

2 Corinthians 4:7-10 - But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing glory is from God and not from us. We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

This passage came alive for me twenty years ago as I was struggling to recover from another abdominal surgery. Literally feeling hard-pressed on every side, I felt these words bring life to me through the empathetic compassion of Jesus as expressed through the apostle Paul. He understood exactly how I felt.

After the devastating earthquake and tsunami that struck Tokyo in March of 2011, taking 19,000 lives and destroying countless homes, a group of women sifted through the rubble to retrieve broken shards of china, from which they made unique pieces of jewelry to sell around the world as a symbol of their faith in Christ to bring beauty from brokenness. The Nozomi Project, named for the Japanese word for "hope," still provides sustainable income for those who lost so much and brings to the world a message of hope in the God who restores and provides for all of our needs.

The leader of our Vintage CHP team shared with me the other day of his progress in recovering from a very serious fall that required extensive surgery. Early in this journey, he asked the Lord to tell him what he was to learn from this. The answer was one word: nothing. But then the Holy Spirit elaborated on it to say that others would learn based on how they saw him handle this situation. Our friend wrote these words to me:

"In the process, I'm learning that patience is not waiting for something to transpire or to end, but that it is a spiritual force that undergirds our reliance on faith to keep our eyes solely on Him - so that our faith and purpose cannot fail. "When I am weak, than I am strong." Patience is the strength of that verse, and it is most definitely not of ourselves. It is grace in action! I have no boasting other than Jesus, my Savior and my Lord."

Today, you may feel hard-pressed on every side, perplexed, even persecuted or struck down. But you have the assurance that the Creator and Sustainer of the universe is alive in you by the power of the Holy Spirit, at work on your behalf to show Himself faithful. He is inhabiting the broken pieces and the broken places in your life, making something beautiful as a testimony to others of His power and love at work in you. Trust Him in this

as you draw near, daring to believe that all of His promises are yes in Christ.

I read recently a quote from evangelist Peter Kuzmic that has stuck with me: "Hope is the ability to hear the music of the future. Faith is having the courage to dance to it today." Listen to the music of His voice, rejoicing over you with singing. Take a step of faith and dance with Jesus today.