

Treasure in Earthen Vessels

Overcoming Barriers in Ministry

Key Scripture:

Treasure in Earthen Vessels: 2 Corinthians 4:1,5-15, NIV

Key Thoughts:

- The power of the gospel resides in you, a messy and imperfect vessel.
- We are commissioned to carry the message of Jesus, to reveal the love of Jesus to this world. The authority to preach this message comes from Christ alone.
- When you take hold of this truth, you realize that it is no longer a question of can I, but a question of how can I not...it is not a question of should I, it's a question of will I.
- As God moves us into the vocation of ministry, we will face hardship, barriers, and obstacles of every kind.
- Our calling and vocation flows out of the work of God deeply within us. God uses every barrier, obstacle, and hardship to transform us from the inside out.

To overcome the barriers that come your way in life and ministry, we must commit to:

- 1. Transform from the inside out, losing your false self to become more formed in your new self in Christ.**

God calls us to leave those old ways and become transformed into a new way of loving, living, and relating so that we look more like Jesus to the world. **(Ephesians 4:22-23, NIV)**

Example: Woman at the Well, John 4, NIV (will not read full story)

John 4:13-14, NIV

Jesus chose to overcome all barriers to meeting her that day for a divine encounter that would empower this unlikely and broken woman to overcome all barriers. She would discover His love and her purpose in carrying the message of the Messiah.

Key Thoughts:

- Your calling and vocation is less about what you do and more about who you are in Christ, and the transforming power of Christ in you as you carry His message to the world.
- We will face external barriers in ministry. Other times, we will face the daily barrier of our false self that rises up and prevents us from serving Jesus in authenticity and humility. We must commit to daily sanctification in Christ.
- As we grow up into our true self in Christ, we learn to live from who we are and who God has created us to be. Then we truly learn what God has called us to do in every season.

2. Become an apprentice of Jesus, belong more to Jesus than this world.

Example: Mary, Luke 10:38-42, NIV

Luke 10:41-42 (NIV)

Mary stepped over and through culture, gender, and expectation to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn his way.

Key Thoughts:

- When we belong more to Jesus than this world, everything else will fall into place. Learn His ways and follow His path.
- Ministries and ministry leaders fall into frantic patterns like the world to maintain success and build something great for God's Kingdom.
- Even our good things for God can become modeled after the world more than after Christ and His Kingdom.

Peter Scazzero, author of Emotionally Healthy Spirituality, says it like this:

Who you are deep on the inside is more important than what you do for God. Your doing for God must always flow out of your being with God. You cannot give what you do not possess.

3. Embrace partnership.

We all have an important place in God's Kingdom. Jesus commissioned us all to carry the message of the Gospel and we desperately need to partner with one another.

We join in mutual submission, joining hands together as we carry this message of Jesus.

Example: Paul co-labored and partnered with Pheobe, Junia, Priscilla, and many other women for the sake of the gospel.

Romans 16:1-2, NIV

Key Thoughts:

- When both women and men are not leading together whether in the family, church, or workplace, something is imbalanced and missing.
- God blesses and anoints the partnership of men and women. He blesses the work of those who insist on centering Him in the work of the Kingdom rather than themselves.
- The work of God in this world - both in our homes and in the body of Christ was never meant to rest on the shoulders of one gender.

Conclusion:

Ephesians 2:10, NLT

Remember:

- **With Jesus barriers become blessings.**
- **With Jesus barriers become opportunity.**
- **With Jesus barriers become transformation.**
- **With Jesus barriers become part of the greater purpose.**