

2 Corinthians 4/7-18 – FAITH IN GOD, NOT CLAY

matt 15/21-28 – faith of woman who believed even though she was told differently by the object of her faith

- Caleb-like faith – believed despite contradiction (numbers 13/30)
- Job-like faith – believed despite God's silence (job 19/25)
- Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego-like faith – believed without proof (daniel 3/17-18)
- Christ-like faith – obedient to death, but also in life (john 5/19)

2 cor 4/7 – faith in clay jars, not treasure

- church in Corinth followed people (1cor 1/11-13)
- disciples fell away without Jesus to follow

do we trust in clay jars today? less likely to follow a teacher/guru as a source of blessing, but are we partly dependent on other clay jars:

- Christian media – God channel, premier radio etc.
- famous speakers/authors (e.g. steve chalke and the penal substitution debate)
- conferences – soul survivor, spring harvest, easter people etc.
- our tradition – protestant > evangelical > charismatic > Pentecostal > apostolic
- our people – culture, friends, groups, leaders

our privilege is to have a PERSONAL relationship with God – good and right to be together as a body/building/family, but must be able to stand alone as well

- 1cor 12 – must be a body, but each body part has to be alive and bring its own blood supply with it!
- 1pet 2/4 – living stones, to be built into the house of God, but each stone must have the nature of a stone, otherwise it's useless to the wall and has no point in it's own existence

THE CHALLENGE

how would we cope if we lost it all?

no media – would we still have God in our 'down-time'?

no speakers/authors – would we still have revelation?

no conferences – would we still have experiences?

no church – would we still have sacred space?

no groups – would we still have deeds?

no Bibles – would we still have scripture?

no ministry position – would I still have living faith?

Brother Yun – saddened to see the state of the church in the comfortable west, a mere shadow of the thriving, growing, Spirit-soaked church under persecution in China. Could we have survived – and more than that, flourished! – under those circumstances? If persecution hit us, would the church still stand? If we had been hit by the tsunami, how would our faith and the out-working of it stand up?