

Paradoxes of Christian Ministry (2 Corinthians 4:7-12)

Intro.

- From the message to the ministry – a shift in focus (see v. 1)
- The message is of a new covenant which brings life (see 3:7-11)
- Paul and his co-workers are reminded of the need for humility.

I. The Paradox of Divine Investment

A. The Treasure:

- “for we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ...”
- “the light of knowledge

The treasure is the gospel that Christ has put in the hands of the church to communicate.

B. The Vessel: “jars of clay...”

- Paul is aware of how frail and fragile he is.
- The paradox: a priceless treasure in a cheap container.

II. Paradox of Hardship

- A. "A tight corner, but there is an escape"
- B. "At our wit's end, not at hope's end"
- C. "Attacked by people, comforted by God" (see 2 Timothy 4:9-17)
- D. "Down, but not out"

III. The Paradox of Life and Death

- A. We experience the pain of crucifixion and the glory of resurrection. (see Philippians 3:10)
- B. We expend ourselves for the life of others.
 - ministry means giving up ourselves for the sake of the other (see John 12:23-25)
- C. Christ becomes our model