Life Group: Strength to Endure

Notes 6th July 2025

The Light That Leaks Through

Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch Christian who survived the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp, once said: *"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still."*

Corrie's life was marked by unimaginable suffering, loss, and darkness, yet she became a beacon of Christ's hope to thousands. What made her testimony so powerful wasn't polished perfection, but the *radiance of Jesus shining through her brokenness*. She didn't hide her scars; she let them speak. And through them, the light of God's love reached people who desperately needed it.

Paul speaks of this same paradox in **2 Corinthians 4:7–18**. He describes us as fragile, cracked clay jars, not in spite of God's plan, but as part of it. The *"treasure"* we carry is the glory of God, and our cracks are not a reason for shame, they are the very places where his light breaks through. In a culture obsessed with strength and appearance, Paul flips the script: it is through our weakness, through affliction, through suffering and loss that God's extraordinary power is made visible.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7–18

Read again **2 Corinthians 4:7** and pause. We're reminded of Paul's powerful image: *"We have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us."* The "treasure" is the radiant glory of God, his presence shining in a dark world. Paul uses a deeply human image: fragile, flawed, even cracked clay pots.

In Corinth, such pottery was common, especially low-grade jars that cracked when fired. And yet, as scholar Ben Witherington notes, those very cracks made them excellent light diffusers.

This is Paul's message to the church and to us: our imperfections don't disqualify us; they make space for God's glory to shine through**.** We don't have to pretend we're unbreakable. The world doesn't need polished perfection. It needs people who are willing to let the light of Christ shine through their brokenness.

Consider:

- Where have you seen God's light shine through your own struggle?
- What might it look like for you to embrace your "cracks" as part of your ministry to others?

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In **2 Corinthians 4:8–9**, Paul speaks honestly about the weight of suffering: *"afflicted… perplexed… persecuted… struck down"* — yet he declares he is *"not crushed, not in despair, not forsaken, not destroyed."* This is not mere resilience, but a picture of God's power sustaining him in the midst of real hardship. It reminds us that endurance in suffering is not about avoiding pain, but about experiencing God's presence in it.

Consider:

- Where have you seen God at work in your own moments of difficulty — sustaining you, guiding you, or even transforming you through them?

Later in **2 Corinthians 4:17–18**, Paul offers a powerful perspective shift: our *"light and momentary afflictions"* are actually producing for us an *eternal weight of glory* far beyond comparison. Though outwardly we may feel worn down or see our bodies fail, inwardly we are being renewed each day by God's Spirit. Paul urges us to live not by what is seen, the temporary, but by what is unseen and eternal. It's a call to live by faith**,** trusting that God is working through every trial to shape us for His glory.

Consider:

- In what ways does focusing on God's eternal promises change how you see your present struggles?
- How have you experienced God renewing you "day by day" even when life feels heavy or uncertain?

To conclude, read Isaiah 40:28–31 and give thanks to God for His faithful presence — for the strength He gives to the weary, the power He pours into the weak, and the promise that those who place their hope in Him will be renewed, lifted, and sustained.

Prayer

Lord of glory and grace,
Thank you for placing your treasure in fragile jars like us.
Shine through our cracks, not despite them, but because of them.
In our pain, be our peace.
When we feel struck down, hold us up with your unfailing love.
Renew us day by day with Your Spirit,
That we may trust what is unseen,
And live with hope in what is eternal.
Amen.