

Jesus Month Part 3: Treasure in Earthen Vessels

Ever heard of “The Dead Sea Scrolls”?

- Discovered 1946-56, series of caves near The Dead Sea
- The second oldest scrolls, or handwritten manuscripts to ever be found
- Hidden to protect them from enemies during war
- Placed in **clay pots/jars (earthen vessels)** for safe keeping
- 2017, a new cave was discovered, but only broken scroll jars were found, had been looted in 1950's

These scrolls are so complete; the only 2 Books of the Old Testament that are missing are Esther and Nehemiah...

But you really have to think about this

- One of the most important discoveries of all time was stored **in clay post**
- Now these scrolls are kept in climate controlled secured vaults and museums

But If you read The Bible closely, you will find that “Clay Pots”, or “Earthen Vessels”, have always been the choice for carrying God’s Word.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels**, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

That's what we're talking about today...

- How God uses these unlikely “Earthen Vessels” to carry out the work of His Kingdom...
- Unlikely as we may be that the Glory is all given to Him!!

There is an example in The Bible that I believe demonstrates this very well....

Acts 9:10-15

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”

And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”

11 So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called **Saul of Tarsus**, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”

13 Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”

15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for **he is a chosen vessel of Mine** to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.

The Damascus Road Conversion of Saul:

Who would have thought Saul would have been a chosen vessel of The Lord?

- A Pharisee
- A champion of the law
- A persecutor of Christians
- Feared by all who followed Jesus...

Yet chosen by God to:

- Carry His Word
- To be an Apostle
- To pen two thirds of our New Testament Bible

Along with Saul/Paul, there are many great examples in The Bible of these unlikely earthen vessels used by God to achieve great things...

But there is one who I think stands out far above the rest...

Luke 1:26-33

Christ's Birth Announced to Mary

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 **to a virgin** betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And **behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son**, and shall call His name Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Consider who Mary was:

- A **virgin**; no younger than 12, no older than 16 considering a wide range of tradition... (12-14 being the most recognized)
- Not just a young woman, but had literally never known a man
- But she was old enough to understand what was expected of her...

- Betrothed to a man(arranged marriage) Joseph (much older according to tradition)

There were so many candidates to bring The Lord Himself into this world...

- But Mary was the chosen vessel...
- This simple “Earthen Vessel”

Luke 1:34-38

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “**How can this be**, since I do not know a man?”

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 **For with God nothing will be impossible.**”

38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Notice Mary’s lack of confidence in herself...

- In contrast to God’s confidence in her....
- If only Mary realized... God designed her for this purpose
- Designed for and specially equipped physically, spiritually, and emotionally to fulfill her purpose
- To carry Jesus in her womb and bring him into this world

Taking the Scripture literally:

- Greater is He that is in you then he that is in the world!!!

In this simple “Earthen Vessel”!!

- Not someone of notoriety...
- Not someone of royalty...
- A simple young girl...
- “that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

(Ephesians 3:20 reference)

That’s just like us...Look around

- We’re just earthen vessels
- Nothing special...
- Not famous

But God has plans and a purpose for each of us

Did you know that you are a chosen vessel?

- That in our individual lives he can do great things
- “that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”
- That people would see through our good works that it must be God!!
- Greater is He that is in you...
- I can do all things through Christ....
- Through simple earthen vessels...

My final thought, and I hope you can take this with you today, and apply it

- God chooses vessels of all types...
- Puts His treasure in certain vessels
- But there's truly only one type of vessel He can use...

As Mary said:

38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word

- God can only use a willing vessel!!!
- Are you willing to be used by The Lord to fulfill your purpose?
- Look what he did with unwed teenager...
- Imagine what He can do with and through you!!

I get the feeling miracles are about to be birthed!!

- The deposit God made in you is due to come forth
- And when it does, the world will never be the same!!

Well, Christmas is about giving...

God placed His greatest treasure in a simple earthen vessel...

- To be given to us as a gift
- A gift of Life
- An abundant life...
- An everlasting life...

Have you received this gift?

It's a gift that's available to anyone, any time...

You don't have to wait another week to receive it....

Do you want the gift of abundant life today

Of everlasting life today?

Altar Music:

Invitation: