

**Be Reformed** – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is

**Be Charismatic** – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

**Be Community** – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up

**Be Missional** – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

## 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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. 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

## Study Guide 16 October 2011 – Treasure In Jars of Clay



### Summary

The passage contrasts the immense treasure we have (Christ) in verses 1-6 with the temporal, fragile bodies of clay that we have in verses 7-18.

This contrast between the priceless treasure we hold and the comparatively worthless and fragile bodies we have been given is a wonderful reflection of God's work.

The purpose of the message is to show what is crucial and important – which is the inner man being renewed day by day, and how we are not to be discouraged at the struggles we go through or opposition we face.

When we put too much focus on just the treasure, we lose touch with our suffering (and Christ's). When we put too much focus on the fact that we are jars of clay, we dilute the power of the gospel.

Our response to God is to keep our eyes fixed on Him, who is unseen.

### Key points

We hold the treasure of Jesus Christ and of His salvation within us.

### Questions

- >>How does God choose to reveal Himself as described in this passage?
- >>What does this passage tell me about God?
- >>What does it mean to be a jar of clay?
- >>How are we being "Given over to death for Jesus' sake"?
- >>What kinds of changes of perspective is this scripture urging us towards?

### Final thoughts

Our temporal bodies waste away but if we are filled with the treasure of Jesus, our inner self is being constantly renewed.