



2 Corinthians 4—NIV

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

LIFE Community Leader's Guide **Sunday, November 5**

Big Idea: When life gets tough, Christ-followers can not just overcome, but overflow with God's grace.

Key Verse: ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Opening Question: Have you ever broken a bone? Share the details with someone.

Study/Discussion Questions:

- What words would you use to describe the tone of this part of Paul's letter?
- The definition of juxtaposition: an act or instance of placing close together or side by side, esp. for comparison or contrast. Where in this passage are two competing, even conflicting words or images juxtaposed for emphasis? Why does Paul establish this tension with his words?
- What does verse 10 mean? "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."
- What is the metaphor that Paul establishes for the life of God's people in vs 7-11? What part of the metaphor do you most resonate with?
- Is it encouraging or discouraging for you that Paul compares the believer with a clay pot? Why?
- Do any of these terms characterize your life right now? "hard pressed", "perplexed", "persecuted", "struck down". Explain
- Why do you think we find it easiest to talk about our strengths and hardest to talk about our weaknesses?
- What exactly is the 'treasure' that Paul says is contained within us? What does this mean for you?
- In verse 16, Paul tells us not to 'lose heart'. On what basis can we be confident that our lives and ministry will not be pointless or fruitless?
- What hope is given at the end of the passage for us as we experience hardship (v. 16-18)? Does this encourage you?
- Pastor Bryan spoke of how we can, during times of hardship, both display and dispense the life giving power of God within us. Have you had an experience where this has been the case for you or someone in your life?
- As you conclude, maybe there is someone in your group who is in special need of encouragement. Take a few minutes and pray for them—that the words of Paul might become a real source of strength for them in the days ahead. Pray that they will display and dispense God's power that dwells within them.