

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: March 27, 2022

Inside-Out: Outer-Person versus Inner-Person

by Dan Trygg

“For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸ we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death works in us, but life in you... ¹⁵ For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.”

2 Corinthians 4:6-12,15-16

“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,... ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:14,16-19

In our “Inside-Out” study, we have looked at several word pictures that have been given to us to help us understand the nature of our salvation. What has happened, what is different, and how are we to live in a new way? We looked at the Old Covenant versus the New Covenant, ...a bad tree versus a good tree, ...the old creation versus the new creation, ...and the old person versus the new person. Each of these indicate that God has done something radically different within us. He gave us a new heart, one that naturally will obey God, ...He changed our nature by making us a “good tree”, one that will naturally produce good fruit, ...He made us a new creation, something that is profoundly different and of a superior quality, so that the things of our old life were pushed aside to make way for this new life, a life that serves God, ...and He created us as a new person, and made it possible for us to put aside the old person and live by that new inner self, which is already righteous and delights in God. **The thrust of all of these illustrations is that we are no longer bound to live the old way, ...we can live a different way, by virtue of this new thing God has introduced within us.** It is already there. It is already available to us to live by. **Instead of focusing on trying to stop sinning, we are to learn to live by this new inner dynamic that is within us.** The outworking of that new life will be obedience, good fruit, a life lived for God, ...one that is devoted to Him and loves to express His life.

Today, we are going to consider another of these word pictures: **The Outer-Person versus the Inner-Person.** This image adds a new dimension to our perception of this new thing that God has done within us. **This word picture would seem to indicate that our old nature, our sinful self, is somehow on the “outside”, and that our new, born from above self is somehow in a “deeper” or more “inward” place within our being.** This seems to fit with the teaching from 2 Corinthians 5:17, that “if anyone is in Christ, ...the old things passed-off-to the side; behold, new things have come.” Our word picture from 2 Corinthians 4 seems to indicate that these “old things” have been pushed outward, and the new creation is an “inner person”. This would correspond to the idea of the new covenant, as well. God has given us a new heart, one that will naturally want to obey God. **Where is your heart? At the core of your being.**

As Paul refers to the “outer person” and the “inner person” in 2 Corinthians 4, he begins by saying that God has shone “light in our hearts”, but note that it is referred to as “light that shall shine out of darkness”. Then, **he describes our lives as being like clay jars that have this “light” shining out of them. Everyone who will see this “light” will know that this is not coming from the clay jar on its own.** Clay jars don’t do that. They don’t “shine”. There must be something else going on. **This “inner light” reveals that God is there.** Our outer person is like the clay jar; our inner person is like that inner light that God placed within that jar.

This much is consistent with the other word pictures we have seen, ...but Paul takes this to a new place. He talks about how, as we experience pressing afflictions and are not crushed, ...and as we are at a loss about things, sometimes, and yet do *not* despair, ...and as we are persecuted, but seem to *not* be forsaken, ...and when we are struck down by things in life, but are *not* destroyed, ...we are revealing the hope and the reality of Jesus that supports us and keeps us going. We are always carrying about the death (or, ‘dying’) of Jesus in the body, in order that (purpose clause) the life of Jesus might be made visible in our bodies. Wow! **The things that tear us down, ...the things that most people would be discouraged about, and would drive them to despair..., become a backdrop for the inner light of God to shine through us!** Paul went on to say, “For we, the ones who are alive, are being delivered over to death on account

of Jesus, in order that (purpose clause) the life of Jesus might be made visible in our mortal bodies.” **The result is that the death is *inworking* in our flesh, in order that the life of Jesus might *be seen* and might *inwork* in others.**

He adds, “Consequently, we do not lose heart, but **even if our outer person might be thoroughly-destroyed, worn away, ruined, decaying, ...yet our inner person is being renewed day by day.**” Our “outer person” here refers to the natural, fleshly part of us. As these afflictions, trials or voluntary sacrifices are challenging or tearing-away at the normal tolerances and choices of what most people would accept or endure, there is something inside of us that is strengthened, invigorated with courage and grace by the indwelling life of the Spirit, so that we are transformed and made new. **As we embrace the cross, by voluntarily choosing to disregard self-comfort for the sake of Christ, the “outer person” loses its strength, and our “inner person” rises up with new empowerment, and the life of Jesus is expressed through us, ...like light from within a clay jar.**

One of the clear observations of this entire passage is that *the Christian life is not meant to simply be smooth sailing*, ...trouble free and without difficulty. No. *The Christian life is meant to be a life of victorious overcoming* (Rom. 8:37; 12:21; Rev. 12:11). Jesus made it very clear that those who follow Him must deny self, ...self-interest, self-comfort, and self-determination..., in order to embrace the cross and go where He leads (Lk. 9:23). What Paul shares with us here in 2 Corinthians is that **when we voluntarily choose to embrace discomfort, denial and death to self, out of obedience to Christ, the power of our outer person is broken, and the overcoming resurrection life of Jesus strengthens, renews and shines forth from our inner selves. This reveals Jesus.**

When you look through this letter, this theme is repeated over and over again. In chapter 1, it was God comforting us in our affliction, so that we could comfort others. Paul was so burdened, he despaired even of life. But, because he had already identified with the cross, and had accepted the sentence of death already, he put his hope in God who raises even the dead. In chapter 2, it was God who always manifested the sweet aroma of knowing Him through the lives of the believers. In chapter 3, it was Him who had made them to be living “letters of Christ” to be known and read by all people. By the Spirit, He had enabled them to make His glory visible through their lives. In chapter 4, it was God who shone His light in the darkness, and made the light of the life of Jesus visible through their dying flesh. In chapter 5, we all were put to death with Jesus, so that those who live would be created new, and God could appeal to others through their lives. In chapter 6, we work together with God, showing ourselves as His servants through the afflictions, hardships, distresses, and difficulties we endure, by maintaining purity, patience, kindness, and revealing the Holy Spirit by our love and the word of truth. In chapter 7, God who comforts the depressed, comforted Paul, by showing him that his work was not in vain. His message had produced a repentance according to God, a genuine change of heart that was evidenced by their longing for truth. In chapters 8 and 9 the believers gave graciously, even though they had need, as they were prompted by the Spirit. They knew God could meet their need, and they demonstrated their faith by choosing to act. In chapters 10-12, Paul warned of false apostles, and demonstrated the genuineness of his faith and apostleship by what he had sacrificed and endured in order to minister to them. He spoke of how God’s power was matured through weakness, so he would gladly boast in his weaknesses, so that the power of Christ might dwell in him. In chapter 13, he reminded them that even Christ was crucified because of weakness, but now He lives because of the power of God. In the same way, he himself embraced weakness in Christ, knowing that he would receive life *with Him*, ...and the power of God to minister *to them*.

Note the sense of mission here: “For all things are for *your sakes*, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.” This is the plan of God: ...to raise up people who will reveal Jesus by their love, service and indomitable character. This is powerful when it is even *one person*, but it is immensely more powerful when there is a *whole community*, or a *movement*, of people like this! Remember, this letter was written to a *group*, ...a gathering of people who were intent on following Jesus.

There is one other place where the phrase “inner person” occurs. That is in Ephesians 3. The entire book is about Paul calling the Ephesian believers to go deeper, ...to look for more that God has made available to them. It is not enough to have found Jesus. That is *only the starting point of a journey of discovery and purposeful living*. In Ephesians 1:3, Paul says that every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places has been given to us in Christ. Paul prays that our spiritual eyes might be opened, that we might know what He has called us to, and what He has made available to us, even now. It is in accordance with the power that raised Jesus from the dead, and seated Him at the Father’s right hand! We were dead, and He made us alive. We were outsiders, and He made us family. His grace is immeasurable, ...and Paul was assigned to declare to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ. In chapter 3, Paul prays that we might be strengthened with power in our inner-person, in order that we might experientially-know the love of Christ that is beyond our full grasp. An epiphany of this love will cause us to be filled-up to all the fullness of God. Note that the process of this discovery begins within our inner person. This, too, is an inside-out proposition!