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“THIS TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS”

The drought was pressing hard, so Yang Zhifa and his five brothers, along with a neighbor decided they would dig a well in order to provide water for their crops. Imagine the surprise of these Chinese farmers, when they uncovered terracotta sculptures of soldiers. The life-sized figures, now referred to as the Terracotta Army had been buried under the ground of central China since the third century b.c.. To say the find was extraordinary doesn't seem to do it justice. Imagine, finding 8,000 soldiers, 150 horses, along with 130 chariots being pulled by 520 horses, all laying just below the surface. A treasure indeed.



futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (1Peter 1:18-19)

When the Terracotta Army was uncovered the hand of those who created each individual piece was on display. Craftsmanship, attention to detail brought to light, even after being hidden for time upon time. In the second chapter of his epistle to the brethren in Philippi, Paul is stressing the need for each child of God to embrace the mind set of Christ (see verses 5-8). But notice what is seen a few verses

later.

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

Focus in on “for it is God who is at work in you”. Now lay that along side what Peter pens in 1Peter 3:15-16, “but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, but with gentleness and respect; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who disparage your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.” The totality of our life must be one that influences others; in both word and deed.

There are any number of illustrations that could be extracted from the Terracotta Army, suffice to say the treasure, hidden in earthen vessels, needs to be uncovered and shared. That treasure is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the message contained therein. A message of forgiveness, hope, love, grace and mercy. A message desperately needed for all. (wbe)

The genesis for this article came to me yesterday, March 29th as a blurb popped up on the Internet titled “what happened on this date”. Fresh in my mind was Paul's writing in 2Corinthians 4, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves” (v.7) A little bit of serendipity to be sure and the priming of the pump for this article.

Just like those precious sculptures; they are seen are treasures. Treasure that had been hidden for millennia. There exists within each child of God precious treasure that cannot be measured by silver or gold; the message of God's love and mercy. We are the “earthen vessels” and we need to show to all the power of the gospel of Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

“Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your

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