

CHRIST AS THE IMAGE OF GOD

- I. **Second Corinthians 4:4-7 shows us that we may experience and enjoy Christ as the image of God and the treasure:**
  - A. The image of God refers to Christ as our outward expression, whereas the treasure refers to Christ as our inward content.
  - B. We should bear Christ as the image of God without, and we should have Christ as the treasure within.
  - C. We need to enter into the rich and full enjoyment of Christ.
  - D. According to Hebrews 1:3, Christ is the effulgence of God's glory; that is, He is the expression of the image of God.
  - E. Christ as the image of God is the declaration, the expression, of God; He declares God and expresses God—John 1:18.
  - F. Colossians 1:15 speaks of Christ as "the image of the invisible God"; the image here is not a physical form but an expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues.
  - G. Our mind needs to be renewed to such an extent that we have a clear view of Christ as the image of God—Rom. 12:2.
- II. **In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul speaks of "the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God":**
  - A. In this verse Paul also informs us that the god of this age, the ruler of this world, has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers—John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2:
    - The god of this age is Satan, the ruler of the present age, who dominates today's world and hunts for people's worship by blinding their mind and thoughts—2 Cor. 4:4.
    - All people today, whether primitive or highly cultured, have been blinded by the god of this age.
    - We need to pray, "Lord, I trust in You to defeat the god of this age; apart from You, I do not worship anyone or anything."
    - If we pray in this way, the divine light will shine, and we will receive revelation.
    - If we drop our concepts and turn our heart to the Lord, the veils will be taken away, and the god of this age will have no ground in our being—2 Cor. 3:16.
  - B. The gospel of Christ is the gospel of His glory that illuminates and shines forth.
  - C. God is invisible, but Christ, the Son of God's love, who is the effulgence of the glory of God and the impress of His substance, is His image, expressing what He is—Heb. 1:3.
  - D. The image of God in Colossians 1:15 refers to the expression of God and the fullness of God, that is, Christ Himself.
  - E. The expression *the image of the invisible God* implies that although God Himself is invisible, His image is visible—Col. 1:15.
  - F. The invisible God has a visible image, and this image is Christ:
    - John 1:18 says, "No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."
    - Although God is invisible, He is expressed by a living person, that is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God—John 3:16.

### III. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels”—2 Cor. 4:7a:

- A. Christ as the life-giving Spirit in us is the One who shines and works; this is the treasure we have in us.
- B. God’s shining in our hearts brings into us a treasure, the Christ of glory, who is the embodiment of God to be our life and our everything—2 Cor. 4:4,6.
- C. Because of the shining in our hearts, we have a treasure that is wonderful, precious, and marvelous.
- D. This treasure, the indwelling Christ, in us, the earthen vessels, is the divine source of the supply for the Christian life—2 Cor. 4:7.
- E. The expression *this treasure* in 2 Corinthians 4:7 refers to verse 6, where Paul speaks of the face of Jesus Christ:
  - The shining of God in our hearts is to illuminate us that we may know the glory of God in Christ’s face.
  - The glory of God manifested in the face of Jesus Christ is the God of glory expressed through Jesus Christ; to know Him is to know the God of glory—2 Cor. 4:6.
  - Literally, the Greek word for face in 2 Corinthians 4:6 is the same word translated “person” in 2:10, which refers to the part around the eyes, the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person.
  - This indicates that unless we have the index of Christ’s face, He cannot be a treasure to us in reality:
    - We will not sense that we have a treasure within us until we see the face of Jesus Christ.
    - On the one hand, we can all declare that we are the earthen vessels and that Christ is the treasure within us.
    - On the other hand, we need to see that it is only when we are living in the presence of Christ, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is a treasure to us—2 Cor. 2:10.
- F. The first step of God’s procedure in fulfilling His purpose was to create man as an earthen vessel to contain Himself as life—Gen. 2:7:
  - God chose us so that we may be vessels of honor filled with the Triune God—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 13:14.
  - The New Testament shows us that God wants believers as vessels loving Him and keeping themselves open to Him—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Cor. 3:16.
  - If in the depths of our being we are not open to the Lord, He cannot dispense Himself into us and make His home in our heart—1 Cor. 2:10.
  - An open vessel is doing nothing but keeping itself open to be filled by the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity—2 Cor. 13:14.
  - When the Lord fills us, He does everything for us—Eph. 3:19.
- G. We are weak because we are earthen vessels; however, a treasure within us, the vessel, enables us to keep ourselves open to the Lord, giving Him every opportunity to do everything He wants to do; this is the proper and genuine Christian life—Eph. 3:17; Gal. 2:20.

### IV. “That the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us”—2 Cor. 4:7b:

- A. The fact that we are earthen vessels proves that the excellency of the power is of God and not out of us:
  - In ourselves we are nothing more than earthen vessels; we are sinful, fallen, and low.
  - As such, we do not have the power to manifest the truth and shine forth the glory of the gospel—2 Cor. 4:4.
- B. Although we are worthless earthen vessels, God has shined the precious treasure into us:
  - Now this treasure becomes the source of the power energizing us and enabling us to shine forth God’s glory and manifest the truth—2 Cor. 4:7a.
  - This treasure has the power, and this power is excellent.
- C. Outwardly, we are earthen vessels, but inwardly, we have a priceless treasure—Christ as the embodiment of the processed and consummated Triune God to be the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b.
- D. Within us, we have Christ as a wonderful treasure; outwardly, we bear Christ as the image of God, the expression of the Triune God—2 Cor. 4:4.
- E. When we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received more than simply a Redeemer; we received the most excellent One in the universe.
- F. We need to experience and enjoy Christ as the treasure within and the image without.

I. **Second Corinthians 4:4-7 shows us that we may experience and enjoy Christ as the image of God and the treasure:**

- We should bear Christ as the image of God as our outward expression, and have Christ, the treasure, as our inward content for entering into the rich and full enjoyment of Christ. Hebrews 1:3 says Christ as the image of God is the effulgence of God's glory; He declares and expresses God. Christ as "the image of the invisible God" does not mean a physical image but an expression of God's being in all His attributes and virtues. We need to renew our mind such that we have a clear view of Christ as the image of God. [Heb. 1:3] Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance... [Col. 1:15] Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation, [Rom. 12:2] And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

II. **In 2 Corinthians 4:4 Paul speaks of "the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God":**

- Paul also informs us that the god and ruler of this age, Satan, dominates today's world and hunts for people's worship by blinding their mind and thoughts. All people are blinded today regardless of background. We need to pray for the divine light to shine in us that we would worship no one nor anything else but trust in Christ only to defeat the god of this age. If we drop our concepts and turn our heart to the Lord, the veils will be taken away and the god of this age will have no ground in our being. John 1:18 says the invisible God is expressed by a living person, Christ, the Son of His love, who is a visible image, the effulgence of God's glory and His fullness, the impress of God's substance expressing what God is. [2 Cor. 4:4] In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them. [2 Cor. 3:16] But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. [John 1:18] No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

III. **"We have this treasure in earthen vessels"**

- Christ as the life-giving Spirit in us is the One who shines and works. God's shining in our hearts brings into us a treasure, the Christ of glory, who is the embodiment of God to be our life and our everything. This treasure, the indwelling Christ, is precious, and marvelous; it is the divine source of the supply for our Christian life. The treasure in 2 Corinthians 4:7 refers to verse 6, where Paul speaks of the face of Jesus Christ. God's shining in our hearts illuminates us that we may know the glory of God manifested in and expressed through the face of Jesus Christ, that we know the God of glory. The Greek word for face in 2 Corinthians 4:6 is the same word translated "person" in 2:10, it refers to the part around the eyes, the look as the index of the inward thoughts and feelings, which shows forth and manifests the whole person. Unless we see the face of Jesus Christ and have the index of His face, He cannot be a treasure to us in reality. Only when we are living in the presence of Christ, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense He is a treasure within us. God first created men as earthen vessels to love Him and keep themselves open to Him, to contain God as life and be vessels of honor filled with the Triune God. We need to keep ourselves open for Him to make His home in us and fill us by the divine dispensing of the Divine Trinity so that He can do everything for us. While we are weak earthen vessels, the treasure within us enables us to keep ourselves open to the Lord and give Him every opportunity to do everything He wants to do; this is the proper and genuine Christian life [2 Cor. 4:6] Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.. [2 Cor. 2:10] ... if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ; [Rom. 9:23] In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory, [Gal. 2:20] I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me...

IV. **"That the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us"**

- The fact that we are worthless earthen vessels with no power to manifest the truth and shine forth the glory of the gospel, but God has shined the precious treasure into us to become the source of the power to energize us, to enable us to shine forth God's glory and manifest the truth; this proves that the excellency of the power of the treasure is of God and not out of us. While we are only earthen vessels, but when we believed in the Lord Jesus, we received more than simply a Redeemer; we received the most excellent One in the universe that inwardly, we have a priceless treasure—Christ as the embodiment of the processed and consummated Triune God to be the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit; outwardly, we bear Christ as the image of God, the expression of the Triune God. We therefore need to experience and enjoy Christ as the treasure within and the image without. [2 Cor. 4:7] But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us [2 Cor. 3:18] But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit. [Eph. 3:19] And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

We need to remember that we have within us the treasure, a living person who is more excellent than the world. Christ is the most excellent One in the whole universe; there is nothing that is more excellent than He. Since we have Christ as the treasure, the most excellent One and the most lovely One, we do not love the world. It is not that we should not love the world but that the world is inferior to the treasure, the excellent and lovely Christ. We treasure the Lord more than the world.

We will not sense that we have a treasure within us until we see the face of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, we can all declare that we are the earthen vessels and that Christ is the treasure within us. On the other hand, we need to see that it is only when we are living in the presence of Christ, looking at the index of His being, that we will sense that He is a treasure to us. In the whole universe there is nothing that is more precious than beholding the face of Jesus Christ. The more we live in His presence, the more we will sense His presence.

*<Excerpts from "The Conclusion of the New Testament", (Msgs. 306-322), Msg. 317, "Experiencing and Enjoying Christ in the Epistles (23)">*

In our preaching of the gospel there should be an illumination, a shining. We need to preach the gospel in a very illuminating way. This means that while we are preaching, God shines into the hearts of those to whom we are speaking. We also need to help them to call on the name of the Lord Jesus in order that they would be brought to the face of Christ, have personal contact with Him, and experience God's shining in their hearts. To preach in this way is to present not merely a gospel of certain facts but a gospel of glory. Those who receive the gospel of glory will have Christ as the precious treasure dispensed into them. Then, like us, they will be earthen vessels containing this treasure.

Daily we need to experience and enjoy Christ as the treasure within and the image of God without.

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