

Fragile Times and Firm Faith
Psalm 116 and 2Cor 4:7-18
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Synopsis

Good morning cracked pots! People are going to see the light of Jesus through us as we live authentic and yes, cracked lives.

PRAY

Fragile Times

These are fragile times

Let me tell you about my fragile week: Willard “Serve what you’re cooking”

1. Last Saturday March 14
 - awakened by alarms and fire, two young men killed
 - on the phone with elders, Meredith, watching emails from NPC, Sequoyah, Laguna Pres
 - Funeral of Ian “Zeke” Zirkle; dropped dead

2. Sunday no service, met with elders
 - Wayne Kramer “we think we’re in *control*, but we’re not”

3. All week scurrying to get a new rhythm

4. By Wed I snapped
 - *Told Barb my list, then said, “I’m going to write it out for you”
 - STUPID! Took a shower, then confessed my wrong
 - *Trying to *control* what I can’t control

5. Bad dreams on Thursday
6. Brother: don’t send me that article (interview with Francis Collins)
7. Beep, beep, beep text while I prepare sermon: Laura at work: friends losing job

*How’s your week?

Fragile Paul in Corinth

Paul in Corinth: at least two letters, maybe “sorrowful letter” (2Cor 10-13)

Paul’s problem child

1st Cor full of issues

*Meanwhile they have hammered him!

2nd Cor READ 1:3-7 in Greek Text

Notice three word fields:

1. Description of God the Father
2. Encourage word: *parakaleo, Paraklete*
3. Suffering words

God the Father: *oiktirmos* = Hebrew *raham* = womb

Encourage word: count 10 x

Suffer words: count 7x

*Paul is under pressure, suffering, and needs encouragement

*God the Father’s *womb* love is going to *encourage* us in *suffering*

God is going to help us but there is more.

So he uses a metaphor from their culture, an earthen pot in ch 4

Fragile People in Our Times

These are not only fragile times

We are fragile people

E.g. Pastor friend Jon: Seattle, been in lock down three weeks, called me to say, “Jeff, you and Barb are in *that category*.” Thanks Jon!

Cracked Pots: Show the pot of Mark Lake

This is the image for what God wants to do with us in these times

READ again vv 7-12

People are going to see Jesus through our *cracked pots*!

How does this work? There are two temptations and one proper path

1. TEMPTATION #1 = I'm Perfect, I'm NOT cracked

*Show the pot and cover up the cracks

-this was what I was doing on Wednesday

-I have to do it all, I'm a Enneagram 3 = stress, I accomplish and beat people over the head in the process

E.g. Larry the Cable Guy "Get 'er done!"

The more perfect I try to be, the bigger mess I make

I am not the TREASURE! Paul addresses this in vv1-4 hiding cracks

2. TEMPTATION #2 = I'm Terrible, look at MY cracks

*Show the pot and point out all the holes

-don't look at me, I'm pitiful

-got up this week on Thursday, bad dreams, I'm terrible

-Chester FaceTimed me this week, bad morning with his son

*We have an adversary who wants to take us out

Jeff = where is he going to attack?

At my weaknesses, "You can't lead, you didn't" get the words right on your congregational letter, You . . . (fill in blank)

I am not just the CRACKED POT!

READ 4:7

We aren't the treasure = temptation 1

It isn't about the pot = temptation 2

What's the metaphor? = proper path

3. PROPER PATH = I'm Cracked but look at how Jesus shines through

*Show the pot and how the light can shine through

Not look at me I'm perfect

Not look at me I'm terrible

BUT

Look at how Jesus is working his *surpassing power* through me

It's where Jesus meets my cracks that we have to show.

Firm Faith for Us

You're going to hear people say, "Buck up, have more *faith* in Jesus"

2Tim 1:7

"God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and love and self-discipline"

NOW QUIT WHINING AND BUCK UP!
HAVE MORE FAITH!

Not at all what Paul is saying.

This is not the counsel of Scripture, Psalms are mostly laments

READ 4:8-10, 13

We carry about death of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be seen

Paul quotes Ps 116 here = thanks for a delivery from death

Among the Egyptian Hallel psalms 113-118

"You have delivered my life from death"

How do we do this in fragile times?

THIS IS NOT A BUCK UP SERMON!

*This isn't a sermon about how you should try harder!

Let people see how Jesus is meeting your and my cracked-ness

Look at me and see how Jesus is at work

Examples:

I messed up on Wednesday, needed help

Barb was Jesus for me:

told me to listen to a Podcast on SoulShepherding "Fear and Faith"

Bill and Kristi were Jesus for me:

Webinar on Thursday for pastors “Leading Through Fear”

The Staff was Jesus for me: Talked about fears, ended up laughing at TP

- We’re doing things we haven’t done before, e.g. Quick Time
- I do stupid stuff when I’m stressed, do too much
- we are feeling extra stress we aren’t even aware of, makes us act in strange ways

People Need to see Jesus shine through our cracks
That’s how God is going to show up
Show people how Jesus is meeting you in the cracks

SING: Kid’s song “This Little Light of Mine”

*Hide it under a bushel, NO, I’m gonna’ let it shine