

Living from Your Heart

Do not Lose Heart

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

January 21, 2007

“Do not lose heart.” 2x in this passage – verse 1, 16. Do not lose heart. What does it mean? D/n mean that we will never struggle or get discouraged (see 2 Corinthians 1:8-9a). That’s normal – losing heart = physical heart ripped out of your chest → stop beating and living. Same way → life deals blows and wounds, overwhelms → spiritual heart gets ripped out of us, given up – go through motions, look good on the outside, but just a shell of a man, shell of a woman. Caved into despair ... We become walking wounded, living dead.

Honest passage – admits, faces squarely much in life that makes losing heart a good option. Bible honest, authentic book – if you want a rosy picture → don’t read the Bible. So much in life make us lose heart.

- See verse 7 – “jars of clay” – that’s us. Clay pots. Cheap, common, fragile pots. Everyone had them – pick them up at market for a few bucks. Breakable, drop → smash. That’s us. Like to think better than that – we’re not. Life has a way of breaking us. Then four things:
- v 8 – hard pressed on every side
- v8 - Perplexed = at wits end, ruined by creditors ... Why? How? When?
- v 9 – persecuted = hunted like an animal – designed to take us out
- v9 – struck down = kataballow = to throw down (wrestler who picks up and slams down opponent) also military – to strike down (soldier in war)

All four together overwhelming = we have a word for this experience when life overwhelming, life hunts you down and slams you to the ground – trauma, traumatic experiences. Judith Herman – *“Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life ... When a person is overwhelmed by the terror and helplessness, the whole apparatus for concerted, coordinated and purposeful activity is smashed ... Long after the event, many traumatized people feel that a part of themselves has died.”* → = losing heart.

- v12 – “death is at work in us” – slow process of dying, other things die – health, relationships, self-worth
- v16 – “outwardly we are wasting away”

Real, honest. Cause us to lose heart. Blows, wounds of life → rip heart out of us. Shell. We're not there. But 2x – “we do not lose heart” – “We do not lose heart.” Wishful thinking? Denial? Unreality? Another reality. Something else at work in us – greater. Listen describes:

- v7 – clay pots but “treasure.” What? “the glory of God in the face of Christ” Pots meant to hold something. We jars of clay – hold what? God’s glory. Jesus. Why would God do this? “to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”
- Verses 8-9. My story – during my senior year in high school I wrote out these verses on a small scrap of paper, during a deep depression they gave me hope – helped me to not lose heart – I read that little scrap of paper so often it disintegrated.
- Verse 10 – “We always carry around in us the death of Jesus...” Mean? Start here? Resurrection? No, the death of Jesus means two things: (1) died for my sins; (2) with me in my suffering – suffered with us. A Jewish rabbi who asked his pupils – in the Bible who has suffered the most? It was God because he suffers with his people. Jesus suffered with us. Still with us in our suffering. Isolated. Alone. No – Jesus has descended into depths ...
- Verse 10b – life of Jesus → Not lose heart. There’s more:
- Verses 14-15 – not alone, together – I’m clay pot, you a clay pot, perplexed, thrown down – not alone. Notice verse 15 – two things: (1) benefited other people and (2) brought glory to God. We want to run away – deny, forget, shake it off and move on, pretend it didn’t happen, bury it. (Quote by Herman). God says, “NO, don’t waste it. I can use it.” Julie. Eduardo and Juliana. How does God take things seemed designed hunt us down, throw us down, break us down, lose heart → benefit others, bring glory to God? How? See verse 7 – the treasure.
- There’s one more thing: Read verses 16-18. Eternal perspective. “light and momentary afflictions” – how can he say that? See verses 8-9, death works in us. How momentary and light? This weights oppressing, daggers cutting in and ripping heart out. Two things: First, v16 – something happening on the inside, underneath, in the heart. Inner nature = the heart. Continuously renewed. Secret spring underneath his heart – keeps feeding. Where? Verse 7 – the treasure within. Second, his heart is set on something besides trauma and brokenness → see verse 18 → verse 17 – “an eternal weight of glory.” Put on scales ...

How about you? Things in your life → lose heart? Clay pots – life will break you. You won’t get off this planet ... Do you know Jesus? Opened your heart? Still traumatized, life still hurts, but so much to give you hope, rather than lose heart – take heart: treasure inside. Spring inside. Eternal perspective. Ministry.