



Growth Group Questions
November 2, 2025
“Beauty in the Brokenness”

CONTEXT

Paul says that believers are fragile “jars of clay” that hold something priceless – the good news of Jesus. This image highlights the contrast between human weakness and divine power. There is nothing exquisite or beautiful about the jar, but what it contains is beyond what anyone can imagine. Paul reminds his listeners that God uses fragile, ordinary people to show forth His power and glory.

The Corinthians misunderstood Paul’s suffering. They did not see it as a sign of God’s power, but of Paul’s own weakness. Yet Paul insisted that persecution and being hard pressed and struck down was a result of him continuing to preach the gospel. He continued to maintain that God would sustain him in every trial. The “cracks” in his life were the way in which the gospel shone forth to the world.

Paul’s experience differs sharply from Stoic and Cynic philosophers, who saw hardship as a test of personal strength. Perseverance for Paul did not come from self-discipline or intellectual conviction, but from divine grace. His own suffering pushed him to rely on God more and more.

Paul lived the paradox of the gospel, dying to himself in order that others might know about the hope of Jesus. His suffering, though not as extreme as Jesus’ suffering, mirrors the idea that Christ’s weakness ultimately led to glory and resurrection. Every affliction becomes an opportunity for grace to overflow and bring life to others. The gospel moves and advances not by offering comfort or fame, but by faithfully enduring, especially when things are difficult.

Paul continues to look to Jesus by telling the Corinthians not to lose hope and to fix their eyes on Jesus. Though outwardly Paul is wasting away, God is doing something new in his life. This world brings trouble, but a day of restoration is coming when God will restore all things. There is a “weight of glory” (see CS Lewis’ book) that awaits all followers of Jesus. Paul fixes his eyes

on that which is unseen and finds the strength to endure, knowing that resurrection and eternal life await all who belong to Christ.

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."^[a] Since we have that same spirit of^[b] faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we^[b] boast in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we^[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Deuteronomy 33:26-27a

²⁶ "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides across the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty. ²⁷ The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.

2 Corinthians 5:1

¹ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Frederick Buechner

"The sad things that happened long ago will always remain part of who we are...(yet) even the saddest things can become, once we have made peace with them, a source of wisdom and strength for the journey that still lies ahead. It is through memory that we are able to reclaim much of our lives that we have long since written off by finding that in everything that has

happened to us over the years God was offering us possibilities of new life and healing which, though we may have missed them at the time, we can still choose and be brought to life by and healed by all these years later."

QUESTIONS

1. Carefully reread 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. What truths does this passage reveal to you?
2. Throughout this week's sermon, Pastor Paul said we are not to lose heart, but to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. What does it mean to "fix your eyes" on Jesus?
3. What Bible verses have helped you in the past to not lose heart when you find yourself in uncertain or difficult circumstances?
4. Besides reading specific Bible verses, what other things have you found helpful in keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus during difficult times?
5. How does God demonstrate His power through our suffering?
6. In 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, the Apostle Paul tells us we should develop an eternal perspective rather than focusing on the temporary. What does it look like to have an eternal perspective and how can we cultivate this type of perspective?
7. How does having an eternal perspective help us to see beauty in the brokenness of life?
8. What is the hope to which the Apostle Paul refers in Romans 5:1-5?
9. Restate in your own words the meaning of Deuteronomy 33:27a. How can this verse help you during difficult or uncertain times?

PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS

1. Has there been a time in your own faith journey where you have seen God's beauty emerge from something that was broken? How has that impacted who you are today?
2. How can you fix your eyes on Jesus and not lose heart when things appear dark. . . or . . . is there someone in your life who is walking through a dark or uncertain time and could benefit from your coming alongside them?