***2 Corinthians 4:7-10 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed - 10always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.***

In these verses, the treasure is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We hold great treasure when we believe in Jesus, the treasure of Light, the treasure of Truth, the very treasure of Eternal Life – The power of God, the power of the One that commanded let there be Light, lies within us. I ask myself – am I living as though the power of God, the treasure of Jesus, is living in me? We mustn’t mix the power of God with the waste of this world. If I have a gallon of gas, I can power many things. Mix gas half and half with water and I won’t get very far. Pour pure water into the gas tank and I won’t go anywhere at all. Likewise, pure Jesus will power us a long way but mix in the world and we won’t go nearly as far.

Verse 7 starts - *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* Paul now speaks of our earthly person, calling it an earthen vessel. The one thing we all know about earthen vessels is that they are limited. True of a milk jug. True of a flowerpot. True of a human. We’re limited. Yet, God has chosen, by His unlimited Grace and unmerited Favor, to place the greatest treasure ever, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, into these limited vessels. Hand me a box with a diamond ring inside, I know the treasure. No pirate ever fought over the wooden chest, but the gold and jewels inside. The treasure we hold as Christians is the treasure of Jesus within, not the earthen vessel without. Though flawed, limited, imperfect, we hold immeasurable treasure within.

Verse 7 continues - *that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*We sing a hymn called Victory in Jesus. The chorus in part says – He sought me and He bought me, with His redeeming blood. He sought me, bought me, why? He saw a vessel to place treasure within. Our earthen vessels are not the treasure, though some treat the physical as though it is. The excellence of the power contained within is the treasure. The Power of Christ unto Salvation and Eternal Life. A light unplugged is not of great use in the darkness, but plug it in, cut it on, and darkness flees. Likewise, we, unplugged from the power of Christ, look like the world, but fill us with the Holy Spirit and darkness to flees. But, lest we boast, the power is of God and not of us. Power, in Physics, is defined as work/time. In other words, power is the amount of work we do over the time we do it. More work over less time means more power present. God does unlimited work over limitless time. His power is unlimited and we, as earthen, time limited, strength limited, capacity limited vessels are graced with His power to do extraordinary things.

Verses 8-9 *We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.* Anyone here this morning feeling hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, or struck down? When we mix world in with spirit, we can get there quickly. By the world we are hard pressed on every side, but by God’s power we are not crushed. By the world, we are perplexed, but by God’s power we are not in despair. By the world we are persecuted, but by God’s power we are not forsaken. By the world we are struck down, but by God’s power we are not destroyed. The excellence of God’s power delivers us in times such as these. And, come what may as we look ahead, the excellence of God’s power, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Truth of Jesus will deliver us one fine day to our Eternal Home that He has gone to prepare, but it will also deliver us through this perplexing life.

Verse 10 *Always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.*Treasure is not placed in us to be buried on a sandy beach or lie hidden in a dark cave high in the mountains. No, we always carry about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus – why? That the life of Jesus may be manifested in us. The very power of Almighty God may come to be manifest – what does that word mean? It means to be rendered apparent - unmistakable, unmissable. Is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ unmistakable and unmissable, rendered apparent in me… in you… always?

This week, consider our imperfect earthen vessels and marvel that God has chosen to put so great a treasure as the Life of Jesus through the Holy Spirit into each of us. Remember Jesus’ assurance in John 16:33 *These things I have spoken to you, that****in Me*** *you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* When we open a diamond ring box, we don’t pitch the diamond and keep the box. Open a treasure chest and the jewels inside are kept, not the wooden box. As we open our eyes each morning, treasure not the broken world all around, but marvel as Romans 1:16 says - *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.* May we make unmistakable, unmissable, render apparent the Gospel of Christ, the very power of God to salvation in this earthen vessel we call our body. We are Light. We are salt. Let’s be a great witness for Jesus in this coming week and the weeks and months to come. God is in control. Let’s render apparent that we believe His Truth.