

Truths all Christians need to understand:

I am a sinner and I will always struggle with sin in this life.

In the Bible, the messed up people- like Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Hosea- outnumber the "good ones" by about ten to one.

We are messed up. Then. Now. All the time in between and, it's a safe bet to assume, the rest of the time we'll be alive.

That's what it looks like. This great "treasure in jars of clay."

David's great lament:

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. 17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. Psalm 51:16,17

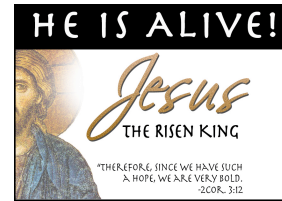
Our experience of weakness is God's blueprint to magnify Christ:

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Faith in Christ is discontentment with what I am, and satisfaction with all God is for me in Jesus.

Struggle, confession and repentance are living by the spirit:

For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13



Confronting The Truth About You And Your Christian Life

The Story: Gospel of Mark Chapter 3: Verses 1-5

Torah/Law of Moses

Dilemmas interpreting the Law

Another time he went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Mark 3:1

So the question is what is Jesus going to do?

Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath.

Mark 3:2

Jesus takes the confrontation to a whole new level:

Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone." 4Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath:...to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?"

Mark 3:3,4

What was their response?

But they remained silent.

Mark 3:4b

Jesus confronts their self righteous values:

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.

Mark 3:5

The Law was not intended to be a path to righteousness:

For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

Romans 3:20

Pretending To Be What We Are Not The Great Sin Of The Church Today

The Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in Rome:

For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot perform it. [I have the intention and urge to do what is right, but no power to carry it out.]

Romans 7:18

Paul's Legacy as a Christian:

We put no confidence in human effort, **4** though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! I am a **pure-blooded citizen of Israel** and a **member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew** if there ever was one! **I was a member of the Pharisees**, who demand the **strictest obedience to the Jewish law**. **6** I was so **zealous** that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, **I obeyed the law without fault**.

Philippians 3:3-6

I once thought **these things** were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Philippians 3:7

Paul's Progression as a Christian:

56AD- *For I am the least of all the apostles*. In fact, I'm not even worthy to be called an apostle after the way I persecuted God's church.

1 Corinthians 15:9

61AD- Although *I am less than the least of all the Lord's people*, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ,

Ephesians 3:8

63AD- Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—*of whom I am the worst*.

1 Timothy 1:15

The truth the Church misses:

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 2 Corinthians 4:7-11

Paraphrased by author Michael Spencer, the mistruth:

But we have this treasure in saved, healed, delivered and supernaturally changed vessels, to show that God has given to us, right now, His surpassing power over ever situation.

We are no longer afflicted, perplexed, in conflict or defeated. No, we are alive with the power of Jesus, and the resurrection power of Jesus has changed us now...TODAY! In every way!.

God wants you to see just what a Jesus-controlled person is all about, so the power of Jesus is on display in the life I am living, and those who don't have this life, are miserable and dying.

Paraphrased by author Michael Spencer the truth:

We're dying. Life is full of pain and perplexity. We have Christ, and so, in the future, his life will manifest in us in resurrection and glory. In the present, that life manifests in us in this very odd, contradictory experience.

We are dying, afflicted, broken, hurting, confused...yet we hold on to Jesus in all these things, and continue to love him and believe in him.

The power of God is in us, not in making us above the human, but allowing us to be merely human, yet part of a new creation in Jesus.