

GOOD NEWS FOR EXHAUSTED PARENTS

2 Corinthians 4:7-12.

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. May 10, 2026.

FRAIL AND FALTERING

Every Christian is frail and faltering.

- We are unlikely servants of God.
- How does he expect us to make disciples of all nations?
- The answer is in 2 Corinthians 4:

7 Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and not from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; 9 we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. 10 We always carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus's sake, so that Jesus's life may also be displayed in our mortal flesh. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life in you.

THE MESSAGE AND THE MESSENGER

Corinth was steeped in a culture of power and status.

- New Christians came into the church expecting church leaders to be rich, successful, and eloquent.
- But the apostle Paul did not fit the cultural stereotype, so the congregation questioned his apostolic credentials.

Paul defended himself. His main point was: don't confuse the messenger with the message.

The message is glorious.

- The gospel is a treasure (verse 7) contained in clay jars.
- The gospel reveals the glory of Christ that brings light, that is, spiritual understanding and life.

2 Corinthians 4:4 (CSB) the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

2 Corinthians 4:6 (CSB) ... the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

- When we hear the gospel and receive it with faith, we “see” the glory of Christ.

But the messenger is not glorious.

- The messenger is like a common clay jar found in every Corinthian home. It was cheap, nothing to look at, fragile, and disposable.
- Paul's defense was that the Corinthians were looking in the wrong place:
 - They were looking at his worn-out clothes, diminutive stature, stutter, arrests, and weakness.
 - They should have been listening to his message about the glory of Christ and observing the gospel's saving power.
- God uses cracked pots like us to make it obvious that the power to save and sanctify comes from him, not us. It's all God:

*2 Corinthians 4:7 (CSB) 7 Now we have this treasure in clay jars, **so that this extraordinary power (to save) may be from God and not from us.***

PARENTING IS EXHAUSTING

Now, since it is Mother's Day, let's take that distinction between the message and the messenger and apply it to parenting

- Parenting is exhausting, so parents fit exactly into Paul's argument about the messenger and the message, the treasure and the clay jars.

What is job one for Christian parents?

- It's to teach and model the Christian faith to their children. We are called to *"bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"* (Ephesians 6:4, CSB).
- Good news: it's the message, not the messenger.

POSITIVE PRINCIPLES FOR CHRISTIAN PARENTS

Principle #1: We may be down, but we're not out.

- In verses 8-9, Paul gets real about life and ministry: He was afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down.
- Nothing crushed, depressed, or destroyed him. God didn't abandon him
- Christ-followers get knocked down, but the message never loses its power.

Principle #2: We may feel dead, but Jesus is alive.

- Verses 10-12 use images of death to describe us. We look like the beaten and crucified Jesus.
- But the resurrection life of Jesus is at work in us, empowering us to share Christ and the gospel. Remember: we can't, but he can.

DON'T WASTE TIME ON "IF ONLY"

Instead, ask the Lord to help you do better today and tomorrow.

- *"God, I want my kids (or friend) to see your glory on display in Jesus. I'm only a cracked pot (nothing impressive), but you have extraordinary power, and your message is light and life. Lead me to take the next step."*

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review Peter's May 10th teaching and study guide.
- What were the main insights of Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What were the main applications or takeaways for your life?

Discuss

1. What feels most draining right now in your life—physical exhaustion, emotional weight, or spiritual pressure? In what ways do you feel like a cracked pot? How does this impact your attitude?
2. How might confusing the “messenger” (clay jar) with the “message” (which reveals the glory of Christ) show up in parenting, or in how we evaluate ourselves spiritually?
3. Can you think of a time when God worked despite your weakness or exhaustion to reveal the glory of Christ in the gospel to someone else?
4. How would you explain the principle that states, share Jesus, and leave the results up to God, to a discouraged parent? How does 2 Corinthians 4 offer encouragement to them?

Prayer Focus

- Lord, please add daily to the Cornerstone those who are being saved.
- Lord, work through our weakness to show the glory of Christ to our family and friends.