

Why would a good God allow weakness to remain in our lives?

Weakness invites us to authenticity.

On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—⁶ though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. 2 Corinthians 12:5-6 ESV

- **When I'm honest and admit that I am weak, I draw near to grace.**

Weakness protects us from pride.

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 2 Corinthians 12:7-8 ESV

- **We cannot experience God's grace until we're in a posture of weakness.**

Weakness brings us into the sufficiency of grace.

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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV

- **God allowed Paul to suffer so he could find Jesus sufficient.**

Weakness reveals the power of God's grace.

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10 ESV

- **The gospel doesn't erase brokenness—it redeems it.**

Let's Talk About It

We naturally assume that God's grace comes to us through blessed circumstances. In 2 Corinthians, Paul describes a powerful encounter of God's grace amidst unrelenting pain and suffering. No matter how much he prayed, this torment did not depart. One might assume that Paul was cursed, but Paul concludes the opposite. He says that he boasts in his weakness and even delights in it because through the suffering and pain he has experienced more of God's grace. How could this be true?

2 Corinthians 12:1-10; Matthew 11:28

Discussion questions:

- As our church continues to grow, we're excited to announce that we have additional validated parking and shuttle service at the **Varsity Building parking lot** (2546 Coyne St.). Check out the parking button on the app for more information.
- Which part of the message impacted or challenged you?
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10. Have you ever experienced a "thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan"—something that hurts that doesn't go away with prayer? How did you react to it? How did it affect your view of God?
- Why does God give Paul this particular thorn? Why is conceit or pride so dangerous? How does suffering humble us?
- Reread verse 9. How do we come to know the sufficiency of God's grace amidst our suffering? What does it mean that God's power is "made perfect in weakness"? Give personal examples.
- In contrast to what Paul is describing in this passage, sometimes pain pulls us away from God instead of drawing us closer. What makes the difference?
- Paul insists on boasting about his weakness instead of his strength. How are our testimonies of weakness more relevant to the lost and broken than the boasts of our victories and trophies?

Take a Step

- Take time this week to bring a specific weakness honestly before God, meet Him there, and receive strength from His grace rather than trying to carry or fix it yourself.

Here's My Prayer

Lord, thank You that Your grace is sufficient for us. In our weakness, remind us that Your power rests on us. When we feel broken, help us trust that You are at work, redeeming what is wounded and shaping something more beautiful through Your grace. Teach us to boast not in our strength, but in Your power. In Jesus' name.