

Week of July 29-August 4

## **PIGGY BANKS**

**Scripture Reading:** Read 2 Corinthians 4

Did you ever have a piggy bank as a kid? If so, you can probably still remember the sound the coins made when you dropped them through the slot on top of the bank. With excitement and anticipation, you regularly added more and more coins. Over time, the bank became heavier and heavier as you saved for that special toy you wanted to buy. Finally, the day came when you were ready to use the money in your piggy bank. With the old fashioned ceramic piggy banks you actually had to break them open with a hammer for the money to be retrieved. Once out of the bank, the treasure was available for your use.

In the first century, folks didn't have traditional piggy banks like we did as children. They used to store their treasure in unassuming jars of clay. The clay pot was just a vessel. It wasn't much to look at. The all-important treasure inside was what counted. This was where the value was.

In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul compares believers to these clay pots: *"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."* Our clay pots aren't much to look at. Outwardly, they are wasting away (2 Cor 4:16). We are hard pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, and always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus (2 Cor 4:8-10). On the outside, there seems to be no value present.

On the inside, though, that's where the treasure is found, for we who have experienced God's wonderful salvation have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us (2 Cor 1:21-22) *"...He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."* We have salvation life within us through Christ's death and applied by God's Spirit. This new life is an indestructible life, an eternal and abundant life that flows from Christ.

The irony is that this new life shines brightest not in our moments of greatest strength but in the moments of our greatest weakness. As Paul notes in 2 Cor 12:9-10, it is in our weakness where God's power is made perfect. It's in our weakness that Christ's power rests on us. The trials that we suffer are not evidences of the Lord abandoning us. Not at all! God is simply breaking open the piggy bank of our lives so that His treasure spills out and is usable for the kingdom. This is why Paul could say that he was not crushed, nor in despair, not abandoned, nor destroyed when he faced overwhelming odds. It's why he could encourage the believers in Corinth (and us) not to lose heart but to recognize that *"our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."*

**Action Step & Prayer Focus:** Saint of God, are you going through a painful experience right now? Are you wondering if you will make it? Be encouraged! The treasure inside is about to be spilled out in a way that others will see Jesus in you. It's time for you to trust the Lord who loves you. Outwardly, we may be wasting away, but *"inwardly we are being renewed day by day."* You can take that to the bank in prayer.

**Take-a-way:** *We are God's piggy banks!*