



Scripture Nugget – Power in Clay Pots

But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not constrained; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:7-9).

Negative feelings can be temptations and tools of the Evil One, and the gateway to sin.

The key to overcome many temptations is self-control and holy perseverance. Though we may be very aware of our human weaknesses, we have to remember always that the unsurpassed power of God's grace is within us. Knowing that uncontrolled feelings can be a weakness and a gateway to sin in many people, Satan tempts us untiringly through our feelings and senses. He incites hatred, fear, anger, jealousy, suspicion, despair, discouragement and all kinds of impure and negative feelings which make us miserable. However, once we recognize them as temptations by the Evil One, half of the battle is won. Praying daily for holy perseverance and self-control strengthens us spiritually in the constant battle against the Unholy One. Through His Passion, Christ gives us all the graces we need to overcome all temptations as He endured them Himself and overcome every one of them for our sakes (cf. Hebrews 5:8-9). While struggling in agony on the Cross, Jesus was tempted and taunted not just by passers-by but even by the spiritually blind chief priests, scribes and Jewish elders, to come down from the Cross if He was indeed Son of God (cf. Matthew 27:39-42). It took Jesus great self-control to remain humbly quiet on the Cross.

Jesus gives us power and light through His Passion. *Though harshly treated, He submitted and did not open His mouth; Like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, He did not open His mouth (Isaiah 53:7).* Like our Divine Master, we should try to control our tongue especially in the face of provocation. An ability to control the tongue is a great Christian virtue which we should try to cultivate with practice and grace from God. The human inclination to defend oneself in the face of accusation comes from the fear of adverse opinion of others, a reflection of our fallen, prideful nature. Yet, we can learn and be strengthened by the examples of Jesus and Mary. Mary kept her peaceful silence when St Joseph, her betrothed prepared to divorce her quietly in the face of her unexplained pregnancy. Instead, God spoke mightily on her behalf in a dream to St Joseph. Many sins and hurts could have been avoided through a holy control of the tongue which can potentially inflict more harm than a sharp sword. We can appear more humble in God's eyes if we treasure more what He thinks of us than the human opinion of others.

Conversation with Jesus: Precious Lord, though I may be weak like an earthen vessel yet I know that Your grace is always with me to overcome all obstacles to my holiness. When the temptation is great, You provide a corresponding amount of grace. Though I may oftentimes feel like a leaf in the eye of the storm, let not my fear blinds me to the truth that You are always with me as You promised (cf. Matthew 28:20). Let me trust in the unsurpassed power of Your amazing grace always. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.