

Dr. J. Ayodeji Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5, 2 Corinthians 4 – Treasure in Jars of Clay Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5, 2 Corinthians 4 – Treasure in Jars of Clay, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Adewuya's session on 2 Corinthians 4 explores the resilience of Christian ministers facing adversity. He examines Paul's unwavering commitment despite opposition, attributing it to his divine calling under the new covenant and the transformative power of the gospel. **The teaching highlights the paradox of possessing a priceless spiritual treasure within fragile human "jars of clay," emphasizing that suffering does not negate ministry but can its divine origin.** Adewuya unpacks Paul's descriptions of hardship contrasted with unwavering faith, sustained by the assurance of future resurrection and the desire to serve others for God's glory. Ultimately, the session encourages believers to persevere through trials by focusing on eternal perspectives and the surpassing glory to come, remembering that present afflictions are temporary and light in comparison.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → 2 Corinthians).



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3. Briefing Document: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5, 2 Corinthians 4 – Treasure in Jars of Clay

Briefing Document: Dr. Ayo Adewuya on 2 Corinthians 4 - Treasure in Jars of Clay

Source: Excerpts from "Adewuya_2Cor_EN_Session05.pdf" by Dr. Ayo Adewuya and Ted Hildebrandt (© 2024)

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Prepared For: [Intended Audience - e.g., Theological Study Group, Ministry Leaders]

Prepared By: AI Assistant

Executive Summary:

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and key ideas presented by Dr. Ayo Adewuya in his session on 2 Corinthians 4, titled "Treasure in Jars of Clay." Adewuya explores the reasons for Paul's perseverance in ministry despite facing significant opposition and hardship. He highlights the divine appointment and provision for ministry, the integrity and truthfulness of Paul's gospel, the paradoxical nature of possessing the glorious gospel in fragile human vessels, the contrasts between suffering and glory, and the unwavering faith grounded in the resurrection of Christ. The session emphasizes the importance of focusing on Christ, not self, in ministry and the eternal perspective that sustains believers through present afflictions.

Main Themes and Key Ideas:

1. Sustenance in Ministry Amidst Adversity:

- Adewuya begins by addressing the challenges faced by Christian leaders, including opposition from Satan, discouragement, and burnout, questioning what sustains those who remain in ministry. He asks, "What keeps a Christian walker going in the midst of pressures and adversaries?" and notes the "growing concern today among denominations and people about the number of people who are leaving the pastoral ministry."
- He seeks to understand "what makes Paul tick," what sustains him through his difficulties.
- Paul's sustenance comes from the "divine appointment and provision to be a minister of the covenant," resuming the theme from 2 Corinthians 3:6.

2. The Nature and Defense of Paul's Ministry:

- Paul's ministry is a result of God's mercy, building on the idea of the "ministry of grace" and "ministry of the Spirit" from the previous chapter. He states, "He opens up by saying he has this ministry, and then he adds the qualification that sets him apart from his opponents, that his ministry is a result of God's mercy."
- Paul actively defends his ministry against opponents who accuse him of dishonesty and deceit. He declares, "as a minister of the new covenant, he had renounced all dishonesty and deceit, and instead, he continues to commend himself to every person's conscience by proclaiming the truth."
- He emphasizes his integrity in handling the Word of God, stating, "we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. Not working in craftiness, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but a manifestation of the truth."
- Adewuya points out that Paul's self-commendation is not for self-vindication but for declaring the truth with God as his witness: "His self-commendation was undertaken with God as an onlooker."

3. The Gospel and the Blinding Influence of Satan:

- Paul's gospel is not veiled due to his own actions but because "the God of this world has blinded their minds, which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine to them."
- Adewuya clarifies that "the God of this age" refers to Satan, a "usurper," not God the Father. This explains why some do not receive the gospel despite faithful preaching.

4. Christ-Centered Preaching vs. Self-Promotion:

- The core of Paul's preaching is "Christ Jesus the Lord," not himself. He states, "for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."
- Adewuya critiques the modern tendency towards self-promotion and eloquence over substance in preaching, contrasting it with Paul's focus: "Sometimes you listen to a message for 30 minutes, for one hour, then you ask yourself, what did he really say? What did he really say? You can't make anything out, because the message is just about self-promotion."
- He emphasizes that all aspects of preaching, even giving, should be tied to Christ. "It doesn't matter what we preach; it must be Christ who is at the center."

5. The Paradox of Treasure in Earthen Vessels:

- Verse 7 introduces a central paradox: "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us."
- The "treasure" refers to "the illumination that comes from the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ."
- The "earthen vessels" represent the weakness and insignificance of the human messengers, highlighting that the power of the gospel is God's alone. Adewuya illustrates this with the story of a blind preacher through whom God worked miracles: "That is to let you know that the power is not mine; it is God's. That is to let you know that I am not doing miracles, but God is walking through me."

6. Suffering and Glory: Paradoxical Realities of Apostolic Ministry:

- Paul's sufferings are not a sign of failure but a manifestation of a ministry derived from a suffering Lord. He wears his suffering as a "badge of honor" and affirmation of his apostleship.
- Adewuya highlights the "catalog of hardships" in verses 8 and 9, which present four vivid antitheses: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed. We are perplexed but not in despair. Persecuted, but not forsaken. Cast down, but not destroyed."
- These metaphors of military and gladiatorial combat illustrate the intense pressures Paul faced but also his resilience and God's sustaining grace. "He was hard-pressed on every side. He said, but I am not cornered."

7. The Dying of Jesus and the Manifestation of His Life:

- Verses 10 and 11 describe the paradoxical experience of always "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."
- This signifies life in the midst of death, where repeated deliverances evidence the resurrection power. "It was not a matter of life after death, or even of life through death, but life in the midst of death."

8. Faith Grounded in Resurrection as the Source of Perseverance:

- Paul's ability to faithfully discharge his ministry stems from his faith, rooted in the resurrection of Christ, which guarantees the resurrection of believers. "Knowing

that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise us up also by Jesus and shall present us with you."

- He shares the psalmist's conviction that "faith cannot remain silent" (quoting Psalm 116:10).
- This faith is not just a feeling but a commitment to the objective truth of God's power demonstrated in Christ's resurrection.

9. Eternal Perspective and the Value of Present Afflictions:

- Paul does not lose heart because he has an eternal perspective. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."
- He characterizes present sufferings as "light affliction, which is but for a moment," contrasting it with the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."
- Adewuya encourages believers to adopt this perspective, recognizing that present hardships are temporary compared to the eternal glory awaiting them. "Your affliction is heavy. Yes, I know it's heavy on your side, but compared with what lies ahead, it is but for a moment."

10. Reasons for Paul's Unwavering Spirit:

- Adewuya summarizes three key reasons for Paul's resilience:
- His divine commission as a minister of a new and superior covenant.
- The prospect of sharing Christ's triumphant resurrection.
- The immediate task of reaching and building up the Corinthians for the glory of God.

Conclusion:

Dr. Adewuya's session on 2 Corinthians 4 provides valuable insights into the motivations and sustaining power behind Paul's enduring ministry. The chapter reveals the paradoxical nature of Christian service, where divine power is manifested through human weakness, and present suffering yields eternal glory. The emphasis on Christ-centeredness, integrity, and an unwavering faith grounded in the resurrection serves as a powerful reminder for believers and ministers facing their own challenges today. The session concludes with the encouragement to "turn your face upon Jesus" and remember the temporary nature of earthly afflictions in light of eternal realities.

4. Study Guide: Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5, 2 Corinthians 4 – Treasure in Jars of Clay

2 Corinthians 4: Treasure in Jars of Clay - Study Guide

Key Themes:

- The nature and defense of Paul's ministry.
- The contrast between the weakness of the messenger and the power of the gospel.
- The paradoxical nature of Christian life: suffering and glory.
- The importance of integrity and truthfulness in ministry.
- The believer's hope in resurrection as a sustaining force.
- Focusing on the unseen, eternal realities over the seen, temporal ones.

Quiz:

1. According to Dr. Adewuya, what question does Paul address at the beginning of 2 Corinthians 4 regarding Christian ministers facing pressures and adversaries?
2. What does Paul state in 2 Corinthians 4:1 as the reason he does not lose heart in his ministry, and how does he contrast his ministry with that of Moses?
3. In what ways does Paul defend the integrity of his ministry against potential accusations from his opponents, as highlighted in 2 Corinthians 4:2-3?
4. According to Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:4, who is "the god of this world" and what is their primary aim concerning the gospel?
5. What is the central message that Paul and his co-workers preach, as stated in 2 Corinthians 4:5, and what societal pressures on preachers does Dr. Adewuya mention in relation to this?
6. Explain the metaphor of "treasure in jars of clay" in 2 Corinthians 4:7. What does the treasure represent, and what do the earthen vessels symbolize, according to Dr. Adewuya?
7. Describe the four paradoxical antitheses Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 to illustrate the experiences of his ministry.

8. How do 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 explain the relationship between the "dying of Jesus" and the "life of Jesus" in the apostle's experience?
9. What are the two key convictions that enable Paul to faithfully discharge his ministry, as discussed in relation to 2 Corinthians 4:13-14?
10. According to 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, what is the contrast Paul draws between the "outward person" and the "inward person," and how does this relate to the concepts of "light affliction" and "eternal weight of glory"?

Answer Key:

1. Paul addresses the question of what keeps a Christian walker, specifically God's people and ministers, going in the midst of pressures and opposition from Satan, questioning whether these adversities are sufficient reasons for quitting.
2. Paul states that his ministry is a result of God's mercy and grace, which sets him apart from his opponents and gives him no reason to lose heart. He contrasts his ministry of the new covenant, dispensing the grace of God, as a higher calling than Moses' ministry of the law, which had faded.
3. Paul defends his integrity by stating that he has renounced dishonesty and deceit, does not handle God's word deceitfully, but manifests the truth and commends himself to every person's conscience in God's sight. He insists his tactics are not secretive or manipulative, and he preaches the word as it is given to him.
4. "The god of this world" is Satan, regarded as the prince of this world and a usurper. His primary aim is to blind the minds of unbelievers lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
5. The central message Paul preaches is Christ Jesus the Lord, not himself. Dr. Adewuya mentions societal pressures on preachers in a media-oriented society to display eloquence and oratorical skills for entertainment, sometimes overshadowing the substance of the message.
6. The "treasure" in the metaphor represents the glorious gospel of Christ, the light of the knowledge of God's glory. The "earthen vessels" symbolize the weakness and insignificance of the human messengers, particularly Paul and his fellow workers, highlighting that the power of the gospel comes from God, not themselves.
7. The four antitheses are: troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. These

illustrate that despite intense hardships, Paul and his co-workers were not overwhelmed, hopeless, abandoned, or ultimately defeated.

8. These verses explain that the apostles constantly experience a form of "dying" as they face perils and hardships for Jesus' sake. This constant exposure to death allows the "life of Jesus" – His resurrection power and sustaining grace – to be made manifest in their mortal flesh, demonstrating God's deliverance.
9. The two key convictions are: first, Paul shared the psalmist's conviction that faith cannot remain silent (I believed, therefore I have spoken, quoting Psalm 116:10); and second, he had a firm Christian conviction that Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all believers, including himself and the Corinthians.
10. Paul contrasts the "outward person," which is subject to physical decay, assaults, and hardships, with the "inward person," which is being spiritually renewed day by day. He considers his present sufferings as a "light affliction which is but for a moment" that works for believers a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," emphasizing the focus on unseen, eternal realities over temporal difficulties.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of the "treasure in jars of clay" metaphor (2 Corinthians 4:7) in understanding Paul's perspective on ministry. How does this paradox inform his understanding of power, weakness, and the source of effectiveness in spreading the gospel?
2. Discuss the various ways in which Paul defends the integrity and truthfulness of his ministry in 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. What accusations might he be addressing, and how does he counter them? What does this reveal about the challenges faced by early Christian leaders?
3. Explore the relationship between suffering and glory as presented in 2 Corinthians 4:7-18. How does Paul interpret his hardships in light of Christ's experience and the promise of future resurrection? What implications does this have for the understanding of Christian life?
4. Examine the factors that sustain Paul in his ministry despite facing numerous adversities, as highlighted in 2 Corinthians 4. What role do faith, the hope of resurrection, and his understanding of his calling play in his perseverance?
5. Consider the tension between the "seen" and the "unseen" in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. How does Paul encourage believers to maintain perspective amidst present difficulties, and what is the significance of focusing on eternal realities?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Ministry (διακονία - diakonia):** Service, often specifically referring to the work of proclaiming the gospel and caring for the church.
- **New Covenant (καινή διαθήκη - kainē diathēkē):** The new agreement established by God through Jesus Christ, based on grace and the Spirit, in contrast to the old covenant based on the Law of Moses.
- **Mercy (ἔλεος - eleos):** Compassion or pity shown to someone in need; in this context, God's unmerited favor enabling Paul's ministry.
- **Dishonesty (ἀσέλγεια - aselgeia):** Shamelessness, indecency, or licentiousness, which Paul renounces in his ministry.
- **Craftiness (πανουργία - panourgia):** Cunning, trickery, or deceitful schemes, which Paul denies using in his ministry.
- **Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον - euangelion):** The good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **God of this world (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου - ho theos tou aiōnos toutou):** A title used by Paul to refer to Satan, who blinds unbelievers to the truth of the gospel.
- **Image of God (εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ - eikōn tou theou):** Christ is presented as the visible and perfect representation of the invisible God.
- **Earthen vessels (ὀστράκινος σκεῦος - ostrakinos skeuos):** Fragile clay jars, used metaphorically to represent the weakness and frailty of the human messengers of the gospel.
- **Light affliction (ἡ γὰρ παραυτίκα ἐλαφρόν τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν - hē gar parautika elaphron tēs thlipseōs hēmōn):** Paul's description of his intense sufferings as temporary and light in comparison to the eternal glory to come.
- **Eternal weight of glory (ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης - hyperbolēn eis hyperbolēn aiōnion baros doxēs):** The surpassing and everlasting glory that believers will experience in the future, outweighing present sufferings.
- **Unseen (μὴ βλεπόμενα - mē blepomena):** The eternal, spiritual realities that are not currently visible to the physical eye, which believers should focus on.

- **Temporal (πρόσκαιρος - proskairos):** Lasting for only a limited time; Paul characterizes the seen, earthly realm as temporary.
- **Inner person (ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος - ho esō anthrōpos):** The unseen, spiritual aspect of a person that is being renewed by God.
- **Outward person (ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος - ho exō anthrōpos):** The physical, visible aspect of a person that is subject to decay and hardship.

5. FAQs on Adewuya, 2 Corinthians, Session 5, 2 Corinthians 4 – Treasure in Jars of Clay, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on 2 Corinthians 4: Treasure in Jars of Clay

1. What is the central question Paul addresses in 2 Corinthians 4, and what is his initial answer?

Paul addresses the question of what sustains a Christian, particularly ministers, amidst pressures and opposition. His initial answer, drawing from his divine appointment as a minister of the new covenant rooted in God's mercy (resuming the theme from 2 Corinthians 3:6), is that this divinely granted ministry prevents him from losing heart or fainting in the face of adversity.

2. How does Paul defend his ministry against potential accusations of dishonesty or deceit?

Paul vehemently denies using any hidden or dishonest tactics, craftiness, or deceit in handling God's word. Instead, he emphasizes the "manifestation of the truth," commending himself to every person's conscience in the sight of God. He asserts that he preaches the gospel as it is, without adulteration, and his self-commendation is simply a declaration of the truth, aware of God's constant observation.

3. According to Paul, why might the gospel appear "hidden," and who is behind this veiling?

Paul argues that if the gospel is hidden, it is not due to his failings but because "the god of this world" (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers to prevent them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. This veiling is a result of unbelief, not an intentional obscurity on Paul's part.

4. What is the essence of Paul's preaching, and what does he contrast it with?

The essence of Paul's preaching is not the promotion of himself but the proclamation of "Christ Jesus the Lord." He contrasts this with self-promotion, eloquent but empty rhetoric, and messages focused on the preacher's experiences rather than Christ. He emphasizes that Jesus must be central to all preaching, including topics like giving and salvation.

5. What does Paul mean by having "treasure in jars of clay" (earthen vessels), and what is the significance of this metaphor?

The "treasure" refers to the glorious gospel and the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The "jars of clay" represent the weakness and insignificance of the human messengers, including Paul himself. This paradox highlights that the extraordinary power of the gospel is from God, not from the ministers, ensuring that the glory belongs to God alone.

6. How does Paul describe the paradoxical experiences of a minister in verses 8-9, and what is the underlying message?

Paul describes a series of paradoxes: "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." These antitheses illustrate the hardships and vulnerabilities faced by those in ministry, yet they also affirm God's sustaining power and the resilience that comes through faith. These are not signs of failure but rather manifestations of an apostleship derived from a suffering Lord.

7. What are the reasons Paul gives for not losing heart despite the difficulties he faces in his ministry?

Paul provides several reasons for his unwavering resolve: his divine commission as a minister of a new and superior covenant, his conviction in Christ's resurrection which guarantees the resurrection of believers (rooted in the same spirit of faith as the Psalmist in Psalm 116:10), and his ultimate aim of reaching the Corinthians and bringing glory to God.

8. How does Paul view his present sufferings in comparison to future glory, and how should this perspective encourage believers?

Paul characterizes his present afflictions, no matter how severe they may seem, as "light" and "but for a moment" when compared to the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" that awaits. This perspective encourages believers to endure present hardships by focusing on the eternal, unseen realities and the surpassing glory that will follow, reminding them that their current struggles are temporary and will lead to lasting glory.