

Jars of Clay 1: Why God values weak leaders

The experience of a group of leaders

The pressure to appear strong/desire strong leaders

The situation in Corinth- *"Those 'super-apostles'" (2 Corinthians 11:5)*

Paul's experience- Trials; Beyond our ability to endure; No peace of mind; Jars of clay; Thorn in the flesh

"This is the point of the letter: a crucified Saviour who willingly embraces weakness in the incarnation and on the cross can only be properly passed on by servants who willingly accept weakness and vulnerability." Julian Hardyman

1. Brings comfort to others.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."
2 Corinthians 1:3-4

2. Shows that the power is from God

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."
2 Corinthians 4:7

How have you seen this in your experience or that of others you know?

3. Makes us like Jesus

"We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ 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. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you." 2 Corinthians 4:10-12

4. Authenticates our ministry

"We put no stumbling-block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited...sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2 Corinthians 6:3, 10

5. Keeps us from pride

"In order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in the flesh...He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me...For when I am weak, then I am strong." 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Applications:

1. Don't resent your weaknesses

"I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful I hope none of you get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to." "The good that I received from my sorrows and pains and griefs is altogether incalculable." C.H. Spurgeon

2. Be strong in the Lord- by remembering the "but"

"We do not lose heart"

2 Corinthians 4:1, 16

"My need now is great and urgent but God is greater and more near."

Hudson Taylor

"Pray for us. At times I seem altogether overwhelmed with the internal and external trials connected with our work. But He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and "My strength is made perfect in weakness."