

God's Grace is Sufficient – Adversity

(God Has A Better Way!)

(2Cor 12:1-6) Paul's visions of the 3d heaven – not permitted to speak about it

(2Cor 12:7-10)

- 2Cor 12:7 **Preventative Suffering**
- 2Cor 12:8 **Prayer for relief**
- 2Cor 12:9-10 **Power of Christ**

(2Cor 12:7) God intervenes with suffering to prevent Paul from becoming proud

- vs.7 – hina me huperairomai P.P.Subj – to raise up, to become proud, see self as better than others - so that I might not see myself as more than I am
 - His area of weakness – (Phil 3:4) Paul had more reason to trust/flesh than others
- vs.7 – given to me – didomi – give, grant, supply – (Mt 14:19) food; (Phil 4:15) money
 - God gave Paul the gift that kept on giving – his suffering was a gift
- vs.7 – thorn in the flesh – skolops – stake, splinter, injurious sharp object
- vs.7 – angel from satan – demon
- vs.7 – buffet – kolaphizo – beat with a fist; treat harshly; (Mt 26:67) suffering of Christ
 - Demon induced illness or malady of the physical body
- vs.7 – hina me huperairomai – so that I might not see myself as more than I am
 - Notice that Paul repeats this phrase to emphasize God's purpose for suffering
 - a. God allowed Paul to see something so wonderful he was not allowed to reveal it
 - b. Paul's area of temptation was related to pride and self promotion – he had legitimate reasons in the flesh to view himself as better than many others
 - c. God gave him the gift of physical illness **to prevent** Paul from falling prey to the temptation of exalting himself (1Tim 3:6) condemnation of the devil
 - d. Note that God designs circumstances to help us prevent sin in the future

Thayer: “even having been caught up in a trance to the third heaven, sternly admonished that he still dwelt in a frail and mortal body.”

(2Cor 12:8) Paul prays for relief from his ailment

- vs.8 – three times the Lord – on 3 separate occasions
- vs.8 – I besought – parakaleo – to encourage, beseech, plead, beg – Paul's prayer
- vs.8 – to depart – aphistamai – to turn away – take it away
 - a. Initially, Paul did not understand the purpose of God's gift of suffering
 - b. His logic: this is hindering my ability to do God's work; how can I continue to fulfill the assignment when I hurt; this is making me weak & I need to be strong.
 - c. Paul prays that God would remove this great blessing from his life.
 - d. Paul's prayer: please give me relief from my suffering
 - e. God's answer: gave Paul a better solution than relief – He gave him a purpose for his suffering that allowed him to be grateful for his weakness.

(2Cor 12:9-10) – Power of Christ is revealed through Paul’s weakness

- vs.9 – he had said – lego P.F.A.I – said with finality; said in the past with enduring results
 - Paul realized what God had been teaching him for some time – it clicked (Eph 1:18)
- vs.9 – my grace – charis – God’s blessing to man based on the work of Christ
- vs.9 - sufficient for you – arkeo P.A.I – suffices, provides all you need
 - God’s grace provides all you need to have victory in any/all circumstances
- vs.9 – power – dunamis – power of God;
 - (Mt 22:29) power of God;
 - (Mt 26:64) right hand of power;
 - (Mt 11:20) – might works, miracles;
 - (Mt 24:30) Son/Man coming in power
- vs.9 – perfected – teleo P.P.I – made complete; fulfilled; finished; full result
 - God’s power is allowed to have its full and complete result
- vs.9 – in weakness – astheneia – weak, sick, inadequate, impotent, inability
 - Man’s inability provides the opportunity for God’s ability to be glorified
 - Only when we are rendered helpless can God’s power find its full expression
- vs.9 – Most gladly I will boast about my weakness (Jms 1:2) Count it all joy
- vs.9 – so that – reason: power of Christ may live in me
 - When Paul realized that his weakness magnified Christ’s power in his life, he was overjoyed about his weakness because it was greater opportunity to magnify Christ
 - Christ magnified was his priority and he was willing to endure anything so that his life could be a greater instrument for God to glorify Himself.
- vs.10 – I take delight – weakness, insults, hardships, persecutions, difficulties
 - Anything that went beyond his ability to control – helplessness
- vs.10 – when I am weak, then I am strong
 - When we accept our weakness as part of God’s design, we can depend on His strength rather than struggling with our own.

1. All of us struggle with our weakness, suffering and mortality.
2. All of us have developed the Old Man belief that we are supposed to be strong
3. God designed us to be weak, needy and helpless – dependent
4. God designed us to be totally dependent on His strength for our success, impact and happiness as we endure life in the devil’s world.
5. Adversity has the purpose of putting us in situations beyond our control
6. Adversity reveals and clarifies the reality of the inadequacy of human ability
7. Having seen our own inadequacy, we have the option to change our minds about the importance of human ability – we were never for intended to be strong
8. When we abandon human ability as our strength, we can embrace God’s strength
9. Adversity & suffering is a gift from God to show us the truth about strength
10. Sometimes our suffering is all that prevents us from leaving the true path.
11. Adversity / suffering inspire us to draw near to God and He draws near to us.

The bible explains that even Jesus learned through God’s program of adversity

(Heb 5:8) Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.