

Making Jesus Known No Matter What!

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfreda, Georgia. This is the next message in our series in the book of 2 Corinthians, entitled, We Faint Not.

God has been awful good to us. Thank you, Bob. We'll go to 2 Corinthians chapter 4. We're only going to look at one verse tonight. We'll consider one verse, and it really goes along with what Brother Steve just sung.

And I just want you to look at verse 7 with me. It goes along with the Lord's Supper tonight also. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 7, But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

Look at the verse with me. How about reading that out loud with me? Would you do that in just a strong, united voice? Let's read that together. You ready? Father, thank you for allowing earthen vessels, just clay pots, to be used of you to carry your gospel.

Thank you, Lord, and help us to focus on you tonight, as I think Brother Jason has led us so well to do. And Brother Steve has done that in the song, Brother Ed, in the songs that he led us in.

[1 : 22] God, we love you, and we praise you and magnify you. In Jesus' name, amen. I'm sure you know by now that Paul is under attack, and he's going to answer that, and he's going to show them that the focus ought to be not on us, but on him.

And that's what's going on in this verse here. The verse says, We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God.

It's pretty easy to look around, and if you really start thinking about yourself, you start realizing, man, I am a nobody, and I am nothing, and I don't know why God would ever use me.

I don't think I measure up to other people, and so I'd just like to go over that with you tonight, and help you focus on that and get that in your heart. But before I read the verse and kind of analyze that verse with you, just remember this, that the people God used were all weak people.

He's always used weak people. And so tonight, you're in good company. Tonight, when you realize that you probably don't deserve, you probably aren't worthy of singing a song to honor him, playing an instrument to honor him, preaching a message to honor him, sharing the gospel with somebody else, you're like, I'm nobody, and I can't.

[2 : 35] Can I remind you that Abraham, who was greatly used, lied about Sarah being his sister? That's just the one thing we'll pick out. Abraham lied about her. You can remember that Moses, the guy who couldn't speak well, he had evidently maybe a stuttering-type problem, and he killed a man.

And King David failed with Bathsheba. And Elijah, after he sees 400 prophets of Baal get defeated, falls into deep depression after that victory. And Peter denies Jesus.

And now they've attacked Paul. And they're saying, Paul, you know, you're just nobody. They've even told him he's not good-looking. They've told him his speaking ability stinks.

And he writes back and he said, you are so right. You are so right. I am nothing. I am a nobody. I am simply a clay jar. I'm simply a clay pot.

I am not worthy to be used. I'm only a vessel. And the treasure is not me, but it's what's in me. We have this treasure in earth and vessels.

[3 : 36] We have this treasure, the gospel message. We have this treasure, the ministry. We have this treasure, the Holy Spirit in us, and the excellency of the power that it might be of God. The treasure is that ministry.

Look, if you would, at Acts 9 and verse 15. I'm sure they'll keep up, and you can check this out on the screen. But in Acts 9 and verse 15, the idea of being a vessel, the idea of simply being a clay jar that God can use for him, that's what it is in verse 7, is something God chose to use.

In Acts 9 and verse 15, he said about Paul, the Lord said unto Ananias, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me to bear my name among the Gentiles and the kings and the children of Israel, for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name.

So God chose Paul. God's going to use Paul. And he chose you, by the way. He chose you. He said that in John chapter 15 and verse 16. He's talking about the apostles. He's talking about his servants.

And he said this. He said, You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and I have ordained you. And what he chooses for, and what he ordained us for, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it.

[4 : 52] So do you realize tonight that I am looking at a group of chosen people? People chosen by God to carry his message. People chosen by God to have the ministry.

People chose that we have this ministry. We have this ministry. We wouldn't have been able to do it. We would faint if we didn't have mercy. But we have this ministry. And as we've received the mercy of God to be allowed to be in the ministry, God's allowed us to be in the ministry.

Tonight, you're chosen. Tonight, you're the earthen vessel. Tonight, you can easily look at yourself and come up with every reason why you shouldn't. You could easily say, I can't speak well. You could easily say, I'm just a nobody and I'm a nothing.

I'm just an earthen vessel. And while that's true, and you ought to always remember that, because all glory goes to God and all praise goes to God, and we know that he's the one that gets it done, at the same time, I need to know God made me just like he made me.

And you're a very important person. And God has made you to serve him. And you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Look in your Bible at Psalm 139, 13. Psalm 139, 13.

[5 : 56] I would have to admit to you, I've worked with Spanish people. I've worked with Peruvian people. I've worked with American people. And almost all of us have plenty of reasons and excuses why God can't use us.

But he chose to use us. And we read that part about Paul saying, well, I'm just a treasure in an earthen vessel. And it's very easy for us to read that and say, well, Paul could say that, but I don't even measure up to that.

But God did choose you. And God did use you. And by the way, you've been especially made. You were designed by God to be used. Now, I'm not talking about your sin.

I'm not talking about your failure. I'm talking about, though, that you need to accept that God knew exactly what he was doing when he made you. God prepared you. And God's got a job for you. Look at what it says in Psalm 139.

While I'm an earthen vessel, I'm at the same time fearfully and wonderfully made. Look what your Bible says in Psalm 139, 13. Thou has possessed my reins, or you've had control over me and direction over me.

[6 : 54] You have covered me in my mother's womb. Verse 14. I will praise thee. I will praise thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

You know what David says here? He said, Boy, God made me right. God knew exactly. By the way, the height you have, the skin color you have, the teeth you have, the eyes you have, the thing that God, when he put you together, he was doing a right thing.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I love verse 16. Verse 16. He said, Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect. While the baby was still in the womb, while you were still inside your mother's womb, and you weren't made, the Bible said, And in thy book all my members were written.

God handpicked. God chose and wrote down what he was going to use to put you together. How tall you are, what your complexion would be, what your hair color would be, what your IQ would be, what time in history you'd be born.

All of that. He wrote it down in a book, and which in continuance, which later, it's the way he fashions you. He wrote a plan, and then he built you. He wrote a plan, and then he built you.

[8 : 07] I often think he must have messed up on plans when he made me, but the truth is, he had a plan, and he made us, when there was nothing done yet. So, it's easy for you, to think you might not be used of God, and for you don't fit in, and you couldn't be in the ministry, and you couldn't, but if you'd back up and say, the focus isn't supposed to be on you, it's supposed to be on the treasure.

He never intended to make you so good-looking, you'd overshadow Jesus. He never intended to make you so fancy, that everybody would be thrilled with you. He made you where you could make much of Jesus, and Paul said, hey, the treasure's in an earthen vessel, but you shouldn't use that as an excuse, not to be in the ministry.

Now, as a vessel, even as a vessel, you ought to be in your heart. I want to be used of God. I want God to use me, and I want to be ready, and able, for whatever God wants to do with me.

Look at what he said, in 2 Timothy chapter 2, in verse 20. In 2 Timothy chapter 2, in verse 20, he said this, in a great house, there are not only vessels of gold, and silver, but also of wood, and earth, some to honor, and some to dishonor.

That means, there are vessels that you use, for things that are fancy, and there's vessels you use, that are not fancy. There are fine china you put on the plate, and there's potty buckets you use, to go to the bathroom in.

[9 : 22] That's exactly what he's saying. He said, hey, there's some to honor, some to dishonor. And then look what he said, in verse 21. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor.

God's allowing you, no matter, even if you are an earthen vessel, God said, you can have an honorable position. You get to carry the treasure. You get to be part of the ministry. You get to be used of God. You get to have lips of clay, that brag on Jesus.

You get to stand and teach the Bible, even though you're not fit, you get to. He said, he said, if a man purge himself, if you separate yourself from sin, if you separate yourself from God, he will, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, made holy, in other words, meet, or fit, or prepared, for the master's use.

Exactly what the master would want to use, and prepared, unto every good work. And so tonight, the treasures, and earthen vessels, and the earthen vessels are us.

The first thing I need to realize is, yep, you're right, I'm not much, but I can be used. I need to realize that God chose to use vessels like us. God chose to use vessels like us. I don't really understand why he did it.

[10 : 24] I'll be honest, if I were him, I think I could have written it in the clouds. If I were him, I'd have used the angels, if that never messed up. If I were him, the last thing I'd have chosen would have been a bunch of people, it all messed up. Everybody in this room is a bunch of, we're a bunch of losers.

We all sinned. We all deserve to go to hell, but he saved us and decided he would use us. So he chose us. Then he made you just like you are, so he could use you for a job. The truth is, you know, Kristen, like as a wonderful piano player, do you realize somebody put her all together just to be just who she is?

Somebody gave her the fingers she's gotten. Somebody gave her the heart and the mind and the brain. Somebody even gave her all it took, all the talent it took to do that. And somebody, Steven Evans stands up here to sing, or Ed comes up here to sing.

And we can look at them, but you know what? God was making those people. God was making you, and he made you exactly like you are to be used of him in some way. And now it's your part. What are you going to do?

What are you going to do to work at saying, I want to be used of God. I want to be a vessel for honor. I want my life to count. I want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing in the right ministry. Last thing before I finish this verse, you know, Paul didn't compare himself.

[11 : 32] He doesn't compare himself. He tells us not to compare himself. You know, the treasures and hidden is in earth and vessels. And tonight it's very easy for you and me to think, uh, for you and I to think that, that maybe God can't use me, or maybe I can't, I can't do that, or I can't learn that, or I'm not somebody, but God did make you special.

And God did choose you. One of the biggest problems I have is I spend my life comparing myself. And so I start to think, well, I can't sing like her. I can't sing like him. I can't preach like him.

I can't lead like him. I'm not as smart as him. And I begin to easily take my earth and vessel and think it's no value. And so God couldn't use me. Look at what the Bible says. If you would in the Bible verse, second Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12, look at second Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 12.

we dare not make ourselves of the number or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves, but they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.

Do you know who has a dark complexion? Well, we wouldn't know if we weren't comparing, would we? Can you say, man, do you know who's short?

[12 : 41] Well, we wouldn't know if we weren't comparing, would we? I like this one. Do you know who's fat? We wouldn't know if we weren't comparing. Do you realize what Paul said? And here's the whole deal.

I can remember when God was dealing in my heart about preaching. As a little boy, I'd wanted to be used to God. I surrendered to be a missionary when I was 11. I didn't know that God was really calling me to preach. I thought I was going to be a medical missionary.

And I went to pre-med. And while I'm in pre-med, there's two buddies of mine, man, one of those guys, he can sing. He is handsome. Everybody likes him. He's elected president of the, of the freshman class.

He's like the big man on campus. Everybody thinks he's something. And when he told everybody he was called to preach, everybody's like, well, good night. If anybody ought to be called to preach, it ought to be him. Now I had another friend. This guy was a wild man.

I'm telling you, I'd never known in my life, anyone as bold as him. I mean, he would preach anywhere. He would go to the bowling alley, get up on top of a 1947 Plymouth and preach the gospel.

[13 : 36] Everybody came out. He would go to bars. He would go to the movie theater. When people were lined up, trying to get into some dirty movie, he'd stand outside. I mean, this guy was a wild man. When he's called to preach, everybody understood why. And then I'm sitting over going, Oh, I think I'm called too.

And you know, everybody's kind of like, Oh, hold on, buddy. Come on. That's exactly how we like to do it. We like to compare ourselves and think and measure ourselves by other people. But you didn't choose you.

He chose you. And you didn't make you. He made you. And you didn't figure out how he could be. You could be used. He does that. And your only job is to make sure you're ready to be used by the master.

Look, if you would, second Corinthians chapter 10 and verse 13, we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule, which God has distributed us, a measure to, uh, to reach even unto you, but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord, but he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

For not he that committed himself is approved, but whom the Lord commend us. So, you know, what's going on here. Go back. If you would a second Corinthians chapter four, verse seven, Paul says, we have this treasure in earthen vessels.

[14 : 52] And tonight I want you to know that the level of the vessels, not very fancy. It's an earthen vessel. It's a clay vessel, not a silver vessel.

Not a gold vessel, not some fancy thing that they'd set on the table of the King. This is just a clay pot. He said, we have the vet. We have this treasure in clay pots.

He didn't bring any honor to himself. He didn't lift himself up. He didn't brag on himself. He didn't act like he was anything. And he said, but listen to this, the, that, that reason God chose such unworthy people, the reason God chose a guy like Paul, whose speech may not have been that good, whose appearance wasn't that good, who wasn't that popular.

A guy was this Paul said, I'll tell you why he chose to use a clay pot like me. He said, cause he never did want me to get the glory in the first place. He wanted him to get the glory that the power would all be of God.

So tonight, where are you and how are you being used? How many of you aren't involved in discipleship because you just don't quite think you could measure up to be at somebody who could teach somebody else. You really could. You've already been through discipleship.

[15 : 57] You've been there. You've learned the lessons, you know, the material, but the truth is you hadn't stepped up to say, I want to get involved in ministry because, well, you know, you know, you know, you got good reasons. Don't you? You're a clay pot.

You're just a clay pot and a clay pot. I mean, what could a clay pot do except carry the treasure? And you're not involved in the visitation or you're not involved in the Sunday school class or you don't take care of the nursery or you're not involved in anything for God.

Because just to be honest, let's be honest. I mean, there's so many people around here are so much more talented than I am so much more ability than I have. So you've been comparing yourself among yourselves and I'm just not sure God wants to use me.

Yes, he does. He chose you and he ordains you that you should go forth and bear fruit. Look at the verse. Isn't it a beautiful verse? Well, I fit in that verse. I fit in that verse.

I mean, if they were bringing out pots and putting them up here and they, you know, my, uh, my parents had, uh, when, when we were settling up things at the, at my parents' house, they, they had this silver sugar bowl and, and, uh, my brother and sister were both kind of like, they wanted that.

[17 : 01] And then, and then they got to say, well, that thing might be worth something. So let's have it weighed and make sure it kind of gets divided up. Even. So they took it somewhere and all it was, was painted silver. Wasn't real silver.

All the years we were so sure it was something. And I feel like if you was to set a table up, up here and you were to have a goal, a goal pot and a silver pot and, uh, and then a clay pot.

And then you have a really small clay pot. Maybe that's where I belong. I'm not much, but the verse says it real clear. Doesn't it? You are not the issue. You are not the point.

Focus on the treasure. Focus on the treasure. And if you were to think this, man, I get to tell people about Jesus. I get to teach a Sunday school class and I get to tell little children about Jesus.

And I get to sing in a choir and I get to tell people about Jesus. And I get to go out and hand out a gospel track. And I'm not the best at witnessing, but I can hand out a gospel track. It's not you. It's Jesus.

[18 : 01] Would you read the verse with me one more time? And we'll quit. Look at it. Would you say it with me? But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. You're not reading it with me. Let me hear you start over.

But we have this treasure in hidden vessel and earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

What this church was full of really highfalutin, rich, smart, intelligent geniuses, world-class scientists. We could easily brag about how smart we are and brag about all the stuff we are.

But since we're just a bunch of clay pots, all glory goes to Jesus. That's pretty powerful. Are you involved in the ministry? Are you serving? No, you could be a missionary, take the gospel around the world.

You say, I don't know if I'm ready. Well, if you, if you can make it up to clay pot level, you'll be all right. Cause it's not about you. It's about the message. You say, I don't think, I don't think they'd let me be a Sunday school teacher.

[18 : 59] Well, it's not about you. It's about the message. Quit comparing yourself, get in the battle and do a job for Jesus. Father, I love you and I praise you and I magnify you. And I just thank you for all you're doing.

I pray that you'd work in our lives. I pray you'd have your people step up. I pray you'd have your people focus on the, the treasure and not on themselves. And I'll give you all praise and all honor and all glory for all that you do.

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