

**“Treasure” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Audrey Bauch Memorial**  
**2 Corinthians 4:6-5:7 – November 18, 2023**

- I. **Julie, Alan, Robin**, and all the family and friends here today, grace, peace, and mercy are yours through our living Savior, Jesus Christ.
- II. **Audrey is now home with the Lord.**
  - a. I realize that whenever we get to be her age that anything can happen with our health – in fact, anything can happen at any age – but it was still unexpected.
  - b. The day I got word from Julie that Audrey was in the hospital and facing a life or death surgery, it didn't seem to add up... as things were going pretty well with her health.
  - c. When I got to the hospital, she was resigned to whatever had to happen – if surgery extended... or ended her life, she was fine either way – but the doctor made that decision for her, because he didn't think her heart could take an operation... so she went on hospice.
  - d. Some people just put on a brave face and say their “ready”, but deep down they are very unsure and frightened... not Audrey.
    - i. She was very clear with me that she was absolutely ready to go home to be with Jesus.
    - ii. She exuded what Paul says in our reading today, “we walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Cor. 5:7)
    - iii. What a great comfort that is to all of us who were with her during those last days and hours – she was God's child and knew without a doubt that she would be home with her Lord soon.
  - e. When I first got to Ascension, Audrey had just finished up a long stint as the Treasurer and was passing it on to the next poor soul to take on that difficult position.
    - i. In the little time I got to observe her as Treasurer, I always appreciated her strong trust in the Lord... and that He would take care of everything... even when the finances looked bleak.
    - ii. It can be a stressful job to write checks and take care of the finances, but Audrey always handled it with grace and knew deep down that God would take care of everything.
    - iii. I suppose that is a picture of Audrey that we can all take with us – her faith in Christ showed outwardly – her deep trust in God shined for others to see.
- III. **At the hospital, I asked Audrey if she had a favorite Bible passage.**
  - a. She immediately responded, “Treasures in Jars of Clay”.
  - b. It makes sense that she loved this reading, because it paints a beautiful picture of longing for our future glory and the resurrection.
  - c. Paul is writing to the Church in Corinth... a city that has all kinds of worldly views and false gods... and some this has made its way into the church.

- i. Some saw Paul's suffering and trials as God's disapproval – and Paul probably had a bunch of marks from these trials on his body.
- ii. The general view of the day was that anyone blessed by God would have prosperity and health, not be rejected and beat up.
- iii. Paul spent many years preaching the Gospel with his brothers in the ministry, and he was under constant threat of imprisonment, lashings, and beatings of all kinds.
- iv. Yet, he would go to any lengths to preach the Good News of salvation, even if it meant that he would suffer terribly for it.
- d. So, he tells them that the body is nothing more than a fragile jar of clay that holds a great treasure inside – the treasure is the power of God that comes from faith in Christ.
  - i. Paul wants to be clear that the body is going to get beat up... that we are no more powerful than a clay pot, but the power of God is within.
  - ii. The body is weak, and the hardships of witnessing Christ to others, along with the trials and tribulations of the world, will never let up.
  - iii. Paul says we are afflicted... perplexed... persecuted... and struck down.
  - iv. But in all this tribulation... we are not crushed... we are not driven to despair... we are not forsaken... and we are not destroyed. (vss 8-9)
- e. The promise that Audrey believed – and each of us has as we believe in Jesus – is that our earthly lives are filled with weakness, but God's power enables us to finish the race and take our place in eternity.

IV. **We have a home, a permanent dwelling place, with God.**

- a. Jesus says in the Gospel lesson that He will prepare a place for us in glory.
- b. The way Paul puts it is the difference between a tent and a building or house.
  - i. Our bodies are a tent... a temporary way of life, just as the Hebrews lived out in the desert for 40 years in tents after their escape from Egypt – awaiting the final destination in the Promised Land.
  - ii. In the same way, we are in the wilderness for now, with a permanent home on the horizon – a body that is no longer a tent, but a house.
  - iii. This is why Paul says he's not interested in just being a naked spirit – he wants to be clothed with his permanent home, his resurrected and glorified body.
- c. The promise for all of us is that we will not be abandoned to the brokenness of our bodies and this world... we will not be abandoned to the grave... but God has prepared a wonderful life that never ends.
  - i. So that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life! (vs 5:4)
  - ii. So that death is swallowed up in victory! (1 Corinthians 15:54)
  - iii. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces. (Isaiah 25:8)

d. All of these verses remind us of the resurrection power of God – that He has the gift of life eternal for us in Jesus – and death does not win.

V. **Yes, our friend Audrey faced her fair share of trials.**

a. She lived longer than many, and she was blessed with a loving family – but life is never easy.

b. She spent many years working through Shorty's dementia, let alone her own health problems.

c. Yet, through it all, Audrey had this treasure of God's power within her.

d. The faith that exuded from her was a gift of God that came to her all the way back at baptism as a little baby.

e. That connection is critical... God claimed her in the waters of baptism as His own... which means that this earthly tent is temporary... the trials and afflictions of this world are temporary...

i. Audrey walked in this gift of faith all her life – and some might say, “she wore it on her sleeve” for all to see.

ii. Her trust in the God was all a gift though... because clay jar, or the tent of Audrey's body held within the power of God.

iii. She was fully aware of her weakness, and that is why she was supremely confident while facing death.

iv. Audrey would finally leave behind the brokenness and trials of the world and take her place in glory.

f. To God be the glory and praise, as only He can be given credit for saving Audrey – and us.

i. The death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead is God's victory over anything that might separate us from Him... He wins over sin... He wins over satan... and He most definitely wins over death.

ii. So for all of you clay jars with God's treasure inside, take heart, your future glory... your permanent home... rests in Christ. Amen