

**"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan****II CORINTHIANS 4****II Corinthians 4**

The Apostle Paul encourages the Corinthians to affirm their love for the sinning saint among them who had repented of grievous sin after the church had taken the action of discipline. Paul warned them that they must forgive, or the enemy would come in like a flood into their hearts and their membership.

***"Therefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. For to this end I also wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."*** (II Corinthians 2:8-11)

The word for "devices" in v.11 is the word for "schemes" or "mind games," as this is what the enemy does when we walk in known disobedience to the revealed will of God. After telling them that they are the very "living letters" of Jesus to the city of Corinth, Paul immediately tells them the incredible truth set forth in chapter four and the reality that the gospel is a treasure that is more precious than any earthly treasure because the gospel reveals the glory of God!

The Corinthians were urged not to "lose heart" but to be forever encouraged. They had received a ministry

that is based on the grace and mercy of God to share with everyone. They had this treasure in earthen vessels. In Greek, the word treasure is "***Thesaurus***," and the Greek word for earthen vessels is "***Ostraca***" or "clay pots," vessels made from the most common material in the ancient world. Clay had many limitations. It could be easily broken. It could not be used to store liquids for service in the Temple worship. The oil, wine, and pure water that was used in worship had to be in stone jars. But God, in His great wisdom, put the greatest treasure of all His gifts, the gospel, in clay pots! These "pots," or followers of Jesus, hold within them the glory of God, both in the Gospel and the very presence of God Himself in the Person of His Spirit. Clay pots were often broken, shattered, and thrown out in the garbage heap. In the days of the Bible, these "Ostraca" were often used even after breaking. The way they were most often used was to write portions of Holy Scripture with acidic ink that would bite into the porous clay. These broken "potsherds" would become instruments on which God would write the greatest message ever heard, the good news of Jesus, His words, and that of the new covenant.

**Prayer and Action Steps**

*Don't Faint! Don't lose heart! Don't be discouraged! God has deposited into each and every follower of Jesus the gospel as a sacred deposit. When we carry the treasure around with us without sharing it with others, we become discouraged and lose our joy. Share the message of God's great redemption story and "Don't give up!"*