

Accepting Our Thorn

Sermon Outline (Deuteronomy 34:1-12 and II Corinthians 12:1-10)

- I Find it difficult to say “when I am weak, then am I strong?”
 - A. An underdog team may try even harder to win (like how the Raptors beat the Warriors in 2019 for their 1st NBA title when Warriors had won the last 3 out of 4 titles.)
 - B. It may take time & reflection for us to be able to say it.
 - C. A paraplegic co-worker once said he’s glad for the person he’d become since his accident.
 - D. Only the 1 struggling knows what God’s lesson may be for him/her in the struggle, so we shouldn’t judge it.
 - E. If struggle seems senseless- need to hold-on/trust God.
- II Moses and Apostle Paul held-on to faith despite their troubles.
 - A. Moses’ thorn=putting up w/disobedient/complaining people
 - 1. Folks complained, M prayed & God told him what to do.
 - 2. Once M deviated from God’s word & it cost him dearly: God said Moses wouldn’t take folks into the promised land
 - 3. We must be careful of how we react to the pressures of dealing w/our own thorn-in-the-flesh (no lapsing into sin).
 - B. Despite his thorn, Paul trusted God’s purpose. What thorn?:
 - 1. Calvin-P tempted to doubt God/walk away from calling.
 - 2. RC view-P had fleshly temptations, struggled with lust.
 - 3. Luther-opposers persecuted P & tried to undo his work.
 - 4. Gk word Skolops means sharp stake=immense physical suffering: epilepsy? Migraines? Eye trouble? Or malaria?
 - 5. Thru Paul God healed others, but he wouldn’t heal Paul.
 - 6. Paul felt God was humbling him thru his thorn-in-the-flesh and giving him grace to endure it.
 - 7. P believed when he’s weak, he’d be strong in God’s power so he was able to live a victorious life in the midst of pain.
- III God’s grace-sufficient for us whatever our problem: trust Him!
 - A. Moses didn’t balk/sulk at God’s consequences; he must have repented/still talked w/God face to face. God blessed him:
 - B. God allowed M to see promised land/feel mission achieved.
 - C. Deut. 34’s closing words affirm Mose’s relationship w/God
 - D. God forgives/gives us grace; we’re strong as we lean on Him