Dear Open Door Family,

Christmas has arrived in our home; the tree is up and the decorations are out. I have been playing great Christmas music since the start of November. It is no secret, I love Christmas. WHY? It is not because of the giving and receiving of gifts (though I am not against that and enjoy giving as much or more than receiving). For me it is one of those times of the year that brings beauty. I love the music, I love the lights and the decorations, and I love the fact that there are so many symbols of the Gift of God our Lord Jesus. The star on the tree - reminds me of the star that guided the Wiseman to Bethlehem. The lights on the tree and angel decorations remind me of the stars that shown over the shepherds before they heard the angel choir and the proclamation of a Savior being born. The gifts remind me of God's gift to us - our Lord Jesus. The tree itself reminds me that even though Jesus arrived as a helpless baby he would live a perfect life and die on a "tree" a cross for MY sins. I love Christmas because in it I always see the cradle and the cross. Christmas is a reminder of the fact that our GREATEST treasure in LIFE should be Jesus our Lord. Let's look at these verses that speak of this Treasure.

2 Corinthians 4:5-7 *(HCS) For we are not proclaiming ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves because of Jesus. [6] For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ. [7] Now we have this TREASURE in CLAY JARS, so that this extraordinary power may be from God and NOT from us.*

2 Corinthians 4:1-7 *(JBP) For it is Christ Jesus the Lord whom we preach, not ourselves; we are your servants for his sake. God, who first ordered 'light to shine in darkness', has flooded our hearts with his light. [6] We now can enlighten men only because we can give them knowledge of the glory of God, as we see it in the face of Jesus Christ. [7] This PRICELESS TREASURE we hold, so to speak, in a COMMON EARTHENWARE JAR - to show that the splendid power of it belongs to God and NOT to us.*

There is discussion by scholars as to whether this TREASURE is Jesus or the gospel itself. My thought is that without Jesus you do not have the gospel. It can also be stated that Jesus IS the Gospel. Take Jesus out of the equation and there is no salvation - only judgment and death and separation from God. So the Treasure is JESUS and The GOOD NEWS of His death, burial and resurrection. The point Paul is making however, is that this good news - this message - the indwelling Jesus Christ is PRICELESS. The contrast he makes is that WE the *"jars of clay"* or plain *"common earthenware"* jars are what God uses to DISPLAY the priceless TREASURE. WHY? So that everyone will look past the jar of clay to the TREASURE. It is NOT about us, the jar of clay, it is about Jesus our Lord who is God's Priceless Gift to us. God wants to display the Glory of Jesus and His power in us in a way that makes everyone see the TREASURE not the plain ordinary clay pot. So as we look at our Christmas trees and see the lights and look at the gifts - let us remember we are only jars of clay that crack and break and fade away. Let us remember that JESUS is the Priceless treasure and may we seek to show the wonder of His power and beauty to the world.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to earth, living and dying for me. Thank you that You can take this common clay pot and use it for Your own purposes. Please, Lord Jesus, use me in anyway that will demonstrate Your power and majesty to the world. Please, Lord God, may they see YOU and not me.

Pastor Mark Kieft
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