



Power in Weakness

By Jeff Bedwell on May 6, 2022

TODAY'S READING: 2 Corinthians 12

Paul is continuing to seek to counter the false accusations and teachings of the gospel's opponents, these "super-apostles," who claim to be superior to Paul. He only does so in defense of the gospel and out of concern for the Corinthian believers who may be led astray by these false teachers. As we have seen in previous chapters, he counters their boasting by boasting in his weaknesses.

Paul shares about his almost indescribable experience of being caught up into the third heaven – the heaven of heavens where God dwells in glory – also described as paradise (vv. 2-6). But Paul's greatest "boast" is not in this incredible experience from God, but in his weakness, his "thorn in the flesh" that kept him humble and dependent on God (vv. 7-10).

Even though Paul asked God repeatedly to remove this "thorn in the flesh" (we are never told exactly what it was), God never did. God's answer to Paul comes as one of the high points of this entire letter. *"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"* (2 Corinthians 12:9, ESV). This theme of power in weakness runs throughout Paul's ministry and writings.

Power in weakness is seen in the cross of Christ. In God's plan of redemption, there had to be weakness (crucifixion) before there was power (resurrection). And this power in weakness connection is what Paul reflected on when he contemplated Christ's praying three times in Gethsemane before his death on the cross, which was followed by the power of the resurrection! Paul came to understand and embrace the fact that his thorn in the flesh was essential to his ongoing weakness and the experience of Christ's ongoing power.

Henrietta Mears, who was used so mightily to strengthen the evangelical church through her discipleship and writing, suffered from childhood on with extreme myopia and general eye weakness and irritation. She, like Paul, cried out for relief, but to no avail. In her maturity, Miss Mears often remarked, "I believe my greatest spiritual asset throughout my entire life has been my failing sight, for it has kept me absolutely dependent upon God." Henrietta Mears went on, still plagued by her increasing disability, to set the standard for Sunday schools in America. She founded Gospel Light and wrote the million-plus best-seller, *What the Bible Is All About*. She was influential in shaping the ministries of Billy Graham in his beginning stages, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Richard Halverson, Chaplain of the United States Senate, to name only a few.

Like Henrietta Mears and Paul, may we learn the power in weakness as we fully depend upon Christ! *"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" (2 Corinthians 12:10, ESV).

PRAYER: Father, I do not like weakness and suffering. You are often so gracious in removing suffering from my life as I cry out to You. I thank You for those moments. I also choose by faith to thank You for the times when You choose to use these weaknesses and sufferings in my life to shape my heart and life and keep me dependent on You. May Your power be displayed through my weaknesses. May you be glorified in my life today whether in abundance or in weakness and suffering.

TOMORROW'S READING: Weekend is for catch-up and review.

MONDAY'S READING: 2 Corinthians 13

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