

Jars of Clay

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. ~ 2 Corinthians 4:7

Discover the Context
2 Corinthians 4:1-7



If pride is a stumbling block for you, repent of that today in your prayer time. Confess to God your tendency to permit pride in your heart even while you are serving God.



“Oh gaze of love so melt my pride, that I may in Your house but kneel. And in my brokenness to cry, spring worship unto Thee.”

~ Jars of Clay
from album, *Much Afraid*



What gifts do you bring to the ministry of your camp? Are you allowing the giver of those gifts to shine through you, or are you taking glory for yourself? What will people remember most about you? What are some ways that your attitude or focus needs to change? What are some things you can do throughout the day to remind yourself that you are only a clay pot and that the real treasure is the good news of Jesus?

As you spend your summer working at camp—whether as a counselor or on support staff—you may begin to feel that you are doing something tremendous, really awesome. I can still remember my first summer as a counselor. I was so young in my faith, but I was fired up more than I ever thought I could be. I was thinking to myself, “I really have something to bring. I have something good to say to these kids.” My thoughts seemed to center around what I was doing. I felt pretty important.

When Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, he was writing to people who were new to the faith. They were on fire for Christ, but they were also immature Christians. Paul reminded them that they were not as powerful or important as they may have thought. In fact they were like fragile little jars of clay—jars that have no decoration, jars that break so easily. In Paul’s day valuable things were sometimes kept in those simple little jars. First of all thieves would not take the time to look at a plain jar, and so it made a good place for hiding things. Second—and this is what Paul is talking about in this verse—the very plainness of the jar stands in contrast to the great treasure inside, emphasizing just how precious and valuable the treasure really is. As jars of clay we are plain, simple, and imperfect. The spotlight is not on us.

So we are the jars. But what is the treasure inside us? The treasure we carry is the gospel message that Jesus came to rescue sinners. All of our imperfections only serve to highlight just how amazing God’s good news really is. This gospel saved us, sustains us, and preserves us. It ushers us into the very presence of God.

As you interact with campers and staff today, ask yourself this question: What is truly amazing? The message of the gospel or the mouth that brings it? It is a great privilege to be able to offer the good news to others, but always remember that the treasure itself is the important thing. [MSP]