

The Blessings of God Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:19

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In ancient times, jars of clay were common, inexpensive, fragile, and easily broken. They possessed little intrinsic value.

When Paul described us as jars of clay in his letter to the Roman church, it brings to light our own sense of insignificance and vulnerability.

Surrounded by headlines of wars, earthquakes, famines, divorces, illnesses, and financial crises, we often feel fragile and fearful about what the future may hold.

While planning can spark hopes of success, it also invites fears that no amount of insurance or preparation can truly silence.

The world tells us to hoard possessions and wealth, believing that material abundance can protect us from life's unavoidable storms, yet experience reveals that no accumulation of "stuff" can provide lasting joy or peace.

The true key to peace isn't in material security but in counting our blessings and placing our faith in our risen Savior, who not only gave His life for us but also meets our daily needs and satisfies the deepest longings of our souls.

Like the psalmist, we can declare, *"God is my portion forever,"* knowing that in Him, we have a source of strength, joy, and hope that no earthly trial can take away.

Trusting in His unfailing provision allows us to live not in fear but with confidence in His eternal promises.

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This is why we need to understand that true security isn't found in what we can hold in our hands but in Whom we place our trust.

This truth is beautifully illustrated in the story of the widow in 1 Kings 17. It's a poignant example of how God knows our needs and provides for them when we place our faith in Him.

During a time of severe drought, brought about as judgment for King Ahab's wickedness, God directed the prophet Elijah to rely on miraculous means for survival.

Initially, Elijah was sustained by water from a brook and the help of ravens who brought him bread and meat.

When the brook eventually dried up, God sent Elijah to Zarephath, where a widow was to provide for him.

However, this widow was herself in desperate straits, with only enough flour and oil to prepare one last meal for herself and her son before they expected to die of starvation.

When Elijah asked her to use her meager provisions to prepare food for him first, he reassured her with God's promise that *"The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord sends rain on the land."*

Despite the enormity of the sacrifice and the apparent impossibility of the promise, the widow chose to trust God and obey. God rewarded her faith, miraculously sustaining her household throughout the famine.

This story is not only a profound reminder that trusting God often requires us to step out in faith, even when the odds seem stacked against us, but it demonstrates that true security is only found in the abundant provision of a loving and faithful God who cares for His own.

In fact, this story of the widow in 1 Kings illustrates the teachings of Christ found in Matthew 6:25-34, where He commands us not to be anxious about what we will eat, drink, wear, or even about our bodies.

Matthew 6:25-26, *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”*

He reminds us that the birds of the air, though they neither sow nor reap, are fed by God.

In verse 28 He explains how the flowers of the field, which do not labor or spin, are adorned in splendor far surpassing that of Solomon.

Jesus challenges us to examine our faith, asking if our worrying can add even a single hour to our lives. He knows that life's trials often fill us with worry and fear.

Yet He calls us to trust in a sovereign God whose peace surpasses all understanding.

Philippians 4:7, *“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Anxiety often stems from a lack of trust in God's provision, as if we could orchestrate a better future than the Good Shepherd has planned for us.

True peace comes not from our own striving but from seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness, knowing that everything we need will be provided by His loving hand.

Trusting God frees us to live in the confidence and rest only He can provide.

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So, how does one place their trust in God during tribulations, especially when prayers seem unanswered?

In such moments, it's easy to fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others who seem better off, questioning God's fairness. The psalmist wrestled with this very struggle.

Psalm 73:3-4, *“For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong.”*

Troubled by the apparent prosperity of the wicked, he lamented how they lived free of struggles, flaunted their arrogance, and mocked God, while he endured affliction and pain despite striving to remain righteous.

This inner conflict brought the Psalmist to the brink of despair, questioning the value of his faith. However, everything changed when he entered the sanctuary of God.

Psalm 73:17-19, *“Till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!”*

Here, he gained divine perspective: the prosperity of the wicked is temporary, and their end is eternal ruin.

He realized that true fulfillment comes not from earthly ease or material wealth but from a life anchored in God.

Jesus taught that we're not to store up treasures here on earth but we're to first seek the kingdom of God, where our eternal rewards await.

The Psalmist finally understood that God was his strength and his portion forever, even if his heart and flesh failed.

Psalm 73:26, *"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."*

Trusting in God means embracing His eternal justice and unfailing love. Recognizing that a life lived in God's will may not always be easy, but it'll be profoundly joyful and purposeful.

In eternity, the rewards for faithfulness overshadow every memory of earthly suffering, for in God, we have everything we truly need.

When the Psalmist entered the sanctuary of God, his perspective shifted, and he realized that the prosperity of the wicked is fleeting, while true fulfillment comes from anchoring our lives in God's eternal goodness.

Therefore, when we shift our focus from earthly struggles to God's eternal sufficiency, our frailty as "jars of clay" becomes an opportunity for His power to shine through us.

Paul also teaches us that the secret of contentment is to find peace in every circumstance through Christ's strength.

Philippians 4:12-13, *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."*

In tribulations, we often covet what others have, focusing on our lack—a failing marriage makes us envy loving couples, financial struggles turn our attention to the wealthy, and poor health makes us yearn for strength.

Rarely do we pause to count the blessings we still possess, forgetting that while much may be lost, far more remains.

Unspeakable joy is not found in fleeting treasures or false securities but in resting in God's perfect provision.

True contentment comes from basking in the grace, mercy, and love of our Savior. With God as our portion, what more could we ever ask for?

True contentment is not rooted in what we lack or desire but in who God is—the One Who fills our fragile “jars of clay” with His abundant grace, strength, and peace.

So, Just as God's faithfulness sustained the widow and her household through the famine, and just as Jesus reminds us not to worry because our heavenly Father knows our needs, we too, are called to place our trust in Him.

Philippians 4:19, *“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”*

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Yet trusting God often requires us to confront the areas of our lives where fear and self-reliance dominate.

What are the jars of oil in your life with which you struggle to trust God to handle? Is God calling you to take a leap of faith, even when it feels risky or uncomfortable, to serve His kingdom?

Perhaps, as you glance at your dwindling bank account or growing debts, God's inviting you to give, trusting that He'll supply your needs.

Or maybe your overcrowded calendar, packed with countless responsibilities, is preventing you from slowing down to seek His presence, to be holy, or to comfort someone in need.

Don't let the noise of worry and the weight of life's tribulations drown out the still, small voice of God.

He promises never to leave or forsake us and assures us that He's working all things together for our good when we place our trust in Him.

Take heart, and step forward in faith, knowing He's faithful to provide and guide.

Though we may feel like fragile jars of clay, God fills us with His strength and sustains us through every trial, just as He did for the widow.

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Conclusion

As we become frightened, surrounded by headlines of wars, disasters, and crises, it's no wonder Paul calls us "*jars of clay*."

Fragile and easily broken, our lives should not depend on the need to "*store up*" treasures here on earth but to rely wholly on God to provide for our every need.

Even in the valleys of tribulation, we can experience unspeakable joy when we count our blessings and see the Lord as our provider.

Here are three practical ways to live out this truth:

1. Practice gratitude: Each day, thank God for specific ways He has provided—spiritually, emotionally, or materially. Count your blessings and name them one by one.
2. Cultivate contentment: When tempted to compare or focus on what you lack, remember that in Christ, you already have enough. Trust God as your provider and let go of the need for more.
3. Trust God with your future: Turn your worries into prayers. Trust that the same God who has provided in the past will continue to do so. Surrender your worries to Him and rest in His faithfulness.