



V E R Y

BOLD

2 CORINTHIANS 3:12

BOLD BECAUSE OF THE TREASURE

Wiersbe, Warren W. 1996. [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#). Vol. 1. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7–14 (NKJV)

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7–14 (NKJV)

¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹² So then death is working in us, but life in you.

¹³ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

¹⁴ knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.



WE HAVE A VALUABLE TREASURE

From the glory of the new creation, Paul moved to the humility of the clay vessel. The believer is simply a “jar of clay”; it is the treasure *within the vessel* that gives the vessel its value.

“And we have this treasure in earthenware pots.”

The phrase, “and we have”, refers not to Paul only but to everyone who has received and possesses the good news of salvation. This treasure consists of the gospel message that we have received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kistemaker, Simon J., and William Hendriksen. 1953–2001. Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Vol. 19. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.



WE HAVE A VALUABLE TREASURE

The image of the vessel is a recurring one in Scripture, and from it, we can learn many lessons. To begin with, God has made us the way we are so that we can do the work He wants us to do.

ACTS 9:15 (NKJV)

But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

No Christian should ever complain to God because of his lack of gifts or abilities or because of his limitations or handicaps.



PSALM 139:13–16 (NKJV)

¹³ For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.



VESSELS FORMED BY GOD'S HANDS

Psalm 139:13–16 indicates that our very genetic structure was formed by the hands of God. Each of us must accept himself and be himself. The important thing about a vessel is that it is clean, empty, and available for service.

2 TIMOTHY 2:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.



FOCUS ON THE TREASURE

We are vessels so that God might use us. We are earthen vessels so that we might depend on God's power and not our own.

**“WE MUST FOCUS ON THE TREASURE AND
NOT ON THE VESSEL.”**

1 TIMOTHY 6:20–21 (NKJV)

²⁰ O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—

²¹ by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.



WE ARE BOLD BECAUSE WE HAVE ENDURED TRIALS

2 CORINTHIANS 4:8–9 (NKJV)

⁸ **We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;**

⁹ **persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—**

Paul was not afraid of suffering or trial because he knew that God would guard the vessel so long as Paul was guarding the treasure God permits trials, God controls trials, and God uses trials for His own glory.



WE ARE BOLD BECAUSE WE HAVE ENDURED TRIALS

2 CORINTHIANS 7:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

⁶ Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,



WE ARE BOLD BECAUSE WE HAVE ENDURED TRIALS

“GOD IS GLORIFIED THROUGH WEAK VESSELS.”

The missionary who opened inland China to the Gospel, J. Hudson Taylor, used to say, **“All God’s giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on Him being with them.”**



Sometimes, God permits our vessels to be shaken so that some of the treasure will spill out and enrich others.

**SUFFERING REVEALS NOT ONLY THE
WEAKNESS OF MAN BUT ALSO THE GLORY OF GOD.**

Paul presented a series of paradoxes in this paragraph:

- earthen vessels — the power of God;
- the dying of Jesus — the life of Jesus;
- death working — life working.



God will get the glory through righteous suffering.

The natural mind cannot understand this kind of spiritual truth, and therefore, cannot understand why Christians triumph over suffering. We must focus on the treasure and not on the vessel, but we must also focus on the Master and not on the servant. If we suffer, it is for Jesus' sake.

1 PETER 4:16 (NKJV)

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.



WE ARE BOTH BOLD IN DEATH AND LIFE.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ always carrying about in the **body** the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

¹² So then death is working in us, but life in you.



WE ARE BOTH BOLD IN DEATH AND LIFE.

If we die to self, it is so that the life of Christ might be revealed in us. If we go through trials, it is so that Christ might be glorified.

And all of this is for the sake of others. As we serve Christ, death works in us—but life works in those to whom we minister.

Dr. John Henry Jowett said, “Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing.”



The Judaizers did not suffer. Instead of winning lost souls, they stole converts from Paul's churches.

Instead of sacrificing for the people, they made the people sacrifice for them, and Paul spoke severely to the church.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!

²⁰ For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

²¹ To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.



This section is one of three sections in 2 Corinthians devoted to a listing of Paul's sufferings. The other two are in 2 Corinthians 6:1–10 and 11:16–12:10.

- The false teachers did not have a treasure to share.
- All they had were some museum pieces from the Old Covenant – faded antiques that could never enrich a person's life.
- Warren Wiersbe stated, “It has been my experience that many churches are ignorant of the price a Pastor pays to be faithful to the Lord in serving His people.”



THE TEST OF A TRUE MINISTRY IS NOT STARS, BUT SCARS.

GALATIANS 6:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

**¹⁸ Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
Amen.**

How can we keep from giving up? By remembering that we are privileged to have the treasure of the Gospel in our vessels of clay!



WE HAVE A CONFIDENT FAITH

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13–18 (NKJV)

¹³ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak,

¹⁴ knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

¹⁵ For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.



WE HAVE A CONFIDENT FAITH

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13–18 (NKJV) (cont.)

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.



The phrase spirit of faith means “attitude or outlook of faith.” (vs. 13)

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13 (NKJV)

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak,

Paul was not referring to a special gift of faith (1 Cor. 12:9) but rather to that attitude of faith that ought to belong to every believer.

He saw himself identified with the believer who wrote Psalm 116:10,
“I believed, and therefore have I spoken.”



True witness for God is based on faith in God, and this faith comes from God's Word.

ROMANS 10:17 (NKJV)

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Of what was Paul so confident?

- **That he had nothing to fear from life or death!** He had just listed some of the trials that were a part of his life and ministry, and now he was affirming that his faith gave him victory over all of them.
- **He was assured of God's power because of his faith in the gospel.**



He was sure of ultimate victory (vs. 14).

2 CORINTHIANS 4:14 (NKJV)

knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

If Jesus Christ has conquered death, the last enemy, then why fear anything else?

Men do everything they can to penetrate the meaning of death and prepare for it, yet the world has no answer to death.

Until a person is prepared to die, he is not really prepared to live.

Rejoice In Christ's Victory!

- The joyful message of the early church was the victory of Christ over death, and we need to return to that victorious emphasis.
- Paul saw a future reunion of God's people when he wrote, "and shall present us with you."
- Death is the great divider, but in Jesus Christ, there is assurance that His people shall be reunited in His presence (1 Thes. 4:13–18).

He was sure God would be glorified (vs. 15).

2 CORINTHIANS 4:15 (NKJV)

For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

This vs. parallels Romans 8:28 and assures us that our sufferings are not wasted:

ROMANS 8:28 (NKJV)

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

God uses them to minister to others and also to bring glory to His name.

How is God glorified in our trials? By giving us the “abundant grace,” we need to maintain joy and strength when the going gets difficult. Whatever begins with grace, leads to glory.

PSALM 84:11–12 (NKJV)

¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly.

¹² O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

1 PETER 5:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

¹⁰ But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

He was sure his trials were working for him,
not against him (vss. 16–17).

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-17 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

“We faint not” (2 Cor. 4:1) was Paul’s confident testimony. What does it matter if the “outward person” is perishing, so long as the “inward person” is experiencing daily spiritual renewal?

OUR BODIES ARE IMPORTANT

Paul was not suggesting that the body is not important or that we should ignore its warnings and needs.

Since our bodies are the temples of God, we must care for them, but we cannot control the natural deterioration of human nature. When we consider all the physical trials that Paul endured, it is no wonder he wrote as he did.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

As Christians, we must live a day at a time. No person, no matter how wealthy or gifted, can live two days at a time. God provides for us “day by day” as we pray to Him.

LUKE 11:3 (NKJV)

Give us day by day our daily bread.

He gives us the strength that we need according to our daily requirements.

GET THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

When you live by faith in Christ, you get the right perspective on suffering.

Note the contrasts Paul presented in 2 Corinthians 4:17:

- light affliction—weight of glory;
- momentary—eternal;
- working against us—working for us.

Paul was writing with eternity's values in view. He was weighing the present trials against the future glory, and he discovered that his trials were actually working *for him*.

GET THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE

ROMANS 8:18 (NKJV)

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He was sure the invisible world was real (vs. 18).

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18 (NKJV)

While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Dr. A.W. Tozer used to remind us that the invisible world described in the Bible was the only “real world.”

If we would only see the visible world the way God wants us to see it, we would never be attracted by what it offers.

1 JOHN 2:15 – 17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

SEE THE INVISIBLE!

The great men and women of faith, mentioned in Hebrews 11, achieved what they did because they “saw the invisible” (Heb. 11:10, 13–14, 27).

Christians are content to govern their lives by eternal values, not *temporal* values.

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