



**Grace Life Church**  
*of Dallas*

The doctrines of grace, the life of the Spirit, to the glory of God

# **2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

## **Thorns/Weaknesses**

### **Sufficient Grace & Power Made Perfect**

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## 2 Corinthians 12:1-6

*1I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows.*

*3And I know that this man was caught up into paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6though 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 12:7-10

*7 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. 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 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.*<sub>3</sub>

Verses 1-4 Paul gives insight to the revelation:

- Paul speaks about himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person
- *“He heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter”*
- *V5-6 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses—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*

*V7 So to keep me from becoming conceited (exalting myself) because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass (buffet) me, to keep me from becoming conceited (exalting myself)*

### **Thorn: Sharp stake/splinter (Symbol)**

- It was “given” to him (by God)-Not something Paul is in control over (weakness)
- “In the flesh”
- A messenger (angel) of Satan
  - To harass/buffet Matt 26:67 (present tense)
- Ultimate purpose (God): to keep Paul from becoming conceited (self-exalting)
- Summary: Ultimately the thorn is given by God, for a redemptive purpose (keep Paul from becoming conceited), it is given in the flesh, it involves a demon harassing/buffeting, and it shows Paul’s weakness (not something he can control)

**Paul’s initial response:** *v8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.*

*9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”*

- God is not going to remove the thorn
- *“My grace is sufficient”*
- *“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. 10 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.*

- The very weaknesses that the thorn exposed (and Paul pleaded to be removed), Paul now (in light of the revelation of their purpose) boasts gladly in them
- He isn't looking to his own strength to endure or overcome the weaknesses, because now he knows “the power of Christ rest upon him”
- For the sake of Christ then, I am content in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecution, & calamities
- When I am weak then I am strong