

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷So 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. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Background

In what is likely his fourth letter to the church at Corinth, Paul deals with the accusations of the church and their unhealthy views of Paul and his leadership. The believers at Corinth were fascinated with the idea “super apostles” – and Paul didn’t fit the description they had in mind. Paul spends three chapters of this letter listing all the ways he could brag about his credentials and religious experiences. But in this passage, though, we see how Paul chooses not to promote himself but instead brags on the grace of God in Christ *through* his weaknesses, more specifically his ‘thorn in the flesh.’ As we close out the series today, Pastor David will lovingly remind us of that it’s okay NOT to be okay. As we acknowledge our weaknesses and lean into Jesus, we find that His sufficient grace meets us right where we are to put His strength on display through us.

Service Notes

What is your biggest takeaway from today’s message?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Instructions

This discussion guide is to help you facilitate a conversation with your small group. The "Getting Started" section serves as a quick opener and introduction to the group conversation. In the "Talk it Over" section, feel free to use all or only some of the questions. Again, our hope is to have meaningful and encouraging conversations around the passage used in the sermon, not simply answer all the questions. Give each member of your group opportunity to respond. Take your time. Finally, the "Live it Out" section is to help identify a specific next step. Use these questions as a guide to find practical ways to apply the passage to our everyday life.

Getting Started

- ▼ What is one thing that stood out the most to you in this week's message? What has God been teaching you lately? How can we pray for you?

Talk it Over

- ▼ Why is admitting weaknesses or struggles in our life so difficult? How have you experienced the pressure of 'having it all together' both inside and outside of the church? What happens when we fail to acknowledge our weaknesses? In what ways do we miss out on God working *in* and *through* us?
- ▼ **Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-9** According to Paul, what was the reason he was given this 'thorn?' What can we learn from Jesus NOT taking away Paul's 'thorn?' How should this encourage or challenge us? What do you think it means for the power of Jesus to be 'made perfect' in our weaknesses? What might this look like practically?
- ▼ **Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.** What do you think Paul meant by 'boasting' in his weaknesses? In social media-obsessed world, how can 'boasting' in our weaknesses be misunderstood? What does it look like for us to be 'content' in our weaknesses? How does God's grace make us strong even when we are weak? How have you experienced God's 'sufficient grace' both sustaining you and shining through a weakness?
- ▼ **Read Proverbs 3:5-6.** How do we 'trust' and 'acknowledge' the Lord in all we do? What's the promise in this passage? What might this look like in your daily life?

Live it Out

- ▼ In what area(s) of your life right now are you relying upon your own strength? What are some practical steps you can take this week to rest in the sufficient grace of Jesus?

