

Sufficient Grace for Today

Part 2

October 7, 2018

Scripture Text: II Corinthians 12:7-10 NIV The Thorn in the Flesh

7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, 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 However, 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.

Last week we shared with you about how Paul chose to boast about his afflictions, rather than his accomplishments. Paul had every reason to boast according to his background. Philippians 3:4-7
*4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. 7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. VERSE 6 *For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.**

VERSE 7 or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

When God blesses a person with the gifting that Paul received to affirm and confirm the message of Jesus Christ, trouble will follow. People can tend to become lifted with pride when others laud praise upon them. The apostle reminds us of the method God chose to keep him humble. His purpose for you and me can be entirely different as to our gifting and placement in the Body of Christ. We don't know what his thorn in the flesh was, whether some great trouble or some great temptation.

The subject came up in conversation with another brother about a thorn in the flesh, and he began to show me a metal splinter in his finger. He had tried many times to remove it, using different techniques with no resolve. Sometimes we try to remove the thorn from our lives and not realize that it is there for a reason. For some people, it takes a near death experience for them to pray. Is that you?



THE VILLAGES
COMMUNITY
CHAPEL

God loved Paul and his devotion to the faithfulness of his calling. The scripture shows us many times that God brings good out of evil from Genesis to Revelations. If God loves us, He will keep us from being exalted above measure; and spiritual burdens are ordered to cure spiritual pride. This thorn in the flesh is said to be a messenger of Satan which he sent for evil, but God designed it and overruled it for good. 1 Peter 4:19 NIV So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

VERSE 8 *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.*

We have heard the expression, "Prayer Changes Things" and it does according to God's will for a person's life. Paul reminds us of the desperation of his heart to be free of the torment from his thorn in the flesh. He prayed earnestly and intently for deliverance, but there was none because through his affliction God was being glorified. The Kingdom was expanding through the foolishness of preaching the Gospel.

God loves the world and wants us to know the truth and be committed to Him. God wants us to love others enough to be willing -- just like Jesus was -- to put up with inconvenience and discomfort to touch them with God's love. Philippians 2:13 NKJV "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." I know that God, Himself is the one who's at work among us, who provides both the will and the energy to enable us to do what pleases Him.

VERSE 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.*

Paul's prayer for deliverance did not go unanswered, and neither does our prayers. The answer may not be the one that we want, so shall we keep on asking? I was in Target Store once, and there was this little girl maybe 4 or 5 years old. She was giving her mother a tough time because she couldn't have the toy that she had put in the shopping cart. Her mother had told her before that she wasn't going to buy the toy. Behind her mother's back the little girl hide it in the shopping cart only to be discovered at the checkout! The little girl began to perform including drawing the attention of shoppers near and in the distance.

When God said to Paul after his earnest prayers; "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul's testimony and resolve were, "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

VERSE 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*

Paul knew that God is sovereign and the Lord has his back. Being convinced of God's love your attitude and testimony will change. He wrote to the Church in Romans 8:35-39 NIV 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written: "For your sake, we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

APPLICATIONS:

The very thing that causes you trouble is the very thing that drives you to God. If God is at work in your background what reason do you have to complain?