

CARRYING GLORY IN JARS OF CLAY

INTRODUCTION

What's the most valuable possession you have?

Where do you store that possession? How do you protect it?

God, as he so often does, reverses our normal human tendencies

2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-4:9, 16-18

Contrasting Glories

The law (Ten Commandments), written on stone, had a form of glory
it came direct from God

Moses' face shone brilliantly after being in God's presence

Yet it was a ministry of condemnation and death

it was a ministry of diminishing returns

it was a glory constantly fading

The Gospel (story of Jesus Christ), written on hearts, has its own glory
it also comes direct from God

the glory of Jesus surpasses all others

This is a ministry of freedom and life

the freedom comes from being declared righteous by faith

this received glory will never fade away

this glory grows as we are transformed into the image of Christ

How Do We Handle This Glory?

Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart
we receive it as a gift to be handled well and with care

we never lose heart

We have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception

We commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God

We recognize that some are blinded and will never see the truth

We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord . . .

. . . and ourselves as servants for Jesus' sake

We are carriers of the Light

But we have this treasure in jars of clay

We accept the fact that life can be incredibly difficult

We do not lose heart

we trust that God is at work within us

we trust that God is at work ahead of us

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen

How Do We Live This Out?

We accept what we are—jars of clay

We accept others for what they are--jars of clay

We humbly accept the treasure God has given us within

We live according to the treasure, not according to the clay

We celebrate that as the jars crumble, the treasure does not

We celebrate that as the jars disintegrate, the treasure continues

CONCLUSION

What is the most valuable possession you have?

How well are you storing and protecting that treasure?