Potter: His shaping your form.....His Plan

Week 6 The Potter will use us how He has shaped us

2 Corinthians 4:7

[But we have this treasure] The treasure of the gospel; the rich and invaluable truths which they were called to preach to others. The word "treasure" is applied to those truths on account of their inestimable worth. Paul in the previous verses had spoken of the gospel, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as full of glory, and infinitely precious. This rich blessing had been committed to him and his fellow-laborers, to dispense it to others, and to diffuse it abroad. His purpose in this and the following verses is, to show that it had been so entrusted to them as to secure all the glory of its propagation to God, and so also as to show its unspeakable value. For this purpose, he not only affirms that it is a treasure, but says that it had been so entrusted to them as to show the power of God in its propagation; that it had showed its value in sustaining them in their many trials; and "they" had showed their sense of its worth by being willing to endure all kinds of trial in order to make it everywhere known, 2 Cor 4:8-11. The expression here is similar to that which the Saviour uses when he calls the gospel "the pearl of great price," Matt 13:46.

[In earthen vessels] This refers to the apostles and ministers of religion, as weak and feeble; as having bodies decaying and dying; as fragile, and liable to various accidents, and as being altogether unworthy to hold a treasure so invaluable; as if valuable diamonds and gold were placed in vessels of earth of coarse composition, easily broken, and liable to decay. The word "vessel" skeuos means properly any utensil or instrument; and is applied usually to utensils of household furniture, or hollow vessels for containing things, Luke 8:16; John 19:29. It is applied to the human body, as made of clay, and therefore frail and feeble, with reference to its "containing" anything, as, e.g., treasure; compare note on Romans 9:22-23. The word rendered "earthen," ostrakinois means that which is made of shells (from ostrakinon), and then burnt clay, probably because vessels were at first made of burnt shells. It is suited well to represent the human body; frail, fragile, and easily reduced again to dust. The purpose of Paul here is, to show that it was by no excellency of his nature that the gospel was originated; it was in virtue of no vigor and strength which he possessed that it was propagated; but that it had been, of design, committed by God to weak, decaying, and crumbling instruments, in order that it might "be seen" that it was by the power of God that such instruments were sustained in the trials to which they were exposed, and in order that it might be manifest to all that it was not originated and diffused by the power of those to whom it was entrusted. The idea is, that they were altogether insufficient of their own strength to accomplish what was accomplished by the gospel. Paul uses a metaphor similar to this in 2 Tim 2:20.

(from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

Based on the Barnes' Notes excerpt, discuss the following:

Explain the value to you of 'this treasure' referenced in the first paragraph of Barnes.

Why would God put his great treasure in a "jar of clay" when that vessel is subject to decaying and crumbling? Do you think God keeps the jar from crumbling while it is being used? Any relation to your experiences?

What is God's purpose/design for using us (weak instruments) to share his precious treasure in a "jar of clay?" Can you share an example from your ministry experience confirming this mystery of God's doing in you?

TRANSFORMATION

Fingerprints of God

Small Group and Individual Study Guide

Week 6

The Potter: His shaping your form.....His Plan

Week 6 The Potter will use us how He has shaped us

2 Corinthians 4:5-10

We have this treasure in jars of clay

2 Corinthians 3:3-6

We are (not) adequate in ourselves

Proverbs 21:1- 3

His hand directs all things (even the hearts of kings)

Based on the Scripture passages, discuss the following:

After reading 2 Corinthians 4:5-10, which phrase or verse stand out to you? Why?

What has been ‘shone’ in your heart during this sermon series and small group study time?

Focus on verse 7, what is your response to—“...to show the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”

Read 2 Corinthians 3:3-6; do you have a sense of God making you “competent to be a minister of a new covenant?” How has this been seen in your life? What steps do you need to take to allow God to do this work?

Discuss what is meant by “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

When “feelings of inadequacy” come (we all get them!) how do you deal with them?

Read Proverbs 21:1- 3; describe in your own words the meaning of this passage.

Do you find it comforting that even kings have their desires and intentions controlled by God? How do we view the world situation today based on this promise?

Does God’s hand on your life bring you peace or does it give you a sense of being confined and restricted? Explain your response.

Set aside some time in prayer requesting the power of God to “make these truths” evident and characteristic of your life and the life and ministry at BPPC. Ask for leading from the Potter to reform my life to match His will.

Going Deeper
Tweener Time

For your personal devotion time; Read then write your reflection

The Potter: His shaping your form.....His Plan

Week 6 The Potter will use us how He has shaped us

Day 1 Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-11, then go back and reflect on v.5,6

Day 2 Read Ephesians 2:1-10, then go back and reflect on v.10

Day 3 Read Philippians 2:12-18, then go back and reflect on v.13

Day 4 Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-15, then go back and reflect on v.5-6

Day 5 Read Hebrews 13:18-25, then go back and reflect on v.21