

## 2 Corinthians

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Preacher: Collier, Gilbert (1900-1984)

- [ 0 : 00 ]     The Fourth Chapter of the Second Thestal to the Correctness is the Seventh Thest.
- But we have this treasure in earth and vestments that the excellency of the power may be absorbed and not yet.
- Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you. Brought out by our glorious God. The visible act of creation in the formation of the heavens and the earth, God who commands the light to shine out.
- And then the invisible work of that mighty work, that mightier work, which he performs in the hearts of all his people, the works of his grace.
- [ 2 : 04 ]     Such work is even greater than the wonderful works of creation. Now tonight we come to the third great miracle, the third great wonder.
- The visibility bringing to light of that which God hath prompted and revealed in the heart of this dream.
- The glorious performance of God.
- God. And I would say at the outset tonight, you may depend upon this. This is something that so many fail to understand, totally ignore.
- Totally ignore. And that is this. If grace has ever been planted in the heart of a sinner, it will manifest itself in some way to the glory and the power of God.
- [ 3 : 27 ]     Now that is what our subject is here tonight. The making visible of an invisible work within the heart.
- Now so many people, they say, well I'm a Christian. I'm a follower of Christianity.
- But I do not consider that it is of great importance for me to work in solemn ways or worship, or to perform anything great in God's fear and for his honor.
- But you see, the very fact denies the reality that there has ever been implanted in that soul the life of God and the work of his arrest.
- Because life is irrepressible. You may have seen, even in natural life, the irrepressibility of things that are natural.
- [ 5 : 03 ]     I saw not very long ago a pavement placed down with thick concrete. And I saw in the middle of that thick concrete a slender plant that burst its way through to come to the light.
- And I thought as I looked at that illustration of the mighty power of life, even though it was natural life, there was indeed in that instant demonstration of the mighty power of life.
- and how much more so in regards to the life of God. I say again, it is irrepressible.
- And that is why our text brings it so wonderfully and beautifully to the forefront. that we have this treasure in earthen vessel.
- That the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. I want to therefore, this evening, to look for a few moments at the earthen vessel.

[ 6 : 36 ] Then I want to look for a few moments Then I want to look for the treasure. And then a third day at the great purpose that God always has in you.

That his intended purpose is in respect to all this revelation of Christ and grace. when he shines in the heart through the beauties and glories of the face of Jesus Christ.

The great purpose of God is that that light should shine and shine with all its significance through the glory and honor of God.

You may say, and I often say to myself what poor examples we are of this great and precious truth.

How do men see us? What do they see in us? Do we demonstrate anything before the eyes of our fellow men of the grace of God and the love that we hope we have for Christ and for his truth?

[ 8 : 25 ] Now, we have then the earthen vessels. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. What a miracle and an amazing wonder this is that the treasures of divine grace should be entrusted to earthen vessels.

and yet this is God's purpose. This is God's great plan of revealing his greatness and of bringing his people into such sweet and wonderful cooperation with himself by his own grace bringing them to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous love.

And do you not, some of you, say this is just what I hope I shall be enabled to do and to live for the glory of my God who has loved me and given himself for me.

There can be no higher objective no greater purpose for a poor soul to aim at that to live for the glory and honor of God.

What kind of vessels then are these that our text speaks about? Earthen vessels. That signifies they are of a common kind.

[ 10 : 25 ] And in the days of the apostles, no doubt, he was familiar with the practice of many around him and in various parts of the world where men kept their treasures in earthen vessels and in order to keep them safe they chose very often the least likely to attract attention.

I mean to say they would choose the most unbecoming unadorned vessel.

They certainly would not have put their treasures in anything of a golden kind or of a silver nature or something that would immediately draw attention of any would-be possessor but they often found that their treasures which they treasured up so much and hoarded were safer if the vessel itself was least adorned and very common and unbecoming in every respect without any kind of attraction to those who would desire possession earthen vessels and how remarkably this does describe the condition and the situation of the believer in the

Lord Jesus Christ. They are earthen vessels and you know this is the Holy Spirit's description of it. This is not the apostle he wrote the word but the Holy Spirit gave the word to write and it is the Spirit's divine description of the vessels that contain the divine treasure of the Lord.

They are earthen vessels and I would suggest this there's another description of them that we might add to this.

[ 13 : 01 ] They are empty vessels. Do you feel? Have you felt? Are you feeling tonight maybe empty?

Have you come into this chapel this evening feeling a want of something? Something that you haven't received and yet you long to receive?

and perhaps you tell the Lord in secret that you are empty and you want him to fill you with the finest of his wheat and to fill you with his grace and gladness peace and with his peace?

Yes, they are empty vessels. We can say a great deal more about them. They are often broken vessels and it seems almost as if the treasure is in kind of leak out and be lost.

but remember the words of God here. It's a promise. It's a declaration and this is what it is.

[ 14 : 30 ] We have this treasure in earth and vessels. Whatever the condition of the vessel, the treasure is in that vessel and will remain in that vessel.

God will see that it's not the safety or the condition of the vessel that retains the great wonders of his grace.

It's the power, the excellency of that power that assures to every believer what God gives will be continued and retained unto the end.

Yes, earth and vessels, man purge himself and then look at how Paul wrote to Timothy about it. He said, if a man shall purge himself from these, that is to say, from the outward influences and from the many things that may come into a person's way of life, to man purge himself from these things, he shall be a vessel unto honor.

Vessel unto honor. Sanctify, set aside, chosen by God.

[ 16 : 07 ] God's choice of his vessels is amazing when you come to think of it. God's love. He took a poor man out of the wilds of air of the Chaldees, and he called him to his footstool and said, go forth in a way that thou knowest not.

He was a vessel, sanctified by God. He takes other vessels and you read of them in the word of God, like this writer of this epistle who on the way to Damascus, breathing out cruelty and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.

That was the kind of vessel he was. And God took him, Christ revealed himself to him, and what a vessel he became, what treasure was manifested in him.

And so he says, sanctify and make meat for the master's youth. My dear friend, the methods God may use to make you meat for his use may be very severe and very trying, very hard to bear, but it will be a wonderful honor, extreme honor to be made use of you, the master's servant.

meat, the Lord, and you can account, and I believe, explain a great deal of your adversities and trials and difficulties that have come your way in life to this very purpose of God, the process of making you meat, to be a vessel meat, for the master's youth.

[ 18 : 26 ] What a wonderful word that is to be made, meat for the master's youth. you may say, whatever use can he make of me, poor, worthless, fatal, sinner that I am, weak, and prone to wonder, with a heart that is so easily diverted from the way of truth, how can the master ever make use of me?

He will, if you are one of these vessels, if you are one of these burden vessels, the Lord will make you something.

It's not the way that you will choose, it's the way that he will choose. It may be a very different way from what you would choose. we all have the thought in our hearts that we are going to be something very great, important, do a great work, but it may be a very different thing the Lord may send like he did Philip.

He said to Philip when he was in Samaria and he was full of work there, he was doing a work, he was I expect wondering whether he was not going to make a great mob in Samaria and whether he would not find some great occupation.

The Lord says go down to Gaza. Never told him why or to what purpose. Go down to Gaza, 65 odd miles to a desert.

[ 20 : 33 ] Is this the way of making use of a vessel? And Philip obeyed the Lord and went on this strange, mysterious journey.

And when he comes to the desert he sees a chariot, the only thing possibly in view. He joins himself to the chariot of the bidding of the Holy Spirit.

He hears a man, a black man, a man of Ethiopia, reading the word of God. He comes up into the chariot, he preaches Christ.

And he's made a vessel to that man of use in the Lord's service. and they were baptized. You see, it's not how we figure out we should be made use of it.

It's how the Lord has decided and determined he will make use of us. So then it's an earthen vessel.

[ 21 : 47 ] we have this treasure in earthen vessels. And you know, there's another thing.

Some of these vessels, like those that we hear of in the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, there's no doubt some vessels were very slim and slender in their structure, that if you put a light within these vessels, in some dim way at least, the light would be visible from the outside.

eyes. So I would suggest this is another aspect of these vessels, that they are very thin, so much so that they almost are transparent.

Oh, I want to know, I want to see, I'd love to find, and I'd love to have some communication with a transparent soul, whom you can see by their very face, and by their very walk, and by their conversation, they are those in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, you can live with people. I've heard of a man who was in the same office for thirty years with another. He went to similar places of worship, worship, and yet they were thirty years there before they found out that they were in the same line of belief and worship.

[ 23 : 45 ] Well, all I can say is there's no transparency about either of them. my dear friends, let us pray that we may be made clear and be clear in every respect and be transparent in respect of this, that the light of God's grace may shine through us.

Amen. answer. Well, now, let us turn to the treasure. We have this treasure in earth and vessels.

What is the treasure? We were speaking this morning about the in shining, the shining inwardly of the light of God's grace.

now we are coming to what is the unfolding of that treasure that is in earth and vessels.

You know, if you go to the 21st chapter of the Proverbs, you'll find a verse there that seems, on the face of it, to be a contravention of the tenth commandment.

[ 25 : 13 ] That commandment, which is about covetousness, says, thou shalt not cover thy neighbor's wife, thy neighbor's good, and so on.

But in the 21st Proverbs, it says, there is treasure to be desired in the dwelling of the wise. almost as if it is an invitation to go out and find that treasure in the dwelling of the wise, totally against God's holy law.

I say that's on the surface of things, but let us look a little deeper down into the word of God, and let us ask the question, where is that dwelling of the wise?

And what is the treasure to be designed? And you come to this same truth that we have here in this text this evening.

wise, the dwelling of the wise is akin to this earthen vessel that God has changed and brought upon and will use to destroy.

[ 26 : 41 ] That's the dwelling place, and the treasure is Christ's. Oh, and it is to be desired. I say this this evening, do you desire this treasure?

Can you really say you have a desire to know him, to be found in him, to possess him?

That's a wonderful thing, you know. One of the first rising beams of God's work of grace will be found in desire.

We shall never be saved by a desire, but we shall never have salvation without a desire. And if you can say this, that one thing I do desire with all my heart, and that is to know Christ to possess him, there is something in you, my friend, that will not die, will not be submerged by time or change or anything.

It's a desire the Lord plants, and it's because there's treasure in the dwelling of the lives.

[ 28 : 15 ] But what is this treasure that comes and manifests itself and makes itself visible? First of all, I would say this, faith.

What a mighty instrument and power faith is. It works. You read that 11th chapter of Hebrews, and you see how it works.

those great heroes, what it did for them, how they were able to overcome and to suffer all kinds of afflictions.

We saw the thunder, it says, but these all died in faith. They had something that the world never knew and could not know. They had faith.

Oh, what a treasure faith is. We cannot manufacture it or increase it, but God can give it and God can increase it.

[ 29 : 22 ] And it's one of the great treasures that is possessed by all who know God and love him. Faith, precious here, wonderful power, mighty instruments, can remove mountains, can climb to the very gates of heaven, can lay hold of Christ and follow him and obey his voice and lean upon his holy arm and come out of all the wilderness.

So do it. Faith, precious faith. We have this treasure in earth and vessels. It does not need a great intellect for faith to be present and at work.

In some of the simplest characters, there have been some wonderful examples of faith. people who have not been able to match in any way with their fellow man with their intelligence and their knowledge, but they've had a sublime faith that has overwhelmed and overcomes the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Oh, give me faith. that will enlarge your heart and indeed it will enlarge your coast. then to just think of another strength, oh, that is a mighty possession, treasure, is strength, strength of the Lord, strength to do his will, to obey his voice, strength to fight and to conquer, strength to endure all kinds of hardness and adversity, strength to stand when everything gives way around us.

this is the kind of treasure that a Christian finds and receives and oh how valuable and invaluable it is indeed to have a little strength.

[ 31 : 58 ] One says, my soul hath known the day when with a single word God helping me to say my strength is in the Lord, my soul has wrought a thousand foes, has overcome a thousand foes.

Oh yes, friends, strength is a wonderful treasure. And then health, the health of God. David says, I am health.

You will want a great deal of health. You dear young people here. I well look back and remember my days of my youth when I was like this and I feel a great deal of sympathy for young people.

I have them in my own cause at Lins Lane. I have my younger members of my family and one of my grandsons a little while ago, quite young, whilst I was preaching, he turned round to his father who was present in the sermon and he said, Father, when's grandpa going to say amen?

Well, you know, I felt for that dear land and I remember the days when I would say almost or feel and think the same thing.

[ 33 : 33 ] When is the service coming to an end? When can we get out of that chapel and enter into the buzz of exciting talk and so on? You see, it's all because as yet, my dear ones, you haven't come to know the treasure of the Lord, but I hope you will.

I hope that precious grace of God will indeed be found in your heart as the greatest treasure you can possess.

And then I come to this point, love, for immeasurable wealth there is in love, love of God, love for God, love for his truth, love that will overcome all kinds of oppositions and obstacles, love that will endure all kinds of hard dealings and travels, love that is so great, greater than everything, as Paul says in the Deuteronomy, endures all things, suffers all things, loveth the truth, hateth iniquity, he says faith and hope and love and the greatest love.

Oh, Jesus, love, what a treasure that is, to have a little love for the Lord Jesus and for his people. You know, there are people who have a great deal of religion, but there's one thing ever absent in their religion, and that is love.

You can't trace the semblance. they have faithfulness, they are orthodox, they insist upon their orthodoxy, but they have not a semblance of love for souls, or even manifested love for Christ.

[ 35 : 49 ] Well, that's a terrible blood, and an awful deficiency, never to know anything of love. Love all obstructions, all difficulties, obliterate when it is at work.

Oh, if only I could love the Lord more. Do you not feel that? Let me be lost in that love, let me be taken up with it, let me feel the drawing power of it in my own heart, drawing me away from every vain and every sinful pleasure, and attracting me to the dear person of the dear Redeemer, entirely and utterly in the country.

But I must hasten to come to the great purpose, people, that the power of the power excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

This is the great purpose, just one or two words briefly about this. It's God's great purpose words, that his people should shine the light that he puts within, that he illuminates in their hearts.

You know what we used to sing when we were young, about being in a corner with a little light.

[ 37 : 37 ] There was a great deal of teaching, though the language was very simple. There was a great deal of teaching, and there was a real message in it. And for the people of God to learn that if God has planted grace, in their hearts, he has planted that grace to shine, to be a light, to be an encouragement, to be a help to those around us.

Have you ever noticed what the Lord Jesus said about John the Baptist? One of the greatest testimonies ever made about a creature that was made about John the Baptist, Christ's He was a burning and a shining light.

That was Christ's own testimony about John the Baptist. He was a burning and a shining light.

And all that John lived for was for the glory of God. He said, He must increase, I must decrease. He was before me.

All that He spake and all that He did was to that the power, the excellency of the power, might be of God and not of Him.

[ 39 : 09 ] My friends, I should repeat what I said at the beginning of the SMA. What a mercy it is, what a wonder it is, if we shine.

Does the light of God's grace become visible? is that invisible work that He plants in your heart, if it is there, is it a visible work?

Before the eyes of your fellow men, before the eyes of your dear believing brethren, there is solemn in the Tism.

May we pray, may we seek with all earnestness that our lives may shine to the excellency of the power of God.

Not that we might get credit for, receive any approbation, but that He who first loved us, gave Himself for us, might have all the glory, and all that He gives in us might reflect to that glory, in time and in eternity.

[ 40 : 37 ] Amen. our closing hymn's evening is number 255.

255. Happy the men that fear the Lord, they from the paths of sin depart, rejoice, and tremble at His word, and hide it deep within their hearts.

They in His mercy, hope, move grace, prepare His judgment, not contempt, in feeding Him their pleasures place, and His delight is placed in them.

Chairman number 255. take O'er church.

Oh, yes, finish with the Holy sons of sin irl ■■■■ decision When his heart secends back to bread, William is josh elles soft dot tell.

[ 43 : 14 ] In His name, the precious place, And His delight, His place in them.

Yes, dear, a rich and endless soul, Is not a soul for a voice of pride, A heart that falls, is still His home, And ever it was his soul.

Blessed Awaites Where be warm, the sick litters, and weary death shall be his own.

Praise the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the honor of the fellowship and communion of the Spirit.

Ride with us, now and forever. Ride with us, now and forever.

[ 46 : 30 ] Ride with us, now and forever.

Thank you.