



## Clay Jar Caregivers

II Corinthians 4:7-9 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power 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.

I was thrust into caregiving for my mom following the death of my dad. My first step was getting through the “FOG” of many issues and assessments in hopes of gaining a foothold on the path forward in caring for my mom. My hope was to do everything “right”.

Soon I learned that I was a clay jar caregiver. Getting everything “right” was going to be very difficult-impossible. The variables, surprises, questions, communications, and relationships seemed all so complicated. And this was my first time dealing with many of these issues of complicated caregiving. Oh, I had seen others involved in these challenges in my ministry. Now it was my mom and my family. It felt so different. My wife and I went to a conference on grief during this time. We heard a funeral director talk about the difference of helping others with issues of death and grieving and then having the experience himself. At another event, I heard a professional in the field of senior care who had helped many others with caregiving, express the frustration and feelings she was now having to experience within her own family. Professional or not, all caregivers are clay jars.

But we, as Paul says, “We have this **treasure** in our clay jars. The treasure is the glorious presence of Jesus Christ. We are a vessel serving a special purpose and service, in HIS name, for our loved one. Some how and in some way God wants to use us; and through us, to share this treasure with our loved one. We want to share this treasure as we care for their physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs. And this treasure is the all\_surpassing power of God, and how deep and wide is His mercy, grace and love for all of us.

Families, and our other responsibilities, can press us from every side While hard pressed, we are not crushed. We may be very perplexed, to be at a loss on how to act or proceed, then we look to God for help and direction. We cannot give up. We are not alone. That is why a few chapters later Paul says in II Corinthians 12:10, “That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, I am strong.” It was Christ who strengthened Paul. And Christ will strengthen you, also. In our weakness, let us let Christ shine through. So, clay jar caregivers, keep your self relying on these everlasting arms of Christ. Stay close to Jesus so the treasure that is within you might guide and strengthen you in



your calling as a caregiver. You need to take care of yourself spiritually as well as physically and emotionally.

Phillips Brooks wrote a Christmas carol we are all familiar with called, "O Little Town of Bethlehem". He also wrote these words to encourage Christ followers,

*Feed on Christ  
And then go and live your life,  
And it is Christ in you that lives your life,  
That helps the poor,  
That tells the truth,  
That fights the battle,  
And that wins the crowns.*

<b>When do you most feel like a clay jar?</b>	<b>How can the treasure in you help in your caregiving?</b>	<b>Name some blessing for which you can thank God?</b>