

November 30, 2001

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 Corinthians 4:7-9

The Lord led me to this scripture shortly after I was diagnosed with breast cancer. I really relate to the "jars of clay" part, having thought of myself as a "cracked pot" many times. I must admit it is incredible to me that He would choose to put "this treasure" in my cracked, dirty, earthenware jar. WOW!! This jar that has been broken and put back together by the Master so many times. I can only **hope** that the light of His glory and this treasure will spill out of the cracks.

**Hope**, that is my subject. The Amplified Bible says, "We suffer embarrassments and are perplexed and unable to find a way out, but not driven to despair". I looked up the definitions of perplexed and despair. Perplexity is a state or condition of confusion or bewilderment, intricate or complicated. Many times we are confused by situations in our lives. Is it OK to ask God questions? When I am confused it only makes sense for me to turn to the source of all wisdom. When I read the Psalms I realize I am in pretty good company. David asked God questions all the time. Psalm 22 says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?" That sounds familiar. Jesus was quoting that scripture from the cross (Matthew 27:46). Asking questions denotes relationship. Listening for answers is communication. Don't be afraid to ask God questions. Trust all the while that He knows ALL the answers. Sometimes we don't get the answers WE want. David asked himself questions and then answered himself (I've done that). Psalm 42:5 "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your **hope in God**, for yet I will praise him, my Savior and my God". **Hope in God**, you could never go wrong with that advice. We have all had times when we needed to remind ourselves where our hope comes from.

Despair is another matter altogether. Remember, the scripture says we are NOT in despair. That's because despair means an utter lack of hope. Yikes!! We should never find ourselves there. If we know Jesus, He is our hope!! Romans 15:4 "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope." Romans 15:13 "May the **God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may **overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit." Ephesians 1:18 "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may **know the hope** to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints." (You just have to check out verse 17 and 19-21 too!!)

I sure feel better. I **hope** you do too. I love you.

Jan