

Treasure in Jars of Clay – Examine

2 Corinthians 13:5-7

Intro

BO: Who is the person that you want to be most like other than Jesus? Who is the “best” Christian you know? Why?

Engage: Have you ever met someone that seems to have such a real relationship with God that it makes you feel like you must not really be a Christian? Or maybe, have you met someone that clearly has a relationship God and yet they’ve shared that they doubt their faith. Sam Pflederer, one of our church missionaries, is just one of those guys. He was in the grade above me. He would memorize whole books of the Bible for Bible Quizzing. He not only knew what was in his Bible better than me he also was just one of the nicest guys you’d meet. He’d take interest and have fun with anyone. He wouldn’t say anything negative about anyone. As an adult he has been open about his own doubts with faith.

On the reverse side, have you ever met anyone that claimed to be a Christian and yet they seemed to be living a two faced life. Or maybe that person that claims to be a Christian and never does anything with it. I know I’ve shared this before but one of my friends who isn’t a believer once told me that one of the things that held him back was that many of my friends said they were a Christian but their lives didn’t show it.

THT: God calls you to examine our faith. This is so we start viewing ourselves though the lens of what the Bible says and not saying, “I prayed a prayer with my dad when I was 7”. If your only faith experience was praying with your dad at 7 then I believe you’re missing faith.

Prvw: I’m going to walk us through one clear challenge and then have two applications

Review

Setup: As we’re coming to a close (this is the last week) of the book of 2 Corinthians I want to call us to REMEMBER. Remember what we’ve been walking through. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that they may start to see their faith differently. He was calling them so that they would be ready by the time he came to them in person.

Read: ***7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.***

Ex: This whole semester we’ve been seeing what it looks like to have “this treasure in jars of clay”. Treasure – which is the message of Jesus, JARS – Meaning a purposeful yet fragile body, CLAY – Meaning something molded by God.

Jars – Meaning a purposeful yet fragile body

1. When Christians suffer and are comforted by God they are to comfort in order to display Jesus. (1:3-11)
2. When others sin against us then Christians ought to forgive like Christ forgives. (1:12-2:11)

Treasure – which is the message of Jesus

3. A Christian should stink of Jesus. (2:12-17)
4. An authentic faith is an increasingly bright faith that comes from seeing Jesus. (3:1-18)
5. If you love God’s mercy then you’ll love God’s ministries. (4:1-6)
6. If your Christianity is always easy and fits in with everyone else then you’re doing it wrong. (4:7-5:10)
7. We have got to find a way to be active in sharing the gospel. (5:11-21)

Clay – Meaning something molded by God.

8. The great obstacle in our faith and witness are our affections. (6:1-13)
9. In what ways we may be unequally yoked in allowing friends influence me? (6:14-18)
10. God calls us to grieve and repent over your sin. (7:2-16)
11. God LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER. To give generously of your time, talents, and treasures. (8:1-9:16)
12. Examine yourselves to see if you follow Jesus! (13:5-7)

Pass: Our passage tonight will be 2 Corinthians 13:5-7

Examine

Read: ***5 Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! 6 I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. 7 But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.***

- Prin: A Christian is called to EXAMINE themselves. Paul isn't specific on exactly how to examine yourself but he does say it's needed.
- Ex: Just a couple of things that stick out to me before I make some suggestions on how we are to examine ourselves.
1. **Whether you actively have Jesus living in you is a crucial part of the test.**
"Or do not you not realize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? - Unless you fail to meet the test."
If you're a Christian then Jesus must be alive in you. I want to first point out that
 2. **Our ongoing actions are important.** "But we pray to God that you may not do wrong"
As a Christian what we do does matter. But it may not matter in the way that you think it does. We are called to a life defined by the gospel and not defined by the law. The gospel says that Jesus alone makes me righteous whereas the law says I'm going to pull myself up by my bootstraps and make myself perfect. The gospel calls me to love others while they're still sinners but the Law says to fix other people.
- Prin: A Christian is called to EXAMINE themselves. Do you have Jesus living in you? Can you tell by your actions?

Application

Setup: There are two ways I think it would be helpful for us to examine ourselves.

1. What do we do with SIN? 2. What do we do with LOVE?

SIN

Setup: The first area of examination is what we're doing with sin. Someone shared a video recently put out by the Gospel Coalition. There is a panel discussion on how we encourage honesty about sin but not excuse sin. This panel is specifically designed in regards to same sex attraction and you'll note that the guy is the pastor who struggles with that sin who wrote the book, Is God Anti Gay. This may be referring to SSA but it should become very clear that it's what we need to be doing with all of sin!

Trans: I want you to listen to answer 4 questions:

Qu's: How do a LOVE of God and a FEAR of God help us open up about our sin?

How does the gospel get rid of SHAME?

WHO speaks of this gospel that rids shame?

How does the church COMMUNITY need to change its attitude towards the LGBT community?

Vid: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-encourage-honesty-about-sin-without-excusing-it>

LOVE

Ex: I believe that we've got to start to demonstrate Christ's love to those around us. It's not a passive love but seeking out to love other people.

Qt: "If you asked twenty good men to-day what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love. The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire... it would seem that our Lord finds our desires, not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased." The great hindrance of worship is that you and I are willing to settle for such paltry measly pleasures. We are not nearly hedonistic enough to go for what really counts

App: I believe that if you and I were to start loving those around us like Christ then we would find a kind of Joy that isn't met by entertainment, sex, drugs, friends, or food. No steak dinner can make us that happy. No amazing video game will work. Not anything on this earth can bring us as much joy as the LOVE of CHRIST.

Conclusion

Con: I want to end our time with the place that we started. A review of our walk through the book of 2nd Corinthians. Consider first if you have Jesus living in you and second what ways you can still grow in your faith. Paul believe that the Corinthians were indeed Christians but he went after ways that they needed to continue to grow!