

Sermon Series Title: "The Church of God"

Sermon Series Summary: The Church of God is the people of God throughout the ages, redeemed by Jesus Christ. We're going to take a look at who we are and who we are called to be as the church of God. More specifically, we see that who we are is directly connected to whose we are in Christ.

"We are in our "The Church of God" sermon series, and we see that we are defined not by who we are but whose we are as the Church."

Call: Isaiah 26:10-11

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

Title: "The Treasure of the Church"

Next Week's Call: Isaiah 26:12

Next Week's Text: Matthew 16:13-20

Next Week's Title: "The Victory of the Church"

Future Calls: Isaiah 26:13; Luke 1:46-48a, 48b-49, 50, 51-52, 53, 54-55, 68-69, 70-73, 74-75, 78-79; Luke 2:13-14, 29-32; Revelation 5:6-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-14; Revelation 15:3, 4; Revelation 21:1-4, 5-7, 22-23

Future Titles: "The Pathway of the Church" (Matthew 16:21-28), "The Unity of the Church" (Ephesians 4:1-7), "The Diversity of the Church" (Romans 12:1-8), "The Sufficiency of the Church" (Ephesians 4:11-16), "The Identity of the Church" (Matthew 5:13-16), "The Humility of the Church" (1 John 1:5-10), "The Draw of the Church" (2 Corinthians 2:14-17), "The Distinction of the Church" (1 Peter 2:11-12), "The Instrumentality of the Church" (1 Peter 2:9-10), "Church as Building" (1 Peter 2:6-8), "Church as City" (Ephesians 2:19-22), "Church as Body" (1 Corinthians 12:12-31), "Church as Family" (John 1:12-13), "Church as Bride" (Ephesians 5:22-33), "The Eternality of the Church" (Revelation 21:1-7)

Fallen Condition Focus: We think that our lives, bodies, gifts, talents, and strengths are our worth and purpose.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ is the treasure that is the glory and power of God. Our worth is in that truth. He is the ultimate jar of clay that made us His treasure first.

Central Truth: Our worth is not in our gifts and glory but in the treasure of the gospel.

Summary: Paul calls us mere jars of clay. Jars of clay back then were cheap and disposable. There was no worth in them themselves. It was what they contained that gave them their worth and purpose. Our hearts are fallen, our lives are finite, and our bodies are weak. But our treasure is in the gospel, the person and work of Jesus, who was the ultimate jar of clay that made us His treasure.

Reflective Questions:

1. How does Paul describe us? Is that an accurate picture of who we are? Why or why not?
2. What is the treasure that Paul speaks about? What is our treasure?
3. How does the gospel assure us of our identity and worth?

I. Introduction

- A. Hook
- B. Transition
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

II. Who We Are (vv. 7)

A. Context of 2 Corinthians

1. One of the most personal and earnest letters of Paul
2. Paul's apostleship was questioned again. His opponents stated that he suffered too much to be a Spirit-filled apostle (ch. 1, 2, 4, 6, 11).
3. They questioned his motive in organizing a collection for believers in Judea (ch. 8, 12) and questioned his courage (ch. 10, 11).
4. He addresses these issues in this letter, and he pleads for them to believe his apostleship because they need to trust His message. And his suffering confirms his apostleship and the lives of believers.
5. He also teaches that God doesn't work through strength or a prosperous life, but He works through brokenness and weakness.

B. Jars of Clay- cheap and disposable (like fast-food containers)

1. One of the best Christian bands from the 90s and maybe ever.
2. We like to put nice things in nice containers. Not God. We are mere jars of clay.
3. They were questioning Paul's apostleship and message because of his suffering and lowly life, going from place to place... a lot of times in poverty.
 1. Not glamorous. Carl Lentz.

- 2. Paul is saying that he is just a jar of clay... and that we all are a jar of clay.
 - 4. We do not minister from a position of power. We do not share the gospel in and for our glory.
 - 5. We are weak, fallen, and finite in our beings.
 - C. For the Christian, we are all broken jars of clay.
 - 1. Because of our sin (guilt, shame, etc.)
 - 2. Because of others' and the world's sins (being sinned against)
 - 3. Because of sickness (mental and physical health- Spurgeon)
 - 4. Because of our circumstances (i.e. pastor's son's suicide- Rick Warren)
 - D. Power is in God and not us
 - 1. Not our eloquence, skills, talents, etc.
- III. What We Go Through (vv. 8-12)
- A. Christian lives in a paradox
 - B. Afflicted in every way but not crushed
 - 1. Squeezed but not squashed
 - C. Perplexed but not driven to despair
 - 1. Confused but not hopeless; bewildered but not befuddled
 - D. Persecuted but not forsaken
 - 1. Hunted or pursued; not forsaken- abandoned without help
 - E. Struck down but not destroyed
 - 1. Whacked by a weapon but not wiped out
 - 2. Paul literally experienced this by being stoned in Acts 14 and popping right back up.
 - F. Carrying in the body the death of Jesus; always being given over to death for Jesus' sake
 - 1. Persecution because of Jesus
 - 2. Mortification of the flesh
 - G. Life of Jesus manifested in our bodies and mortal flesh
 - 1. Through the suffering and dying, we see the resurrection life of Jesus shine through.
 - H. Death is at work in us, but life in you.
 - 1. You expect Paul to say life in us, but he talks about how the Corinthian church is receiving life from Paul's suffering.
 - 2. This is a small picture of the gospel- Jesus' death for our life.
- IV. What Our Treasure Is
- A. Paul is saying that our worth is not in ourselves but in the treasure inside of us. A jar of clay is only valuable, not because of the way it looks on outside but because of what it contains on the inside.

- B. The treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ based on the first part of chapter 4.
 - 1. By grace- Matthew 13- parable of hidden treasure and pearl of great value (first- stumbled on it, second- was in search of it; both found it)
- C. We all treasure something. People and things are valuable and meaningful to us. And our treasure defines how we view ourselves and this world.
- D. This treasure is our hope and strength through the storm.
- E. This treasure gives us our worth.
- F. It is sure and trustworthy, because of what Jesus has done.
 - 1. Jesus was the ultimate jar of clay broken so that we may live.
 - 2. He was the One crushed, forsaken, destroyed, so that we may endure the brokenness of our lives and the judgment for sin.
- G. Jesus did all of this, because He made us His treasure.
- H. Application points:
 - 1. How do we view ourselves? Jars of clay or treasure?
 - 2. What is our treasure?
 - 3. Do we trust in the truth that God has made us His treasure?