

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 48

TITLE: THE PARADOX OF POWER

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

INTRODUCTION: (1) WHAT IS A PARADOX?

\* **WELL, FIRST OF ALL, IT'S NOT A COUPLE OF PHYSICIANS, A PAIR OF DOCTORS, A PAIR OF DOCS.**

\*\*A PARADOX IS DEFINED AS A SEEMINGLY SELF CONTRADICTIONARY DECLARATION BUT IS IN FACT TRUE.

\*\*\*NOW THE BIBLE CONTAINS SOME SEEMINGLY SELF-CONTRADICTIONARY PRINCIPLES, WHICH IN FACT ARE TRUE.

\*\*\*\*LIKE, WE SEE UNSEEN THINGS.

(2) WE SAVE OUR LIVES AS WE LOSE OUR LIVES.

\* WE ARE EXALTED WHEN WE ARE HUMBLE.

\*\* WE BECOME WISE BY BEING FOOLS FOR  
**CHRIST'S SAKE.**

\*\*\* WE ARE MADE FREE BY BECOMING  
BONDSERVANTS.

\*\*\*\* WE FIND REST UNDER A YOKE.

(3) WE RECEIVE THROUGH GIVING.

\* AND WE GAIN STRENGTH THROUGH  
WEAKNESS.

\*\* NOW ALL OF THESE STATEMENTS ARE  
ROOTED IN BIBLICAL TRUTH AND PRINCIPLE  
AND THEY ARE ONLY APPARENT PARADOXES  
BECAUSE OUR WORLD IS UPSIDE DOWN WHEN IT  
**COMES TO GOD'S HIGHER WAYS.**

\*\*\* FOR THE LORD SAYS IN **ISAIAH 55:8-9:**  
(QUOTE THEM)

\*\*\*\* NOW MY POINT IS, OUR THOUGHTS  
NATURALLY FROM CULTURE AND OUR WORLDS  
PERSPECTIVE **ARE OPPOSITE TO GOD'S WAYS**  
**AND GOD'S WILL.**

**(4) GOD'S KINGDOM OPERATES FROM A HIGHER**  
STANDARD THAT IS HOLY AND HIS WAYS ARE  
PERFECT AND OUR WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE IS  
LIMITED, WHEREAS HIS WISDOM AND  
KNOWLEDGE ARE UNLIMITED.

\* SO **MANY TIMES OUR NATURAL INCLINATIONS**  
**ARE OPPOSITE, COMPLETELY CONTRARY TO**  
**GOD'S WILL AND GOD'S WAYS.**

\*\*AND A PERFECT ILLUSTRATION OF THAT IS  
WHEN WE ARE WEAK THEN WE ARE STRONG,  
THAT THERE IS POWER IN WEAKNESS, THAT  
THERE IS STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS, THAT  
A WEAK SERVANT IS A POWERFUL SERVANT.

\*\*\* AND WE SEE THAT CLEARLY ILLUSTRATED IN OUR TEXT FOR TODAY.

\*\*\*\* FOR WE WILL SEE A HUGE CONTRAST **BETWEEN PAUL'S EXPERIENCE OF GOING TO HEAVEN LAST WEEK IN II CORINTHIANS 12:1-6 TO HIS THORN IN THE FLESH ON EARTH IN VV. 7-10**

**(5) AND THE CONTRAST IN PAUL'S TWO EXPERIENCES ARE HUGE!**

\*PAUL GOES **FROM PARADISE TO PAIN.**

\*\* HE GOES **FROM GLORY TO SUFFERING.**

\*\*\* HE TASTED THE BLESSING OF THE LORD IN HEAVEN THEN FELT THE BUFFETING OF SATAN ON EARTH.

\*\*\*\* HE WENT FROM ECSTASY TO AGONY ALL IN **GOD'S PURPOSES FOR PAUL'S LIFE WITHIN THE** 10 VERSES OF II CORINTHIANS 12.

(6) AND AFTER YOU SEE HEAVEN AND COME BACK TO EARTH, THE TEMPTATION WOULD BE TO BE SO HEAVENLY MINDED THAT YOU ARE OF NO EARTHLY GOOD.

\* YOU COULD BECOME PROUD THAT GOD GAVE YOU THAT REVELATION. SO TO KEEP PAUL HUMBLE, HE ORDAINED THAT PAUL WOULD BE GIVEN A THORN IN THE FLESH.

\*\* AND THAT THORN KEPT PAUL HUMBLE, AND THROUGH THAT WEAKNESS PAUL BECAME **STRONGER AND MORE DEPENDANT ON GOD'S** GRACE.

\*\*\* **THUS I'VE TITLED OUR MESSAGE FOR TODAY, "THE PARADOX OF POWER"**.

**\*\*\* AND UNDER THAT TITLE WE'LL LOOK AT 4**  
MAIN POINTS TODAY IN OUR STUDY OF  
II CORINTHIANS 12:7-10.

(7) **NO. 1 THE REASON FOR PAUL'S THORN IN**  
THE FLESH, **V. 7**; **NO. 2 THE REQUEST** BY PAUL  
TO THE LORD TO HAVE THE THORN REMOVED,  
**V.8**; **NO. 3 THE REPLY** TO PAUL FROM THE LORD,  
**V.9**; AND **NO. 4 THE RESULT IN PAUL'S LIFE**  
FROM THIS THORN, **V. 10.**

\* AND WITH THOSE 4 POINT TO HANG YOUR  
THOUGHTS ON, LOOK AT V. 7 PLEASE, WHERE  
**WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT** TODAY, THE  
REASON.

### **I. THE REASON, (READ V. 7)**

A. NOW GOD GAVE PAUL A LOT OF REVELATIONS  
IN HIS LIFE, LITERALLY DISCLOSURES OF TRUTH,  
REVEALING THINGS UNKNOWN.

\* HE GAVE HIM THE REVELATION OF THE SCRIPTURES WHICH IN THE END WOULD BE 13 INSPIRED LETTERS.

\*\* HE GAVE PAUL SIX VISIONS THAT ARE RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

\*\*\* AND GOD GAVE PAUL THE REVELATION OF HEAVEN ALLOWING HIM TO SEE HEAVEN AND TO HEAR WHAT WAS SAID AND SUNG IN HEAVEN, IN VV. 1-6, WHAT WE STUDIED LAST WEEK.

\*\*\*\* NOW BECAUSE OF THE SURPRASSING ABUNDANCE AND NUMBER OF REVELATIONS THAT GOD GAVE HIM, GOD GAVE PAUL A THORN IN THE FLESH TO KEEP HIM FROM EXALTING HIMSELF.

1. AND THE WORDS EXALTING OR EXALTED OR ELEVATED ARE USED TWICE IN V. 7 DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE, AND LITERALLY MEAN CONCEITED, PROUD, HAUGHTY.

\* AND FOR THIS REASON, SO PAUL WOULD NOT GET ALL PUFFED UP WITH PRIDE AND EXALT HIMSELF THROUGH ALL OF THESE GREAT REVELATIONS, GOD GAVE PAUL A THORN IN THE FLESH.

\*\* AND I SAY GOD HERE, BECAUSE **ULTIMATELY GOD HAS THE FINAL SAY IN EVERYTHING, NOT SATAN.**

\*\*\* GOD IS IN ULTIMATE CONTROL, GOD IS ON THE THRONE OF THE UNIVERSE, THE KING THE SOVEREIGN.

\*\*\*\* BELOVED THE WORD OF GOD FROM BEGINNING TO END, TEACHES THAT GOD IS ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN AND CONTROLS EVERYBODY AND EVERYTHING AS HE WORKS OUT HIS OWN FOREORDAINED PURPOSE AND PLAN.



2. AND IF GOD IS NOT BIG ENOUGH TO CONTROL THE BAD THINGS AS WELL AS THE GOOD THINGS, THEN WE ARE IN DEEP DEEP TROUBLE.

\* SO GOD USES SATAN IN HIS PURPOSES, AS MARTIN LUTHER SAID, **"THE DEVIL IS GOD'S DEVIL!"**

\*\* THE DEVIL IS THE HARDEST WORKING INSTRUMENT GOD HAS!

\*\*\* AND YES, SATAN DOES EVERY SINGLE THING THAT HE DOES OUT OF PURE HATRED, HOWEVER, GOD CONTROLS AND USES IT ALL TO ACCOMPLISH HIS OWN ORDAINED PLAN. LET ME GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION OF THAT OUT OF JOHN **REISINGER'S** LITTLE BOOKLET, THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PROVIDENCE.

\*\*\*\* NOW THE POINT I WANT TO REITERATE IS, GOD NOT SATAN **IS IN CONTROL OF PAUL'S LIFE.** AND **GOD ORDAINED THAT PAUL WOULD HAVE A THORN IN THE FLESH,** AND SATAN CARRIED IT OUT.

3. BUT THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT PURPOSES. **SATAN WANTED TO HURT PAUL, GOD WANTED TO HELP PAUL.**

\* **SATAN'S PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE PAUL BITTER, GOD'S PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE PAUL BETTER.**

\*\* AND NOTHING CAN TOUCH OUR LIVES WITHOUT GOD LOWERING THE HEDGE OR GIVING THE OK, LITERALLY ORDAINING IT. AND WE SEE THAT CLEARLY ILLUSTRATED IN **JOB CHAPTERS 1 & 2.**

\*\*\* SATAN COULD NOT DO ANYTHING TO JOB **WITHOUT GOD'S PERMISSION. SO NOTHING** CAN HAPPEN TO US UNLESS IT FIRST PASSES THROUGH OUR LOVING **HEAVENLY FATHER'S** HAND! WHAT A COMFORT.

\*\*\*\* BUT THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT SOMETIMES IT WILL NOT **HURT DEEPLY** WHAT GOD ORDAINS IN HIS REFINERS FIRE.

4. FOR PAUL WAS GIVEN A THORN IN THE FLESH, A MESSENGER OF SATAN TO TORMENT HIM, A DEMON TO AFFLICT HIM.

\* AND THE WORD THORN LITERALLY MEANS **A POINTED PIECE OF WOOD LIKE A STAKE** THAT GRAPHICALLY INDICATES THE INTENSITY OF **PAUL'S SUFFERING. IT WAS NOT A SMALL** THORN BUT A LARGE STAKE.

\*\* AND WHATEVER THE THORN WAS A PERSON OR A PHYSICAL AFFLICITON, IT DOES NOT SAY, BUT WHATEVER IT WAS, IT WOULD TORMENT PAUL AND KEEP HIM HUMBLE AND NOT ALL PUFFED UP ABOUT HIMSELF.

\*\*\* FOR THIS THORN WOULD TORMENT PAUL, LITERALLY BUFFET HIM.

\*\*\*\* AND THIS GREEK WORD LITERALLY MEANS TO STRIKE WITH THE FIST, TO GIVE A PERSON A BLOW WITH THE FIST! SOMETHING THAT WOULD BE VERY PAINFUL.

I. BUT AGAIN WHAT WAS THE REASON THAT GOD ORDAINED TO USE A DEMONIC MESSENGER TO TORMENT PAUL? THE REASON WAS TO KEEP HIM HUMBLE, TO HAVE PROPER PERSPECTIVE, TO KEEP PAUL FROM HAVING A BIG HEAD ABOUT ALL THE REVELATIONS HE HAD INCLUDING GOING TO HEAVEN.

\* FOR REMEMBER THE WAY UP WITH GOD IS DOWN, QUOTE **MATTHEW 23:12**, **JAMES 4:6**, **JAMES 4:10**, AND **PROVERBS 16:18**

\*\* SO THE REASON FOR THE THORN WAS THAT GOD COULD USE PAUL IN A GREATER WAY. IT WAS TO MAKE PAUL DEPENDENT, NOT INDEPENDENT AS WE WILL SEE LATER ON IN THE TEXT.

**\*\*\* WHICH LEADS US TO PAUL'S REQUEST, LOOK AT V. 8 PLEASE.**

II. **THE REQUEST**, (READ **V. 8**)

A. NOW WHATEVER THIS THORN WAS, **PAUL ASKED THE LORD TO REMOVE IT.**

\* IN FACT, HE IMploRED THE LORD 3 TIMES THAT HE MIGHT REMOVE IT.

\*\* AND THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED IMploRED IN THE NAV IS TRANSLATED

BESOUGHT, ENTREATED, PLEADED, AND BEGGED  
IN OTHER TRANSLATIONS AND IT LITERALLY  
MEANS TO CALL ON SOMEONE FOR  
ENCOURAGEMENT, FOR COMFORT, FOR  
CONSOLATION.

\*\*\* AND PAUL BEGGED THE LORD ON 3  
DIFFERENT OCCASIONS FOR HIM TO REMOVE  
THE PAINFUL THORN SO THAT HE MIGHT BE  
COMFORTED, CONSOLED AND ENCOURAGED.

\*\*\*\* IN OTHER WORDS, THE THORN WAS SO BAD,  
PAUL WANTED IT REMOVED. **SO PAUL'S WILL**  
WAS THAT THIS DISCOURAGING, DIBILATATING  
THORN WOULD BE REMOVED. AND ON 3  
SEPARATE OCCASION PAUL ASKED THE LORD TO  
REMOVE IT.

\*\*\*\* AND WE DO NOT KNOW WHY PAUL ASKS 3 TIMES. WHY NOT TWICE? WHY NOT SEVEN TIMES? EXCEPT THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING **HIS LORD'S EXAMPLE WHOM IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE ASKED THE FATHER 3 TIMES TO HAVE THE CUP OF SUFFERING REMOVED FROM HIM, "YET NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS YOU WILL."** RECORDED IN MATTHEW 26:33-44. AND THAT MAY HAVE BEEN THE REASON PAUL WENT TO THE LORD 3 TIMES. WE DO NOT KNOW.

1. YET PAUL DREW NEAR TO GOD IN THE INTENSITY OF HIS TORMENT AND BUFFETING, WHICH WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

\* AND THAT IS THE MOST BLESSED PLACE TO BE WHEN **WE ARE HURTING DEEPLY, FOR IT'S THE PLACE OF COMFORT AND PEACE IN THE MIDST OF PAIN.**

\*\* AND LET ME ADD, MANY TIMES WE DO NOT FEEL AS COMPELLED TO BE NEAR THE LORD WHEN WE ARE NOT SUFFERING.

\*\*\* EMOTIONAL PAIN, THE PAIN OF GRIEF, PHYSICAL PAIN, FINANCIAL PAIN, THOSE TIMES DRIVE US TO THE LORD, WHICH IS GOOD AND RIGHT.

\*\*\*\* FOR I AM REMINDED OF WHAT THE PSALMIST SAID IN **PSALM 50:15**, QUOTE IT. ALSO QUOTE **PSALM 55:22**.

2. AND PAUL CALLS ON THE LORD IN HIS TIME **OF TROUBLE. AND THE LORD'S REPLY TO PAUL'S REQUEST IS FOUND IN V. 9, OUR THIRD POINT TODAY. LOOK AT V. 9 PLEASE.**

III. **THE REPLY**, (READ **V. 9**)

A. NOW SOMETIMES THE LORD DOES NOT REMOVE OUR PAIN, OUR PROBLEM, OUR TRIAL.



\* **AND THE LORD GOD, DID NOT REMOVE PAUL'S THORN.**

\*\* BUT THAT DID NOT MEAN THAT GOD DID NOT **ANSWER PAUL'S PRAYER. FOR THE ANSWER** WAS SIMPLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT PAUL ASKED FOR.

\*\*\* **PAUL'S PRAYER WAS ANSWERED, BUT NOT IN THE WAY HE HOPED FOR.**

\*\*\* AND IN FACT, THE LORD SAID TO PAUL, I WILL NOT REMOVE THE THORN, BUT **I WILL DO SOMETHING BETTER: I WILL GIVE YOU GRACE TO BEAR IT.**

**1. AND IT'S AS IF THE LORD IS SAYING TO PAUL, "I AM NOT GIVING YOU WHAT YOU ASKED FOR, YET I AM GIVING YOU WHAT YOU NEED."**

\* **"PAUL YOU WANT MY POWER AND STRENGTH**  
IN YOUR LIFE. WELL, THE BEST WAY TO HAVE  
THAT HAPPEN IS FOR YOU TO BE KEPT IN A  
PLACE OF WEAKNESS, DEPENDENT UPON ME  
AND MY GRACE.

\*\* AND CONTEXTUALLY, WHAT A STUNNING  
REBUKE TO THE FALSE APOSTLES AT CORINTH  
WHO WORSHIPPED HEALTH, WEALTH AND  
PROSPERITY AND WHO VIEWED AFFLICTION  
AND **SUFFERING AS THE ABSENCE OF GOD'S**  
BLESSING.

\*\*\* AND WE SEE THAT TODAY WITH THE FALSE  
TEACHERS IN THE WORD FAITH MOVEMENT  
WHO SAY IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH FAITH, YOU  
WILL BE HEALTHY, WEALTHY, AND  
PROSPEROUS.

\*\*\*\* IN LIGHT OF THAT, DO WE REALLY WANT TO  
GO TO **THE APOSTLE PAUL AND SAY "PAUL YOUR**  
THORN WAS NOT REMOVED BECAUSE YOU DID  
**NOT HAVE ENOUGH FAITH? I DON'T THINK SO.**

2. **A LACK OF FAITH WAS NOT THE ISSUE. GOD'S PURPOSE WAS THE ISSUE FOR PAUL, AND** WHAT GOD IN HIS SOVEREIGN PLAN WOULD ACCOMPLISH THROUGH HIM, THROUGH HIS THORN.

\* GOD WOULD NOT REMOVE THE THORN BUT HE WOULD GIVE GRACE WHICH IS ALWAYS SUFFICIENT FOR THE NEED.

\*\* AND I LIKE TO LOOK AT IT THIS WAY, GOD GRANTS GRACE, HIS UNDESERVED FAVOR, TO HIS PEOPLE, HIS ELECT.

\*\*\* AND IT STARTS WITH **SOVEREIGN GRACE TO SAVE US**, TO ENABLE US TO BELIEVE, TO CALL US AND RAISE US FROM THE DEAD SPIRITUALLY.

\*\*\*\* THEN GOD GIVES **STRENGTHENING GRACE TO SANCTIFY US**, TO MAKE US MORE LIKE CHRIST THROUGH HIS WORD AND HIS WILL IN SUFFERING.

\*\*\*\* AND STRENGTHENING GRACE IS THE POWER, ABILITY AND DESIRE TO **DO GOD'S WILL IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING.**

3. AND **THEN IN GLORIFICATION, GOD GIVES SURPASSING GRACE** AS HE TAKES US HOME, AS **EPHESIANS 2:7 SAYS, "SO THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE SURPASSING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN KINDNESS TOWARD US IN CHRIST JESUS."**

\* SO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE STARTS WITH SOVEREIGN GRACE, IT CONTINUES WITH STRENGTHENING GRACE AND THEN WITH THE LORD WE EXPERIENCE HIS SURPASSING GRACE FOREVER. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED HIS SECURING GRACE.

\*\* SO FROM START TO FINISH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS GRACE. SO GOD GETS ALL THE GLORY. HE IS THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.

\*\*\* AND GOD GAVE PAUL STRENGTHENING GRACE.

\*\*\*\* HOWEVER, GOD NOT ONLY WANTED TO DISPLAY HIS GRACE IN PAUL'S LIFE, BUT ALSO HIS POWER, **"FOR POWER IS PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS."**

4. MEANING: GOD NOT ONLY WANTED PAUL TO BE HUMBLE, BUT ALSO **STRONG.**

\* BECAUSE **POWER IS PERFECTED IN WEAKNESS.** IT IS TO SAY, IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE FIRE OF THE THORN OF AFFLICTION IN PAUL TO BURN AWAY THE DROSS, THE IMPURITY OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND PRIDE, WHICH AGAIN THE FALSE SUPER APOSTLES WERE FILLED WITH.

\*\* AND BELOVED, IT IS WHEN CHRISTIANS ARE OUT OF ANSWERS, CONFIDENCE, AND STRENGTH WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN BUT TO THE LORD THAT THEY ARE IN A POSITION TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE.

\*\*\* GEOFFREY WILSON STATED IN HIS COMMENTARY ON II CORINTHIANS, AND I QUOTE, **"NONE IS TOO WEAK TO BE OF SERVICE TO CHRIST, BUT MANY ARE TOO STRONG TO BE USED BY HIM"** (END QUOTE)

\*\*\*\* AND **THE SELF SUFFICIENT DON'T RECEIVE STRENGTHENING GRACE**, THEY ARE TOO CONFIDENT IN THEIR OWN STRENGTH.

5. THEREFORE, TIMES LIKE DISAPPOINTMENT, GRIEF, SUFFERING, MENTAL ANGUISH AND PHYSICAL PAIN SQUEEZE THE IMPURITIES OUT OF THE BELIEVERS LIVES, MAKING THEM PURE **CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH GOD'S POWER CAN MOVE AND FLOW.**

\* AND TWO LAST TRUTHS AT THE END OF V. 9. AND NO. 1 IS **THOUGH PAUL'S CIRCUMSTANCE** HAD NOT CHANGED, PAUL NOW COULD **EXCLAIM**, "MOST GLADLY, THEREFORE, I WILL RATHER BOAST ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT (HINA PURPOSE CLAUSE IN THE GREEK, SO FOR WHAT PURPOSE) THE POWER OF CHRIST **MAY DWELL IN ME.**"

\*\* **AND PAULS' WEAKNESS WAS THE PLATFORM FOR POWER.** AND HERE WE HAVE THE PARADOX OF POWER. WHEN WE ARE WEAK, WE ARE STRONG, WEAKNESS, DEPENDENCE OPENS THE DOOR FOR STRENGTH.

\*\*\* PAUL, NOT **ONLY ACCEPTED GOD'S NO FOR** REMOVING THE THORN, BUT GLADLY GLORIED IN **GOD'S RESPONSE FOR STRENGTHENING GRACE**, SO HE WOULD BOAST ABOUT HIS WEAKNESSES, UNLIKE THE FALSE APOSTLES WHO BOASTED ABOUT THEIR STRENGTHS.

\*\*\*\* FOR PAUL IN WEAKNESS BECAME STRONG THROUGH CHRIST'S POWER THAT WOULD DWELL IN HIM.

**6. AND HERE'S THE 2<sup>ND</sup> THING.** THE WORD DWELL OR UPON LITERALLY MEAN TO PITCH A TENT OVER ONE AS GOD-JESUS, DWELT, PITCHED A TENT IN A HUMAN BODY AMONG MEN IN HIS INCARNATION, JOHN 1:14 AND DWELT IN II CORINTHIANS 12:9 COMES FROM THIS WORD IN JOHN 1:14.

**\* AND CHRIST'S POWER WOULD DWELL** IN PAUL AS IN A TENT, AS THE SHEKINAH DWELT IN THE O.T. TABERNACLE.

**\*\* PAUL WAS MADE INTO THE DWELLING PLACE OF THE POWER OF GOD.**

\*\*\* AND PAUL SAW HIS BODY AS A FRAIL TENT, BUT THE POWER OF GOD HAD COME INTO THAT TENT AND TRANSFORMED IT INTO A HOLY TABERNACLE.



\*\*\*\* THERE WAS **POWER IN WEAKNESS**, THE POWER IN WEAKNESS PRINCIPLE OR **PARADOX OF POWER** IS COMMUNICATED HERE.

7. AND THE RESULT OF THAT WEAKNESS IS COMMUNICATED IN V. 10 OUR LAST POINT TODAY. LOOK AT V. 10 PLEASE.

IV. **THE RESULT**, (READ **V. 10**)

A. NOW THE RESULT OF THE THORN, THE **RESULT OF GOD NOT TAKING AWAY PAUL'S** THORN WAS STRENGTHENING GRACE, WHICH PRODUCES CONTENTMENT, ACTUALLY PLEASURE, AND CAN BE TRANSLATED **PLEASED, OR DELIGHTED** – WOW!

\* MEANING PAUL WAS THRILLED, PLEASED, DELIGHTED WITH WEAKNESSES, INSULTS, TIMES OF DISTRESS, PERSUCTIONS, AND THE MANY DIFFICULTIES HE WENT THROUGH. WHY?

\*\* BECAUSE HE WAS A MASOCHIST AND LOVED PAIN AND SUFFERING? NO.

\*\*\* AND AGAIN HERE IS THE PARADOX OF POWER. THE POWER IN WEAKNESS PRINCIPLE, FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG.

\*\*\*\* BELOVED, THERE IS TRIUMPH HERE. THERE IS DELIGHT AND PURE JOY HERE FOR WHEN PAUL WAS WEAK, IT MADE HIM DEPENDENT, NOT INDEPENDENT AND THAT WHICH HE WAS DEPENDENT ON WAS STRENGTH FROM THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT.

1. J. OSWALD SANDERS SAID AND I QUOTE, **"THE WORLD'S PHILOSOPHY IS, WHAT CAN'T BE CURED MUST BE ENDURED. BUT PAUL RADIANTLY TESTIFIES, WHAT CAN'T BE CURED CAN BE ENJOYED. I ENJOY WEAKNESS, SUFFERINGS, PRIVATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES. SO WONDERFUL DID HE (PAUL) PROVE GOD'S GRACE TO BE, THAT HE EVEN WELCOMED FRESH OCCASION OF DRAWING UPON HIS FULLNESS. I**

**GLADLY GLORY... I EVEN ENJOY - MY THORN."**

END QUOTE.

\* AND BELOVED THAT IS THE PARADOX OF POWER.

IN WRAP UP AND APPLICATION. **THE PARADOX OF POWER IS: "FOR WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG."**

\* AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS; THE TRUTH IS, GOD DOES NOT NEED OUR PERCEIVED STRENGTHS, IF THAT IS WHAT WE ARE DEPENDING UPON.

\*\* HE WANTS US TO COME TO HIM WITH OUR TRIALS, OUR PAIN, OUR GRIEF, OUR INADEQUACIES OUR DISABILITIES, OUR FAILURES, AND OUR FEARS.

\*\*\* AND WE BRING HIM THOSE THINGS AND SAY LORD USE THEM, FOR HERE IS ANOTHER KEY, **"FOR CHRIST'S SAKE"**.

\*\*\*\* FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, WHEN I AM WEAK, I AM STRONG FOR I AM HUMBLE AND DEPEND UPON YOU.

(2) THE LORD WANTS US TO BOAST OF OUR WEAKNESSES SO THAT CHRIST IN HIS POWER WILL PITCH HIS TENT IN US.

\* AND HAVING A PROPER PERSPECTIVE, LOOKING **AT LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW** ON OUR TROUBLES, OUR TRIALS, AND SUFFERINGS IS THE CORNERSTONE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING.

\*\* AND FOCUSING ALL OUR ENERGY ON REMOVING DIFFICULTIES IS NOT THE ANSWER.

\*\*\* AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS WE NEED TO EMBRACE THE THINGS GOD ORDAINS, KNOWING THESE TRIALS DEVELOP CHARACTER, THEY HUMBLE US, THEY DRAW US CLOSER TO THE LORD AND ALLOW HIM TO DISPLAY HIS

**STENGTHENING GRACE AND IT'S POWER IN OUR LIVES.**

\*\*\*\* AND OUR RESPONSE MORE AND MORE SHOULD BE JAMES WORDS IN **JAMES 1:2-4.**  
(QUOTE THEM)

(3) BELOVED, ONE FINAL THOUGHT TO YOU TODAY, **REMEMBER THE PARADOX OF POWER: WHEN WE ARE WEAK, THEN WE ARE STRONG.**  
**(LET'S PRAY)**

