

Containers, We Are

This reading could be utilized as a solo reading, duet, or group reading.

Reader 1: "For we do not preach ourselves."

Reader 2: We don't strut our talents.

Reader 1: We don't flaunt our riches.

Reader 2: We don't tout our strategy.

Reader 1: We don't sell our style.

Reader 2: We don't rely on our wisdom.

Reader 1: We preach "Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves" as the 21st-century representatives of Christ.

Reader 2: Anything more is tainted;

Reader 1: anything less is obsolete,

Reader 2: We speak Jesus into the darkness of a lost, chaotic world.

Reader 1: "For God, who said,"

Reader 2: "'Let light shine out of darkness.'"

Reader 1: That same God "made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Reader 2: So who are we?

Reader 1: We are the containers:

Reader 2: we are the tank,

Reader 1: we are the glass,

Reader 2: we are the bowl.

Reader 1: We have our cracks;

Reader 2: we have our imperfections;

Reader 1: we have our nicks.

Reader 2: Where is our value?

Reader 1: Where is our worth?

Reader 2: Where is our glory?

Reader 1: Look inside our hearts?

Reader 2: If you see Christ at work,

Reader 1: if you hear the sound,

Reader 2: if you feel the beat,

Reader 1: if you see the shine of Christ,

Reader 2: you've seen our glory.

Reader 1: "We have this treasure in jars of clay"

Reader 2: "to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

Reader 1: We don't boast in anything outside of Christ.

Reader 2: How foolish,

Reader 1: how unthinkable,

Reader 2: to claim that we are anything outside of Christ.

Reader 1: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed."

Reader 2: Who can crush the power of God?

Reader 1: We are perplexed from time to time:

Reader 2: we doubt,

Reader 1: we disappoint,

Reader 2: we fail,

Reader 1: we have skinned knees

Reader 2: and calloused hands.

Reader 1: We run into our share of walls, obstacles, and predicaments:

Reader 2: "perplexed, but not in despair";

Reader 1: down, but not out;

Reader 2: "persecuted, but not abandoned";

Reader 1: "struck down, but not destroyed."

Reader 2: Because we are vessels of God's glory.

Reader 1: So, it's OK if I fail.

Reader 2: If we speak the truth, and no one accepts it.

Reader 1: If we run through the fire, and we are left without a friend.

Reader 2: If we are far from the applause of our peers and families.

Reader 1: If no one sees a thing we do for Christ,

Reader 2: it doesn't matter.

Reader 1: We don't have to obsess over how we look,

Reader 2: what we accomplish,

Reader 1: where we are sent.

Reader 2: The only thing that matters, at the end of the race, is what we carry, and into whose arms we fall when we gasp our last breath and cross the finish line.

Reader 1: As long as “we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus,”

Reader 2: “so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”

Reader 1: We are infinitely more than what we could be on our own.

Reader 2: “For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body.”

Reader 1: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away.”

Reader 2: The sands of time keep pouring down.

Both: “Yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”

Reader 2: “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

Reader 1: “So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.”

Reader 2: “For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Reader 1: The glory of Jesus Christ.

Reader 2: The passion of the call.

Reader 1: The freedom of His grace:

Reader 2: His time,

Reader 1: His plan,

Reader 2: His heart,

Reader 1: His home.

Reader 2: So what do you say, oh jars of clay?

Reader 1: Let's pop off the lid and let His power flood every corner of our souls.

Reader 2: It's not a cakewalk,

Reader 1: but it's not a funeral dirge, either.

Reader 2: It is eternal.

Reader 1: It is thrilling.

Reader 2: It is the real thing.

Reader 1: It is beyond us.

Reader 2: It is through us.

Reader 1: It is for us.

Reader 2: It is before us.

Reader 1: So open wide every chapter of today;

Reader 2: open the windows

Reader 1: and fasten your seat belts.

Reader 2: You contain the heart,

Reader 1: the DNA,

Both: the mind of the everlasting Champion!