

A VIEW FROM INSIDE THE POTTER'S HOUSE

Passage: II Corinthians 4:7-15

The title: *A View From Inside The Potter's House, or Pressure Outside, but Power Inside*

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Introduction: I want you to think about this quote:

- *"All of theology must eventually become biography."* In other words, "the constant challenge in this life (as followers of Jesus Christ) is the translation of all we believe to be true (our theology) into our day-to-day lifestyle (our biography)"--Tim Hansel, *Choosing Joy*, p. 41.
- IN SUMMARY: What we believe has to work in real life.
- This is especially true when we are walking through pressure, perplexing situations, persecution, or when we are pummeled through a national crisis like what happened at the New York Trade Center.
- Our faith has to work in hard times or it isn't worth much; but thankfully, it WORKS!!

- A. That's why I want us to affirm again what we all should know: "A myriad of pressure situations are more than interruptions in our life, they are more than meddlesome interludes..."
- B. All types of pressure are major opportunities to see who we are and what we believe played out in shoe leather, our biography.
- D. They are also opportunities to exercise the power available to and resident in every Christian.
- E. Trials are opportunities to see what we are made of, as well as Who made us.

Paul speaks about how our faith works in difficult and stretching circumstances in II Corinthians 4:7-15.

7] *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.* 8] *We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;* 9] *persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.* 10] *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 be revealed in our mortal body.* (See II Cor. 1:8-9.) 12] *So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.*

Now from this text we have a view of the Potter's work. Looking back at these wonderful verses, notice:

- I. **There are two important factors here.** We see the description of basic humanity and the revelation of the intent of God--vv. 7-15. (In other words, who God is and who we are.)

Let's begin with:

- A. The description of basic humanity is that of a container, a vessel, a clay jar--7] *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

Now before we focus on these verses, let's rehearse what we know about clay jars, even though it is obvious.

1. **All clay jars have 3 things in common.** In general:
 - a. All clay jars need a potter to mold them. Jeremiah 18:3 says: *"So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel."*
 - b. All clay jars are made of clay, yet they are all different.
 - c. All clay jars are designed to contain something.

2. **All human clay jars are also similar:** *"...But we have this **treasure** in jars of clay..."*
If we compare clay jars with humans, we see:
 - a. **We all have the same Potter.** Psalm 139:13--"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together (formed me) in my mother's womb. 14] I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. 15] My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth 16] your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." (We all have the same Designer--the same Potter!)
 - b. **We are also made of the same material**--Ps. 103:14. Here's one of my favorite verses: Psalm 103:13--"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14] for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."
 - Verse 14 can be very humbling.
 - God has compassion on us because He remembers we are all made of dust/clay.
 - Third, like our counterpart jars,
 - c. **We, too, are designed to contain something.** (We have a great purpose in being a container, which we will talk about in a moment.)

This comparison between humans and all clay jars is very helpful, because it gives us:

- B. **The understanding we need of the intent of God for all humankind**, which is the second important thing in these verses.

1. **So what, in particular, are we a vessel for?**

I know these are familiar verses, but think about them in a fresh way:

2. **What is the significance of human clay jars?**
 - We are made to be containers of God.
 - Here's what I Cor. 6:19-20 tells us about who lives in us: *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20] you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*
 - As chosen vessels, we are made to be a place where God lives by His Spirit-- I Cor. 6:19-20; Acts 9:15.
 - And at the same time, we are vessels made of the earth, the dust and clay of the earth. v. 7--"*But we have this **treasure** in jars of clay..."*

- What a contrast there is in II Corinthians 4:7 between God's transcendence and our earthiness; His uncommonness and our commonness, etc. (expand).
- How amazing and what a privilege believers have to be chosen clay vessels that are made to be containers of God's Spirit. We are even called His temple! WOW!!

On the other hand, meditate on this question:

3. **What is the description of a person without God?**

Answer: Simply stated, a person who does not have God in their life is **empty, vulnerable and not fulfilled as God intends His creation to be.**

- We sure don't think of those who are not followers of Jesus like that, do we?
- But this is an accurate picture of what the Scripture says about those who are **not** containers of God's Spirit.

Quote: As we all know, Pascal once said: "Within every man is a God-shaped vacuum."
Quote: Dr. Carl Jung affirmed this emptiness, too, when he said, "The world today is suffering from a neurosis of emptiness."

So in summary:

- People who do not have God living in them are empty, unfulfilled, vulnerable and suffering from a neurosis of emptiness; and nothing but God will fit the vacuum and fill their life with lasting meaning! (If you don't have Jesus in you, this description is not a slam; it's a call to be filled up with Him.)
 - **But on the other hand**, those of us who by God's grace have made a decision to invite Him into our lives,
 - have the vacuum in us filled with something unbelievably valuable.
 - This filling is so significant, the Scripture has a very special name for it.
4. **What is this filling called?** Scripture appropriately calls it a **treasure.** *II Corinthians 4:7a--"But we have this **treasure** in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us." (This is the treasure that everyone is looking for.)*

To give us an even better picture of this treasure:

5. **Let's see how the context specifically describes the treasure.**

- I want to take a few minutes to describe this treasure and then we will apply it to our lives.
- Look at the verses preceding vv. 4-6.
- II Corinthians 4:4-6 states--The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5] For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6] For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [Gen. 1:3] made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
 - If we catch the grandeur and beauty of these verses, we will never be the same,
 - and no trial need ever destroy our peace, or our sense of who we are - our identity.
 - The creator God who said "Let there be light" said "let there be light in us--His light."

What a description!

- a. The treasure, the one who fills the vacuum, is a Person. "...the glory of Christ, who is the image of God... (it's) his light (that) shine(s) in our hearts"--vv. 4b,6b.
 - In Colossians 1:27 we see a similar description: "*Christ in you the hope of glory.*"

Quote: Ray Stedman used to say: "He adds the extra to our ordinary to make our lives extraordinary..."

- So the treasure is so valuable that it can't be purchased or earned because it is a person, Jesus Christ.
- In a very beautiful way Paul describes Jesus as "...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ..." (What a treasure!!)
- This treasure is the hope of glory; the treasure is a person--Jesus Christ.

But Paul isn't finished describing the treasure. He continues by saying:

- b. The treasure is not only a person, it could also be called: "*all-surpassing power...*" *II Corinthians 4:7a*--"*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*"

1) Definition of power: Now this is not ordinary power of the mind, or of a super personality, but this "*all-surpassing power...*" is what the Bible also calls resurrection power, in other places. (See Romans 6:5-14.)

2) Description: For the believer, the sequence is the same as it was for Christ:

- First, it's death, then life. (In other words, we die to our old life and we come alive in His resurrection power.)
- Our spiritual death is intended to lead to us to resurrection life.
- It is like Spring coming out of Winter, life out of death.

3) **Here are a few more things to note about this power:**

- a) This isn't the kind of power the world seeks.
 - It is a power that is often released without fanfare,
 - but it will have inevitable and unbelievable impact.
- b) This power, therefore, is the quiet and secret source of our adequacy.
- c) In fact, this power is the secret of humanity, as God intended us to be.
 - God does not want us to operate in this life powerless--in our strength.
 - He wants us to walk in, and appropriate daily, the same power that raised Christ from the dead.

- d) This is so significant. Please listen to me when I say it is counterproductive to try to cover up our humanness with hypocrisy, boasting, or isolation.
- We actually hurt the witness of Christ's power and life when we try to be more than we are.
 - When we are real and transparent people (fragile and flawed), and yet the life, love, and power of Jesus is also present, then it is obvious the life we have is coming from God and not from us.
- e) In our weakness the world sees we are just clay pots filled with God's power.
- f) This brings them hope and also gives God the glory!!
- g) This is very clear when we read sections of Scripture that give to us segments of the Apostle Paul's biography.
- h) For example, take a few minutes to read through a description of Paul's life in II Corinthians 11:16-12:10.
- At the conclusion of that section he writes: 7] *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.* 8] *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.* 9] *But 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.* 10] *That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
 - What an amazing description of the importance of our weakness and the impact of the treasure of God's Spirit living in us as jars of clay.
 - It is easy to see there is no way Paul could respond, as is described in this section, without the person and power of God living in him.
 - Therefore, because Paul was weak (and it was obvious he was weak), then the all-surpassing power did its work and he was made strong.

So we should all know the answer to this question:

6. Why do we contain the treasure of God's Spirit, this all-surpassing power? Why did God choose us? *"...to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."*
- a. In other words, the clay, our humanness can be a tool!
- Do you get it? Your weaknesses, my faults can have a great purpose...to show off what we contain.
 - Is this an excuse for flakiness and erratic behavior as a believer? No!
 - Is this a great opportunity to be real and genuine? YES!

- b. It is by design that God entrusts this secret power to failing, weak, and sinful people, so it will be clear that this power does not originate from us, but from Him.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples:

- 1) Example: In the Old Testament, Gideon collected 32,000 men to defeat 135,000 of the enemy. "The Lord said..."--Judges 7:2-8.
- 2) Example: In I Corinthians 1:22-30, we see that God chose us, the weak and foolish, so it would be obvious we couldn't boast in our strength or prowess.

- c. So in summary: It must be apparent that this treasure and power is not from us: **"Nothing coming from us, everything coming from God."**
- People who are empty don't have Jesus in their life; they need to get the idea that real strength comes from another Person.
 - People who have a God-shaped void in them need to see we are clay pots.
 - People who need God need to be convinced it is the power of Christ in us that makes us strong. The praise is His and the frailty is ours.
 - Therefore, it is okay if our "clay-ness" is obvious, as long as we are relying on the "all-surpassing power," the treasure of God's Spirit living in us to make us strong.

Let's linger a few moments and think about this power. Why else do we need this power?

II. There are four categories of troubles described here to demonstrate why we need this power and the treasure of Christ as Paul did. This is where our theology becomes biography--where what we believe is now very specifically translated into shoe leather.

On author said this: "Now, as Paul develops this, there is an interesting volley between the trials...(we)...experience, and the triumphs we experience... Have you ever been to a tennis match where rather than watching the movement of the ball you watch the audience following the movement of the ball from left to right? This is (what follows next) in the text: (Here we see) trial--triumph--trial--triumph--trial--triumph, and the volley between these two phenomena in life. It is a fact that we are going to experience some tough days, but we are going to have triumph"--Dan Baumann, Confronted by Love, Regal Books, p. 37, 1978.

Paul says there are four trials and these trials are much like a soldier faces in conflict.

A. **"We are hard pressed on every side..."--v. 8a.**

- **"...hard pressed on every side..."**
(It means we have an opponent that leaves little room for action--Acts 16:22-40.)

But because of this treasure and this all-surpassing power,

- **"...(we are) not crushed.."**(We are not hemmed in.)
(That means the enemy is unable to drive us into a corner where no movement is possible.)
1. Christians have the normal pressures life brings, e.g., sunburn, losing wallets, forgetting keys, a flat tire on a rainy day, lost assignments, a flaky roommate, financial pressure, a messy house, cranky kids, a frustrating job, sore muscles and concern for their families.
 - We may say: "I really feel a lot of pressure; I don't have many options."
 - As Christians, we will also experience strong opposition and be persecuted, attacked and mistreated for our faith, and even because we are Americans.
 - Christians will feel the rage and anger of those who hate us, e.g., the attacks in New York.

2. As believers, we are not immune to hard, pressing circumstances on EVERY side, but this passage declares we need **not be crushed**. Why?
 - We have a treasure, a power that is designed to handle not only normal irritations, but the tremendous emergencies as well.
 - So while the *pressure* is building up on the outside, the *power* is pushing from the inside, so we are not crushed; we are not hemmed in!
 - Scripture promises us in I Corinthians 10:13--“No temptation (no test of faith) has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted (tested) beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
 - “*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed.*”

In addition to being “...*hard pressed on every side*...”

B. “*We are...perplexed...*”--v. 8b.

- “...*perplexed...*”
(The word perplexed comes from two words “narrow” and “space.” Get the picture of being boxed in a small room like a telephone booth and feeling at our wits end. It could mean we are in much doubt, and hesitate greatly; or it can mean to have limited ability to cope. The focus is on mental pressure.) But does that need to be our final state?
 - “...*but not in despair...*”
(It means even though we may be without proper provisions or resources, we are not totally at a loss or abandoned. One translation says “perplexed, but not without hope.”)
1. Christians can be perplexed and uncertain of what they should do--II Cor. 1:8-9a; Acts 16:6-9.
 - We may have many questions unanswered.
 - We may have many doubts and be stretched beyond our ability to cope.
 2. But the wonderful thing is, our doubts and limited perspective can often become a point of vision for us--the power within us can create a sense of hope.
 - If we take our perplexing situation and go to God in prayer, or seek counsel from the Scriptures and others...
 - the result is, we will not be in despair.
 - We will find this “narrow mental space” gives way to hope for our situation.
 - In our struggle for perspectives and answers we find God is our counselor;
 - He helps us to see through our doubts and find a place of trust--Prov. 3:5-6.

Example: This week I got a letter from Eric Watt. He was in India and felt he should not fly to Russia. He wasn't sure why, but even though he was very perplexed, he decided not to go. A few days later the airline he would have been flying on stopped all operations. If he had flown, he would have been stranded in Russia until other arrangements could be made. The circumstances in that region of the world are also very unsteady! He was perplexed for a moment, but not hemmed in.

- We, too, can be very perplexed about the world's situation and feel our ability to cope and understand is being pushed into a few narrow options, all of which we don't like.
- But as believers, we have a real advantage.
- We need not be in despair, because we have this *all-surpassing power in us*.
- **Our God is not just over all,**
 - He lives in us by His Spirit, and
 - He opens up our options and gives us hope!

Application: Who am I talking to right now? Who is in this place?

- You have some big doubts about your future, or you seem to have limited ability to cope.
- Your options feel very narrow and you sense a great deal of mental pressure.
- My strongest encouragement is, don't be squeezed.
- If you are a believer, draw on the power of God in you and have hope. Refuse the confining space of despair.
- If you are not a follower of Jesus, then I encourage you to invite Him into your clay jar. Let His power work for you.

In addition to these problems, as believers we should know there will be times:

C. **"We (will be) ...persecuted..."**--v. 9a.

- **"...persecuted..."**

(It means we are pursued, hunted and maybe driven out.)

- **"...but not abandoned..."**

(It means we are not left behind, or left solely to our resources, unable to escape--Acts 9:23-25.)

1. This word "persecution" runs the gamut of offenses, e.g., unkind words, cold shoulders, critical remarks, outright rebuke of our faith, deliberate efforts to hurt, even torture, or death--II Cor. 11:23-29; Matt. 5:10-12; I Thess. 3:4.

Example: I heard yesterday of two young men who smuggled Bibles into North Korea. One of the two men was caught and beaten to death, but the other escaped. The one who escaped was so inspired by the his friend's faith and martyrdom, he has led 100 people to the Lord in North Korea and he continues to smuggle Bibles in at risk to his life. Why? because of the power that is in him he has internal resources.

Example: That may seem like an example that has no application to us, but let me ask what our response will be when people attack our faith because we state gently that death does not assure a person eternal life with God; because Jesus is the only way to the Father, according to the Scriptures?

- As we know, many people feel all roads lead to God and one faith is as good as another.
- Yes, it is a wonderful tenet of our democracy that we have freedom of religion, but I want us to be prepared for the fact that we will be persecuted in an increasing fashion for repeating Jesus' words: *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*--John 14:6.

Example: Our persecution may take the form of

- the silent treatment.
- It may mean you will be isolated from your friends and family because of your faith.
- You maybe accused falsely of something.
- You may cry out: "Oh God, I am alone, all alone."

How will we handle the persecution?

2. The hope we have from applying II Corinthians 4:9 is that persecution should never separate us from the help, wisdom, and solutions we need.
 - We may be "***persecuted, but (we) are not abandoned...***"--*we have our God with us.*
 - Psalm 27:1 affirms this when it says: "The LORD is my light and my salvation-- whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?"

Example: Joan of Arc said, when she was abandoned by those who should have stood by her, "It is better to be alone with God. His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare and dare until I die" (Psalm 27:1)--**William Barclay**. (We are) "***persecuted, but (we) are not abandoned...***"

How about if:

- D. "***We are...struck down...***"--v. 9b (We might say we are pummeled.)

Note: Pardon me, but if you are a pastor you can't pass up a chance for a good alliteration like this: We are pressured, perplexed, persecuted and pummeled. What a list!

- "***...struck down...***"
(It means we are cast down to the ground, maybe pummeled--Acts 14:19-20.)
 - "***...but not destroyed...***"
(It means we are not lost or ruined, but we can get up and continue to move in the way God calls us.)
1. These are catastrophes, shattering blows (cancer, fatal accidents, heart attacks, riot, war, earthquakes, literal beatings).

• Example: Can you imagine the perplexing questions Christian believers must have who lost friends and family because of the terrorist attacks in New York?

• Example: How about the news we heard this week that there is a 100% chance that we will have more terrorist attacks, especially if we attack select targets and individuals in Afghanistan and other places in the Middle East.

2. There will be terrible experiences in our lifetime which will try our faith to the limit and leave us frightened and baffled.
 - What is God's ultimate desire, however, as we go through these circumstances?
 - Does He want these blows to end our peace, destroy our hope and leave us fearful?

3. There is an *all-surpassing power* in us, that makes it possible that we can be “...*struck down, but not destroyed...*”

Example: Of course, one of the greatest biblical examples of being struck down is Job.

- Here is a man who lost his children, his resources and was inflicted with a terrible skin condition.
- What was his response? Job 13:15a--“*Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him...*”
- Why did he say this?

Answer: Again, the answer is II Corinthians 4:7--“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

Project: What are some other examples of the above categories?

- **Think about the specific situations in your life that fit under each of these categories: “*hard pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted, struck down.*”**
- **Then conclude with God’s answer: Whatever the problem or circumstance, because God is in us and His power is all-surpassing: WE/YOU are *not crushed, not in despair, not abandoned and not destroyed...*”**

Conclusion: Now as we look at these things happening to us, what is our reaction?

Are these verses in II Corinthians 4 our testimony? 8] “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9] persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

- We should understand that all four stages we have studied are present passive participles in the Greek. What does that mean to us?
 - A present tense in the original language meant continuous action.
 - That means each of these four areas will come at us relentlessly.
 - These problems don’t come only in our high school years.
 - They don’t come only in the middle years of our life;
 - Or only in our fifties;
 - Or in our seventies.
 - They keep occurring.

Example: I remember a particular conversation I had with my grand father when he was 94. He was telling me about something he was working on in his spiritual life. I wanted to stop him. I didn’t want to know that at 94 a person can still have some things to improve on or develop. I was hoping that a person got to a stage in their life where they could just coast--they didn’t have anything else to work on. What a frustrating conversation it was to find out I was wrong! My grandfather was so sincere as he talked about this area of his life that He was still praying about. These four stages keep occurring our whole life!

- These four areas are not things we bring on ourselves, necessarily; they just come uninvited.
- It’s as natural as life.
- The trials will come, the tests will come, and if you don’t have any of these troubles, I can remind you of a few if your memory fails.

Is there a reason for this continuous series of stretching experiences throughout our life?

- Thankfully there is, and many of the verses that follow give those reasons.
- Let me point out one of the main ones as we close.
 - I'll just read the passage and it will be obvious why trouble comes.
 - Listen for the reason: **4:10**--*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 be revealed in our mortal body. (See: II Cor. 1:8-9.)*
- Notice the words “**so that**” is mentioned twice.
- We have these trials, tests, sufferings, so we will die a little more to ourselves.
- In other words, we die to ourselves “*so that*” the life of Jesus will be revealed in us!
- That means resurrection power doesn't occur until there is death.
- We have to die to ourselves before we can live, and each of these four categories are the catalyst for the life of Jesus to be seen in us!
- *So don't give up; we will have trials, but we will have triumphs!*

Application Questions

1. What is the effect of this kind of life as described in this passage?
2. Verses 12-15 seem to say the life described here reaches far beyond any one individual. It seems as we die to ourself it becomes life to others, just as it did when Jesus died. Ask yourself, “who would be affected by my death to self?” Why are we not dead to our self yet?
3. As we look at these things happening to us, what is our reaction? Be honest, are these verses our testimony?
4. What makes the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian under the same pressures?
5. Why is it some non-Christians act better under pressure than some believers?

**Robyn stop---Save for the rest future teaching--don't use
--no reason to correct.**

III. There are 2 things which release life in us while we are under pressure--vv. 10-11.

4:10--*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.* (That means resurrection power doesn't occur until there is death. We have to die before we can live.) 11] *For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.* (See: II Cor. 1:8-9.)

Here we see:

A. **The inner attitude** to which we must consent: it is our willingness to accept the implications of His death.

Let's remind ourselves of the basics:

1. What did Jesus become on the cross?
 - a. He became what we were, even though He was sinless--II Cor. 5:21.
 - b. In other words, He was made sin for us, our substitute--Rom. 3:23; 6:23.
2. What does this mean to us? v. 10a--"*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus...*"
 - a. Carrying around the death of Jesus reminds us as believers we must accept the verdict of the cross on our natural resources.

Our natural resources are worthless, but we as people are valuable--Mk. 8:34.

- b. Carrying around in our body the death of Jesus is also saying, "Lord, I depend on you."
- c. What will be the result? v. 10b--*For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.*" (See also Rom. 6:5-8.)

4:10--*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*

- *That Means* resurrection power doesn't occur until there is death. We have to die before we can live.)

B. **The outer factors** are those we have no control over--v. 11.

4:11 (See: II Cor. 1:8-9)

1. This is different from the first.
 - a. The first was an attitude in which we must consent: it is stated in the active voice. v. 10--"*We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.*"

- b. The second is stated in the passive voice: it is something done to us, not something we do.
2. This is when God deliberately puts us into situations where we are way over our heads. Why?--v. 11b.

4:11--*For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. (See II Cor. 1:8-9.)*

(Means resurrection power doesn't occur until there is death. We have to die before we can live.)

Summary: What is the effect of this kind of life? It reaches far beyond any one individual. vv. 12-15. As we die to ourself it becomes life to others, just as it did when Jesus died. Ask yourself, "who would be affected by my death to self?" Why are we not dead to our self yet?

As we look at these things happening to us, what is our reaction? Are these verses our testimony? What makes the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian under the same pressures?

III. There are two differences--vv. 10-11.

- A. **The inner attitude** to which we must consent: our willingness to accept the implications of His death.
 1. What did Jesus become on the cross?
 - a. He became what we were--II Cor. 5:21.
 - b. He was made sin for us.
 2. What does this mean to us--v. 10a?
 - a. It is accepting the verdict of the cross on our natural resources --Mk. 8:34.
 - b. It is saying, "Lord, I depend on you." Result? v. 10b; Rom 6:5-8
- B. **The second factor** which produces life in us outwardly--v. 11.
 1. This is a different than the first.
 - a. The first was an attitude in which we must consent--it is stated in the active voice--v. 10a.
 - b. The second is stated in the passive voice: it is something done to us, not something we do.
 2. This is when God deliberately puts us into situations where we are way over our heads--II Cor. 1:8-9.

3. The process is in two steps. It is repeated over and over again in Scripture.
 - a. "Consider yourself dead to sin (step 1), and alive to God in Christ Jesus (step 2)."
 - b. "Put off the old man (step 1), put on the new (step 2)."

Conclusion: What is the effect of this kind of life? It reaches far beyond any one individual --v. 12-15. **4:12** *So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. 13]* It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, **14]** because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. **15]** All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.