

(Note: The printed sermon for today is in outline form. It is based on the sermon I preached at the Arise & Shine retreat in MN last Sunday. To watch or listen to the sermon please visit our website: <http://sslwest.org/worship.html> )

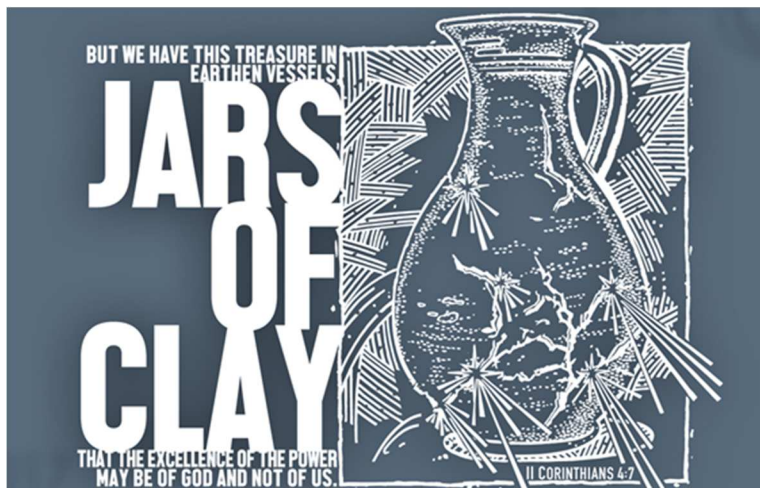
**Text: 2 Corinthians 4:10-12 ESV**

**7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;**

**10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.**

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

**12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.**



- **“Carrying”** – What do you carry around? Important things. Useful things.
- In my pocket: phone, keys, wallet, pen, (and on Sundays, extra throat lozenges to keep me from getting hoarse!). They all have important uses in my everyday life. (My dad still has senior pictures of us in his wallet...except for my youngest brother—it’s like a 5<sup>th</sup> grade school photo. Not sure what that’s about?! ☺ )
  - o Anyone want to share anything “unusual” that they carry in their pocket or purse?
- Sometimes what we “carry” around with us are NOT good things: heavy burdens, stress, sin, guilt, shame, etc.
- **What does Paul say we should be “carrying”?**
  - o **The “death of Christ”** – Sharing in the sufferings of Christ
  - o As followers of Christ we should expect to suffer for Him when we live for Him.
    - John 15:20 - **“No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also.”**
  - o We also share in what His sufferings and death earned for us
    - Rom. 8:17 - **and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.**
  - o **The “life of Christ”** –
    - Rom. 8:18 – **18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.**

- In Christ we share in His resurrection; His life!
  - Philippians 3:10 - **“that I may know Him [Christ] and the power of the resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”**
- **“Everything that happened to Jesus will happen to us”** (Bruce Naumann)
  - **He lived. He suffered. He died. He rose again. He ascended to heaven.**
- **This is the “treasure” within us cracked, crumbling “jars of clay” (v. 7).**
  - **<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (2 Cor. 4:7)**
  - **“carrying”** in our words, our actions, our bodies, our lives: The Gospel! (The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus)
  - **“Wearing” our cross, or “bearing (carrying)” our cross?**
    - Example of not having my cross on for church a few Sunday’s ago. I felt “naked” without it. As Christians we should feel “naked” without our cross. Not just wear it, but bear it!
- **What are we going to “Carry” home with us from this sermon? From this worship service?**
  - **“Carry” Jesus!**
  - No need to try and “manufacture” more “suffering” or “persecution”
  - If we “carry” Jesus with us we will share in His suffering, and His glory.
  - If we “carry” Jesus with us we will share Him!
    - **“so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.” (2 Cor. 4:11)**
    - Paul’s purpose in suffering for the Gospel’s sake: So that when people look at him they pay little attention to him (a cracked, crumbling pot), and focus instead on Christ’s work in his life (the treasure)
  - If we “carry” Jesus with us we will not be “carrying” our sins, our burdens, our guilt, and our shame—or even the fear of death itself!
- **Closing Encouragement**
  - We are leaving this amazing place (God’s house) with these amazing people (our brothers and sisters in Christ) and all this amazing encouragement (God’s Word).
  - We may be heading home to some “heavy” stuff (troubles and sufferings)
  - But we can be encouraged: We are leaving with Jesus! He goes with us **“always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).**
  - 2 Cor. 4:16-18 ESV - **<sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient [temporary], but the things that are unseen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18 ESV) Amen.**