

The Vine and the Branches Part 5

John 15:1-17, 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

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2 Corinthians 12:1-10 ESV

I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I 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. 3 And 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— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 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. 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.

Setting in v1-6

I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I 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. 3 And 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— 4 and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. 5 On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses— 6 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.

- “*God knows*”-God is in control of this from beginning to end.
 - “all things” Rom 8:28-30

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.

- *So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelation:*
 - *This pruning is not because Paul sinned (Every branch that does bear fruit He prunes-John 15:3)*
 - *The purpose of this pruning is to keep Paul from sin “becoming conceited/exulting myself”*
 - *What happens when we become conceited? We stop abiding in Christ (thus bearing fruit)*
- *A thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.*
 - *Who gave Paul the thorn? God, Satan, man?*

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.

- Whatever this “thorn” was, it was so severe that Paul pleaded (begged) with the Lord three times (times or seasons) that it would leave.
 - Note that Paul didn’t cry out for the list of things in 2 Cor 11:23-29
 - How long has Paul had this thorn? *V2 14 years*
- Paul can’t see how it is working for “good”, and he believes the only way “good” can come from this is for God to remove it

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

- *My grace is sufficient for you*
 - God provides sufficient grace for every moment
 - Phil 4:11-13 *I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content...I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*
- *My power is made perfect in weakness*
 - When Paul sees his weakness (caused by the thorn), he abides in Christ, and when he abides in Christ he finds the power of Christ towards him
 - In our pruning, God is convincing us “*without Me you can do nothing*”, so we abide in Christ
- *9b Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*
- Luke 22:42 *“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done.”*

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.

Romans 8:28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good.

Romans 5:8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:9-10 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.