

Christ's Strength Made Perfect in Weakness
2 Corinthians 11:30-12:10

A pattern for our life in Christ and increasing effectiveness in service

“None is too weak to be of service to Christ,
but many are too strong to be of any significant use to Him.”

1. The Starting Point: Weakness and Humiliation **11:30-33**

- Where and how Paul's ministry began – and his life in Christ:
- In weakness and humiliation!

2. Great Privilege **12:1-6**

- A heavenly vision! – This wonderfully epitomized the privilege he had known.
- Even here Paul speaks in a self-effacing way: he speaks in the third person.

3. The Perpetual Reminder of Weakness **12:7-10**

(1) Paul's “thorn in the flesh” v. 7

- 1- A great and natural temptation for Paul – and for all of us:
 - To think oneself “sufficient”
 - ...unless preserved by Christ with a continual sense of one's own weakness and frailty!

-2- A “stake for the flesh”

- Its identity uncertain
- Meaning: - he is transfixed; painfully immobilized, held down, and humiliated.

-3- Like Job

- Satan's purpose: to render the apostle weak, discouraged, and bitter.
- Christ's purpose: to render His servant continually weak,
and so all the more endued with spiritual power!

(2) Paul's Prayer and the Lord's Answer vv. 8-9

-1- His petition v. 8

- three times
- apparently in three sustained seasons of prayer

-2- The Lord's Answer v.9

*“He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you,
for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ ”*

- A sustaining, enduring answer: *“He has said to me,”*

- The weakness, the infirmity *would not* be removed;
Christ deemed it better for Paul to live with it.

(3) The Priority: Christ's power resting upon His Servant v. 10

*“Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities,
that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”*

Further Application

These two *always* go together: an acute sense of my own weakness,
the power of Christ resting upon me.