



Leaders: choose some, but not all of the following questions. Email me with any questions. Mark.

1. Is there anything that stood out for you from the passage or message?

Paul reminds the Corinthians that:

We Preach Jesus - Not ourselves

2. Why does Paul not lose heart?
3. Why do people oppose the gospel? What should we do/not do when people don't like our message?
4. It is God who changes the hearts of people. How can this be an encouragement for us?
5. Is there anyone who is close to you who does not yet know Jesus? What should we do for them?

Our confidence is in Jesus - Not ourselves

6. What does Paul mean by us being 'jars of clay'? What is the treasure?
7. Why is this good news? What impact should it have in our life?
8. Paul says that we should 'always carry in our bodies the death of Jesus.' What will happen when the death of Jesus is engrained in our lives?

We fix our eyes on Jesus - Not ourselves

9. Why should we speak?
10. Michael said, 'Our life isn't defined by the here and now but by what is to come.' What is to come? What does this mean for us today?
11. What are the things that are seen that cause you troubles today? What is the hope for those who are in Christ?
12. What does 'eternal perspective' do?

Pray that we will preach Jesus in all that we do and say. Pray that we will find our confidence, not in ourselves, but in Jesus and pray that we will live looking forward to the world to come.

- Well, we are coming very close to our federal election.
- Politicians are campaigning hard, trying to win our votes in as many ways as possible.
- Now I'm sure that no politicians would do this,
 - But it would be quite easy and tempting for a politician to change what they say from one electorate to another. In order to win votes.
 - As I said...I'm sure no politicians do this...
- In the first century, it would have been extremely tempting for the church leaders to slightly change the message, in order to win more people over.
- Sometimes this happens today in some churches..
 - But what we will see today is that:
 - We Preach Jesus - Not ourselves
 - Our confidence is in Jesus - Not ourselves
 - We fix our eyes upon Jesus - Not ourselves.
- Firstly, let's recap from last week
 - We smell!
 - That is - we are the aroma of Christ. For some, that will attract them to Jesus, others, that same aroma will drive people away
 - We are incompetent in and of ourselves for this ministry, but our competence comes from God
 - We are a work in progress...that is, we are being transformed to be more like Jesus.
- So - Because it's God's ministry, Because it's through his competence and because we are being transformed..Paul says we do not loose heart.
 - The Corinthians were a real pain for Paul! They caused him a lot of grief!
 - Just like they do today, some people in the first century didn't want anything to do with Christianity.
 - Even worse than here in Australia, Paul was put in chains and beaten for the gospel.
 - But through all of that he did not loose heart.
 - Because it's God's ministry. God's competence and it was God's work.
 - And it's the same for us today. We don't loose heart.
 - But also, since we have this confidence, when we tell other people about Jesus, we must not change our message or water it down!
 - Paul writes in verse 2:
 - 'We have renounced the secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.'
 - When we are put under the spotlight, it's tempting to alter the message slightly.
 - When people ask 'You don't really believe all that stuff do you? About sin? Heaven and hell?
 - Sometimes it is easy just to shrug it off and not give an answer, or to give an answer that is different to what God says.
 - But since we know that it is God's ministry and God's work, we have the freedom to openly state the truth without shame.
 - When we stick to the truth, no one can accuse us of saying one thing to one person and then another thing to a different person.
 - So by not altering the message, we actually commend ourselves to every ones conscience!
- And we know that people won't like it. We know that our message is a stench to other people.

- Look with me at V3-4
 - ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- Satan actually veils the minds of those who don't believe.
- He stops people from seeing the light and the truth.
 - And we see this today when people don't really care about God. Or when people are against Christianity in the public sphere and in schools.
- So then what are we to do?
 - We don't change our message but we are to keep on proclaiming Jesus. - V5
 - 'For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.'
- When people turn their back on God, we don't have to win them over by watering down our message, but we need to preach Jesus.
- We don't have to win them over by telling them how nice the church service is, or how nice the community is (although they are great things) but we should be telling them about how great Jesus is!
 - AND All the blessings that he brings!
 - AND Everything that he has done for us in our lives!
- The rest, is up to God.
- It is him who shone the light into our hearts which revealed how great God is.
- And it is only him who will shine that same light into the hearts of those who don't know him yet.
 - Only he can turn hearts back to him.
 - Only he can turn the hearts of Noosa
 - Only he can turn the hearts of those who are close to you who don't know him yet.
- God does the unveiling.
- It's not up to us to change hearts. It's not up to you. God does that.
- But we are told to proclaim Jesus in all that we do. By our words and by our actions.
- We preach Jesus - not ourselves.
- Secondly, our confidence is in Jesus and not ourselves.
 - Paul says that we have this treasure in Jars of Clay.
- And we see a couple of things from this.
 - Firstly, the fact that God has opened up our hearts to him is an absolute treasure.
 - Secondly, we are just vessels. We are containers for this truth! We are fragile beings but it doesn't matter. Because it isn't about us. It's about Jesus
 - No one really would have gotten excited about 'jars of clay' but what was inside of them, was a totally different story!
 - When you get a gift, you don't really get excited about the wrapping or the box. But you get excited about what is in the box!
 - Just like the wrapping or box is a container for the gift, we are vessels for God's good news!
- Because the treasure is Gods and not ours. Our confidence is in Jesus and not in ourselves.
- And this is great news!
 - It means that we don't have to think of crazy ways of how to tell people about Jesus.

- It means that we don't have to 'conjure up enough faith, or work up enough biblical knowledge' to tell people about Jesus
 - Because all of the power is from God.
 - Yes, We will be hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down.
 - But we will never be crushed, we will never be abandoned, we will never be destroyed because It's God's message and God strengthens us.
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- Paul says that he always carries in him the death of Jesus. And what does this mean?
 - It could be a couple of things but I think Paul here is telling us to be constantly reminding ourselves about the death of Jesus.
 - Not just that, but our great rescue should be so engrained in our lives that we never forget it.
 - Now I can't speak from experience, but when a woman is pregnant, I assume that it's pretty hard to forget that there is a baby growing inside of her!
 - Just like the woman with a baby, we should never forget the death of Jesus.
 - And when that is in the forefront of our mind, it's hard not to be defined by it! It's hard for our lives not to be transformed by it.
 - If I started every single day with the first thought in my mind being, 'Wow. Jesus died for me.' Rather than, 'I wonder if the coffee machine is turned on?' I think some days would be pretty different!
 - When we are shaped by the cross, Christ's life can't help but shine through!
 - And in the face of persecution, Christ's life will shine.
 - Look at Verse 11 with me:
 - For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.
 - Now in Australia, we aren't being handed over to death.
 - But in the Middle East, where Christians are being beheaded, Christ's life is being revealed. When they go to their death, declaring 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' Christ's life is being revealed.
 - And the same principle applies to us. We should be people who are fully confident in the treasure of Christ. Confident enough to give our lives to God for it.
 - And if we live like this,
 - a little snide comment, for being a Christian, at work isn't a problem.
 - A jeer from the member of your club isn't a problem
 - Because we are just vessels and we have full confidence in Christ and not in ourselves.
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- Lastly, we cast our eyes upon Jesus, and not ourselves.
 - When I first found out that my sister, Emily, was pregnant, it was such good news that I just wanted to tell as many people as possible! It was hard to keep the secret in!
 - Likewise, we have great news to tell people about. We have the great news about Jesus.
 - We have the same spirit as the psalmist in psalm 116, where Paul quotes from.
 - Here are some highlights:
 - Ps 116:1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
 - he heard my cry for mercy.
 - 5 The LORD is gracious and righteous;
 - our God is full of compassion.
 - 10 I trusted in the LORD when I said,
 - "I am greatly afflicted";

- We believe in the goodness of God. We fix our eyes upon Jesus, so we speak.
 - We speak knowing that when Jesus comes back, he will raise us on the last day and we will spend eternity with him.
 - We speak so that many more people may know of how great Jesus is and that more and more people will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.
 - We preach Jesus to Noosa, to our villages, to our clubs, to our workplace, so that they may join with us in praising and glorifying God for eternity.
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- So we don't lose heart because we set our eyes upon Jesus and eternity.
 - Our life isn't defined by the here and now but by what is to come. And what is to come?
 - we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
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- Outwardly, our bodies are decaying. I'm sure that some of you can't do the same things that you used to do when you were my age!
 - But whilst our bodies decay, inwardly, we are being renewed, remade, renovated, reshaped. We are being transformed to be like Jesus.
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- This life is fleeting. Our troubles are tiny compared to what is to come, so we are to set our eyes upon what is unseen.
 - This world that we can see is temporary.
 - Money is temporary,
 - The troubles that it brings are temporary,
 - Persecution is temporary,
 - Pain is temporary
 - Bullying is temporary,
 - So then, there is no use wasting our time and focussing upon them!
 - But what we can't see is eternal.
 - A future with no pain, is eternal
 - A future with no tears, is eternal.
 - A future with a new body, is eternal.
 - A future being in the presence of God, is eternal.
 - And this far outweighs any pain, any persecution and any troubles. we have on this earth.
 - So if we focus our minds on what is to come, it transforms how we live our life!
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- When I went down to Sydney a couple of months ago, I went and visited my friend James. He was and still is in hospital. James can't use his legs anymore. He was a NSW champion downhill bike rider.
 - I follow a page on Facebook where his family posts updates.
 - Here are the most common phrases used; "thankful to God; God is in control"
 - That's what eternal perspective does.
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- If the public give us a hard time for being a Christian, it doesn't matter. We've got something better to look forward to!

- If school kids are bullying your child or grandchild for being a Christian, tell them about the great love of Jesus. And the great life to come!
- If someone cuts ties with you because you are a Christian, it doesn't matter. Because we've got something so much better to look forward to!
- If workmates look down on you because you refuse to work Sundays, it doesn't matter. Because we've got something so much better to look forward to!
- Our pain on this earth is temporary, but the freedom that we will have is eternal. Thanks be to God.
- And so we fix our eyes upon Jesus. It will transform our lives. We will never loose heart.

- So, what we will continue to do?
 - V5 - we will continue to preach Jesus, and not us.
 - We must not change or water down our message in order to win over people's hearts. Because only God can change hearts.
 - Only he can change the hearts of our work mates, friends and family members.
 - All we need to do is preach Jesus
 - And we can only do this because our confidence is in Jesus and not in us.
 - We are just vessels of his amazing treasure.
 - And he will never let us be defeated by this world.
 - All we should do, is carry the death of Jesus in our bodies in all that we do. So that his life might be shown through us.
 - And to help us do this, we fix our eyes upon Jesus, and not us.
 - We have great news to tell people about, even in the midst of persecution.
 - And we can tell people boldly.
 - Because we know that the troubles that we will experience here on earth are nothing compared to the eternal glory, wonder and freedom of the world to come.
 - When we fix our eyes upon this, it totally changes the way that we live.
 - Let us ask God to help us.