



Dr. Jimmy Stewart | August 10, 2025

Sermon | Power Through Weakness

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Summary: In this deeply personal passage, Paul describes a divine revelation he received—a vision of heaven so glorious that it defies expression in words. Yet rather than boasting in these personal spiritual experiences, Paul gives greater emphasis to a “thorn in the flesh” given to him to keep him humble. Three times he pleads with the Lord to remove it, but the Lord replies, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul then declares that he will boast gladly in his weaknesses so that Christ’s power may rest upon him. This paradox—that strength comes through surrender and power through weakness—is at the heart of gospel transformation and contributes exponentially to spiritual maturity.

Spotlight: The strength of Christ is most visible in our trials not our triumphs; His power rests on those who admit their weaknesses and depend completely on His grace.

I. What Do Others See in Your Life and Hear in Your Message? (vv. 1–7a)

2 Corinthians 12:1-7a

1 This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don’t know—only God knows. 3 Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know 4 that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell. 5 That experience is worth boasting about, but I’m not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses. 6 If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won’t do it, because I don’t want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, 7 even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God.

- Paul describes an indescribable experience of paradise
- This revelation could easily lead to pride -
- Beware: God’s Revealed Glory Can Lead to Pride

- God's revelation to you leads to His Glory in your life or Pride in your life (Pride or Humility?)
- *Illustration:* A mountaintop view no one else has seen—how easy it is to feel “above” others

II. Thorns of Torment in the Flesh (v. 7b–8)

2 Corinthians 12:7b–8

So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. 8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.

- This “messenger of Satan” is used by God for Paul's sanctification
- *Illustration:* Like a pebble in a runner's shoe—small but relentless, always reminding you of your limits
- Paul earnestly prays for deliverance—three times
- God doesn't remove the pain, but He gives something better

III. The Promise of Grace for All Who Depend on Him (v. 9)

2 Corinthians 12:9

9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

- When Thorns of Torment Become Blessings
- Christ's power is made perfect in our inability
- *Illustration:* The cracked pot that waters flowers along the path—God works through our brokenness.

IV. Boasting in Weaknesses (v. 10)

2 Corinthians 12:10

10 That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. “My grace is sufficient for you”

- Paul redefines strength: when he is weak, then he is strong
- The church must learn to value brokenness as the path to real power
- Believers must learn to value weakness, not striving for strength but submitting to the power of the Spirit boasting only in the Lord
- *Illustration:* The cross itself—an emblem of suffering that became the power of salvation

Life Application Questions:

1. **Have I confused personal strength with personal success or spiritual growth at work? At home? At church?**

What is my typical response to weakness or hardship in my life? How can I act and react more like Jesus in how I handle moments of weakness? Moments of strength? Describe a moment when Jesus used weakness for spiritual gain. Describe a time when Jesus used strength to make a spiritual point. What differences are there between the two? Similarities? What are some things you can do to live more like Jesus?

2. **What is the “thorn” in my life right now?**

In what ways might God be using it to keep me humble or draw me closer to Him? What has been your response? What actions will you take moving forward?

3. **How do I understand God’s grace as sufficient?**

Do I believe Christ’s presence is enough, even when my situation doesn’t change?

4. **What areas of weakness might be an invitation for God's power to rest on me?**

How could I share those with others in a way that glorifies Christ?

5. **Am I discipling others to value dependence on God over displays of strength?**

How does my church community define spiritual maturity? What steps do I need to take to grow spiritually more mature?