

## “In Your Weakness”

### 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

One of the great mysteries of Paul’s Message to the church was this: “If I must boast, I will boast in my weakness.”

This certainly must have seemed odd and out of place to the constituents of the Corinthian Church. They were engulfed in a culture that prided itself in triumph and great accomplishment. They were of Roman influence; one that celebrated strength and valor, triumph and exploit over their enemies. Now what Paul is saying must seem backwards and counter productive in their thinking. It was a mystery and required the Apostle Paul to illustrate for them to understand.

### Vs. 7a

**Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited,**

In other words what he endured paid an important role...

It was there to keep Paul from becoming conceited.

conceited: raised up, exalted, haughty

What is it Paul might become conceited about? certain “surpassingly great revelations.” vs. 6

Paul's vision was so impressive that it would have been easy for him to be conceited

Paul experienced being humbled...

- On the road to Damascus he was humbled...
- Now he is kept from becoming conceited...
- Paul, when he persecuted Christ and the Church was humbled...
- Paul, as an Apostle with great spiritual revelation was humbled...

### **Vs. 7b**

**I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.**

When we think of a **thorn**, we think of a somewhat minor irritation. But the root word Paul used for **thorn** here describes a *tent stake*, not a thumbtack.

Ancient Greek meaning: Something which frustrates and causes trouble in the lives of those afflicted.

*“He says, ‘I was given.’ He reckoned his great trial to be a gift. He does not say, ‘There was inflicted upon me a thorn in the flesh,’ but ‘There was given to me.’”* (Spurgeon)

What exactly was Paul's thorn in the flesh?

- Some see it mainly as *spiritual harassment*.
- Others think it was *persecution*.
- Many suggest that it was a *physical or mental* ailment.
- There are many different attempts to figure this one out from these listed to the Paul having an estranged, unbelieving wife.
- None the less the Lord kept Paul from revealing what it was perhaps for the purpose of us not losing sight of the real point.

### **Vs. 8**

**Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.**

Paul says three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

Have you ever pleaded with God about some thing. Only for that thing to not change much, if at all.

Some think that Paul is using a Hebrew figure of speech that really means much more than **three times**. It is the Hebrew figure for *ceaselessly, continuously, over and over again*.

Is it possible that God is doing something?  
or wants to do something in you through the struggle?  
Perhaps even show you something about himself you've never seen?

Paul says **I pleaded with the lord to take it away from me. But he said to me,**

### **Vs. 9a**

**“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**

I am convinced that God is into book smarts...  
But he is also into on the job training...

If God were a Boxing coach he would have you in the ring...

He would say to you while you dance around in the ring **“My Grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**

Here we see Grace and Power are put together.  
If you never new Grace was Power now you know...

He says My Grace: charis - goodwill, loving kindness & favor  
is your Power: dunamis - strength, power & ability.  
and it's made perfect in your weakness.

Paul was looking for a ticket out  
But Jesus gave him a word to get him through.

Rarely in the Bible do you see God giving tickets out

Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego he didn't get them out of the fire, he got them through the fire.

When your going through something you just don't think you handle, you need a word from God. That will get you through.

Story:

The other day I saw a man with a hat that said "Self Made"  
I understand what that meant to him, but all he will get is what he can do.  
But where there is a "God made Man"  
He will see, not only what he can do but what God can do.

### **Vs. 9b**

**Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.**

Through his **weakness**, God made Paul completely dependent on His **grace** and on His **power**, but it was all for good. Paul's continued – even forced – dependence upon God made him stronger than he would have ever been if his revelations had made him proud and self-sufficient.

If my weakness provides opportunity for the Grace and Power of God. Then perhaps we should remind ourselves more often that we are not strong enough without Him.

**Therefore I will boast:** glory on account of, rejoice. **all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.**

Paul says, like John the Baptist, I must become less that he may become greater... **so that Christ's power may rest on me.**

### **Vs. 10**

**10** That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

What triumph! What can the world do to such a man so firm in the grip of Jesus? God did not allow this *thorn in the flesh* to punish Paul or to keep him weak for the sake of weakness. God allowed it to show a divine strength in Paul.

Oh that we would have a good confession like Paul  
a true confession  
a sober confession  
an honest confession to God  
a humble confession of our need for God

**so that Christ's power may rest on me.**