

Christ's Power is Made Perfect in Weakness

II Corinthians 12:1-10

"But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness." --2 Corinthians 12:9

- I. Paul's mountain top experience
 - A. He just shared about his valleys
 - B. God lifts us above the valleys to glimpse His glory.
 - C. The valleys and mountains are side by side - Proverbs 25:21-22
- II. Paul's anonymous signature
 - A. He never fully owns these experiences.
 - B. Humility did not allow Paul to fully disclose these events.
 - C. Paul's concern for them forced him to play a role.
- III. Paul's revelation of Jesus - 12:1-4
 - A. "Revelation" means unveiling.
 - B. God must reveal Himself to us--I Cor. 13:12; John 14:18-21.
 - C. The vision of God's glory changed Paul's life forever.
--Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 1:1-21.
 - D. Paul leaves out details - 12:4
 - E. The third heaven is God's realm.
--Ecclesiastes 3:11; Hebrews 4:14; Ephesians 4:10
- IV. Paul's return to the valley: The thorn in the flesh - 12:7-8
 - A. God's glory is always revealed in human weakness.
 - B. "Every rose has its thorn" - 12:7a - Deuteronomy 8:1-18.
 - C. The original sin: All the knowledge but none of God.
 - D. Humility is central to becoming more like Christ -Psalm 100:3.

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- E. "God gives grace to the humble" - I Peter 5:5-7; James 1:9.
- F. The thorn is evidence of God's love - Hebrews 12:5-10
- G. The thorn was God's frailty beeper for Paul - 12:7b
- H. Thorns cause unusually great pain
- I. God allowed Paul to be wounded - 12:7c
--Job 2:3-10 ; James 1:2-5, 13, 14, 17
- J. Paul prays about his thorn - 12:8
- K. God's answer came, but not according to Paul's request.
- V. God's grace is sufficient to sustain us in our pain - 12:9a
 - A. What is grace?
 - B. God's grace alone is sufficient for every circumstance.
 - C. Another side of grace
- VI. God's power is made perfect in weakness
 - A. The great irony of God's kingdom: Weakness = Power
 - B. Paul's greatest achievement: To be completely carried by God
 - C. We gain God's strength only when we need it -Matthew 11:25
 - D. My ability to tap into God's power is "made perfect".
- VII. Paul's conclusion: "I will gladly boast in my weakness" - 12:9b-10
 - A. He is proud of what he is not
 - B. The reason he boasts: "So Christ's power may rest upon me."
 - C. "I delight in weakness for Christ's sake"
 - D. When I am weak, then I am strong!