

The Sufficiency of God's Grace

2 Corinthians 12:1-12



August 2, 2026
New Baptist Church



If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. (2 Corinthians 11:30)

WHY? Why does Paul boast in his weakness?

- 1. Paul's weakness reveals the power of God.**
- 2. Paul's weakness reveals that God's grace for him is enough.**
- 3. Paul's weakness reveals Paul's love for the church.**
- 4. Paul's weakness reveals the supreme worth of knowing Jesus.**

Paul's weaknesses demonstrated that whatever good had been accomplished through his ministry had not been accomplished by Paul's natural strength. It had been accomplished by the power of Christ working in and through him.



2 Corinthians 12

“1 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.

56 AD: Paul writes 2 Corinthians: “Fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.”

A Chronology of Paul with Historical Events

33 AD: Death and Resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1)

35 AD: Saul Encounters Jesus on Road to Damascus (Acts 9)

35 AD: Saul preaches Jesus in synagogues

35-36 AD: Saul travels to Arabia (Mt. Sinai) (Gal 1:17)

36-37 AD: Saul returns to Damascus, Escapes under King Aretas (Acts 9, 2 Cor 11).

38 AD: Saul travels to Jerusalem (three years after conversion) – Gal 1:18-19.

38 AD: Saul sent to Tarsus (Acts 9:30).

38-43 AD: Silent Years in Tarsus

43/44 AD: Barnabas finds Saul and brings him to Antioch (Acts 11)

44/45 AD: Barnabas and Saul bring Relief to Jerusalem due to Famine

46 AD: 1st Missionary Journey

49 AD: Jerusalem Council

50-52 AD: 2nd Missionary Journey (Stays in Corinth for 1.5 years).

53-56 AD: 3rd Missionary Journey (Stayed in Ephesus for 3 years, Acts 20:31).

56 AD: Paul writes 2 Corinthians: “Fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.”

A Chronology of Paul with Historical Events

Have you ever had questions of God? Have you ever felt forgotten or believed God called you to something, only to find yourself waiting? Or maybe just the question why?

38-43 AD: Silent Years in Tarsus

It was during this hidden season in Paul's life that God did something extraordinary.

“caught up into paradise.”

14 Years Ago

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14 Years Ago

56 AD: Paul writes 2 Corinthians: “Fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.”

For the next fourteen years, Paul would experience great suffering.

(Stoned, beaten, mocked, whipped, opposed, riots, imprisonments, sleepless nights, hunger, danger, rejection) - See 2 Corinthians 11:24-28

Yet Paul carried within himself a certainty that no suffering could erase. He had seen the glory that awaited him. “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”
(Romans 8:18)

By God's grace, Paul was given everything that he needed to sustain him in God's calling upon his life.

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2 Corinthians 12

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.

Things we do not know.

- What was the “thorn”?
- Who gave it to him (God or Satan)?

*We do not always know the source or the cause of our own thorns. **Where does suffering come from? Why do bad things happen?***

I do not know.

Sometimes the cause of our suffering and grief is ..

- **Ourselves**: the consequence of our own actions.
- **Other people**: the consequences of their actions
- The consequence of living in **a world marred by sin**.
- **Satan**: Evil that seeks to devour and destroy
- **God**, according to His purposes and glory, He works in ways that are beyond us.

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But what we do know is this, God is Sovereign.

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I do not know.

God is sovereign over human sin, over Satanic opposition, and over the brokenness of creation. This does not mean that God approves of evil or delights in suffering. It means that no suffering occurs outside His knowledge or beyond His sovereign authority. Because God is using this messenger of Satan in Paul's life does not make Satan good. It simply means that Satan is not sovereign.

*Satan's intention was to harass, discourage, weaken, and destroy Paul.
God's intention was to humble, preserve, and keep Paul near to Him.*

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Satan's intention was to harass, discourage, weaken, and destroy Paul.

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No thorn or suffering is sovereign in your life; God is. God can use even the broken things of your life for His good purposes in you and through you.

2 Corinthians 12

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.

Christ answers Paul's prayer not by giving him an explanation, but by giving him something better. **He gives to Paul Himself!**

9 But he said to me,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Paul's relief came not through the removal of the thorn, but through an abiding relationship with Christ. And the same is true for us.

God deals with our grief, our heartaches, our sufferings, and our illnesses by giving us something greater: **Himself.** **“My grace is sufficient for you”**

“My grace is sufficient for you”

Grace: *The generous goodness of God, freely given, unmerited, to us through Jesus Christ.* The word “Grace” means a favor bestowed or a generous benefit freely given.

Grace is the goodness and power of God being applied to our lives to save us, to keep us, to enable us, to deliver us, to sanctify us, and to glorify us. All of God’s good favors to His children are given through the means of this goodness called grace.

2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”

“My grace is sufficient for you”



2 Corinthians 12:9

“My grace is sufficient for you”

for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Paul wanted Christ to remove the thorn. Christ gave Paul something greater: the promise of His abiding presence.

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.

The weakness is Paul's.

The power is Christ's.

Paul rejoices not because his suffering was pleasant, but because in his suffering he experiences the presence and power of Christ.



2 Corinthians 12:9

“My grace is sufficient for you”

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To the questions of: **Why? Why did this happen?**
Why did God not prevent it?

I do not know.

**But what I do know is
that in our grief, in our weakness, in our
hardships, He does not leave us alone.**

**Christ draws near and gives to us everything
we need; most importantly, He gives to us
Himself. And this giving of Himself is grace.
And it is sufficient.**



