Remember a few months ago when I called us all a bunch of cracked pots?

It was a little added humor to remind us that we *are* flawed. No one is perfect.

Well, in all seriousness today Paul gives us the *rest of the story*.

In his letter to the church of Corinth, Paul points out that “God shines in our hearts causing us to reflect the face of Christ – Gods light shines out of the darkness...

...the cracks in our flawed selves allow God’s light to shine through. Though we are imperfect God uses us perfectly.

* we may be simple **clay jars**, cracked pots even, *but we are filled with* what Paul calls a treasure of *---***extraordinary** **power** –
* Power that belongs to God... and does not come from us.”
* Power that can shine through *any* darkness...

Imagine then, being a cracked pot but filled with sparkly treasure...like diamonds ...shimmering through every little nook and cranny.

 That which glows from the inside comes from a greater power...an **extraordinary power**.

We may be fragile clay pots but through the strength that only God can provide we have the ability to preserve and to project the light of Christ.

WE are not much different from

 the artifacts found thousands of years ago. While touring the Vatican last year I saw some of the very first jars of clay and they came in many shapes and sizes.

These earthen vessels were cracked and chipped...yet maintained their shape and their contents.

Pastor Scott Thompson from Montana ... a contributor to the daily e-devotion, God Pause, (Wednesday, 5/30/2018)

wrote about similar clay pots found near the **Dead Sea** in the West Bank of the Jordan River, called The **Dead Sea Scrolls.**

**D**iscovered in 12 different caves only 70 years ago, these jars contained most of the Old Testament.

Just East of Jerusalem, in the mountainous area where steep cliffs and dry scorching desert surrounded these dark cold caves.

The same Place where David sought refuge from King Saul,

and where Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert to fight against the temptations of the devil.

... rocky caves in a barren land held these well-preserved scripts of the Bible –

Where for thousands of years they lie unpretentiously, as history of our forefathers echoed through the caves.

Think of the treasure in *those* clay pots.

Think of the value in those jars, not because of the way they looked or how well *they* were preserved but because of what they held.

Simple clay jars ...chipped or broken with contents that were priceless.

We, too, are broken, chipped away by life – cracked by harsh reality ...but we are all filled with priceless treasure from God.

We are earthen vessels made for a specific purpose in life.

Made in the image of God by God, we are still being shaped and molded every day -

intricately designed, like a potter’s hand on the potter’s wheel as we go round and round in life.

Whatever we hold inside *that* is worthy of God comes from God...and it has extraordinary power.

### It is our spiritual make up...So what? What do we do with the treasure that only God can provide?

### Richard Rohr (in his Daily Meditation, Swallowed by a Whale Wednesday, May 30, 2018) believes we should give it away.

### Once we understand what it is we hold – this treasure given to us is meant to be given the world to make *it* a better place*.*

### *We* often hear that we should use our gifts for the good of all, whether it is time, talent or treasure.

*But how do we Know what we are supposed to do?*

*... by listening.*

*“In fact the “word*vocation*...rooted in the Latin means “voice.”*

*Vocation does not mean a goal we pursue. It means a calling to* ***hear***.

Listening helps us communicate better!

listening helps us see what is truly needed in the world.

And according to Paul we have that ability deep down inside.

No matter what is chipping away at us, we can listen for God’s word because We are protected ...

Though vulnerable like the clay jars in those caves, S&S writes “it was the strength of the clay jars **against** the elements [of the world] that protected the scrolls for so long.

The strength -the extraordinary power -to weather any storm.

 8We are afflicted, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken;
Struck down, but not destroyed;

In our gospel today Jesus commands us **to rest.**

Sabbath was made for us...

Sabbath is meant to give us time to “relax...to catch [our] breath.”

So that we hear Gods voice

 Then Take a moment and feel your pulse by pressing lightly on an artery in your wrist or neck.

Then close your eyes and breathe, slowly and deeply.

...feel your heartrate slow as you relax.

This is the gift of Sabbath, it is a time to slow down, to breathe deeply and relax in the presence of God.

Sabbath is meant for everyday if only for a few moments...and then at least once a week all day long.

Because just as Jesus tells the Pharisees to get over themselves about the strict laws he tells us to regroup...

 refocus our attention.... look at the needs of those around us.

Listen ...we can do that no matter the struggles in life...in fact...

We could say God allows us to not only be broken but maybe even to bust wide open

...while still holding Gods treasures.

 Think about the way we commission a ship. We smash a bottle against the bow to “express joy and thanksgiving...to offer a blessing of safety and peace during times of troubled water.”

*Why not allow a crack or chip to cause our treasurers to fall out, “let the treasure held inside burst forth extravagantly.” Thompson asks,*

 *“Perhaps God has poured the treasure of the gospel into clay jars like you and me*

 *for the very reason that it might burst forth when we are most broken,*

*so blessings might overflow.*

*And these bodies, souls and minds of ours into which God has entrusted the gospel will break...*

*But in our brokenness,*

*“God will commission a ship* ***called grace*** *that will sail to the ends of the earth”*

Could the gift of faith be both strong and fragile at the same time?

*Amen*

 (Scott Thompson, '96 Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Kalispell Montana).