

2 Corinthians #27 (12:7 -9)

I. Let us Look at Verse 7 and Paul's famous "Thorn in the Flesh"

- A. The reason that Paul received this was because of great revelations
 - 1. Paul had received many- Gal. 1:11, 12; Acts 16:9, 10; 18:9
 - 2. Similar to Jacob in Old Testament—Gen. 32:24-31-limped afterwards
- B. Purpose of this thorn was to keep Paul humble –because of revelations
 - 1. Bible warns us many times against the sin of pride and consequences
 - a. I Corinthians 10:14; Proverbs 16:5, 18; Psalm 101:5; Prov. 15:25
 - b. Probably a special problem for Paul- Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:4-6
 - c. God uses other things to keep humble-poverty, failure, sin (Peter)
- C. Described as "Thorn" – Hosea 2:6; Ezek 28:24- Sharp thing in side
- D. Part of figuring this out is determining what is meant by "in the flesh"
 - 1. If looked at as physical flesh—then it's some kind of physical infirmity
 - a. Gal. 4:13-15; (eyes? Malaria, epilepsy, headaches, earaches)
 - b. Or enemy like Alexander (2 Tim. 4:14) or these false apostles
 - 2. If flesh looked at as "sinful nature" then this leads to different thought
 - a. Some think some special lust or temptation Paul was subject to
 - 1. Romans 7:15- 24; Joshua 23:13
- E. This was "messenger of Satan" – Messenger same word as angel
 - 1. This messenger was given to "harass" or "afflict" him
- F. Paul said that this thorn was "given" to him- "Appointed" as a favor

II. Let us Look at verse 8

- A. Paul had brought this specific need to Lord- be specific in prayer
- B. This thorn drove Paul to prayer – afflictions drive us to prayer-Ps. 34:4-6
- C. Paul says he prayed three times for this thorn to be removed
 - 1. Perhaps following example of our Lord – Matthew 26:42-44
 - 2. Some think only means many times- but three has significance
 - a. Numbers 24:10; I Samuel 3:8; John 21:17

III. Let us Look at verse 9

- A. Paul received answer in special word that thorn wouldn't be taken
 - 1. We have other ways of knowing than revelation (David – 2 Sm. 12:20)
 - 2. Word "said" in perfect tense- This is God's standing answer to this
 - 3. There can be time we should stop praying about issue- Josh. 7:10, 11
- B. Paul prays for thorn to be removed- but God's answer to that is no
 - 1. When prayer not answered our way- we are in good company
 - a. Moses (Deut. 3:23-27) David (2 Sam. 12:16-18) Paul (here)
- C. God's grace is sufficient for every need – Rom. 5:20 – every sin
- D. Sometimes going through trial is more valuable than avoiding it
 - 1. Removal of trial might not be benefit (Hezekiah –2 Ki. 20:1-6)
 - 2. Our prayers can be wrongly motivated- James 4:1, 2
- E. God's strength is made perfect in weakness – 1 Cor. 1:27- 29
- F. Power of Christ may "rest" upon me- Literally "pitch a tent"
 - 1. John 1:14; Isaiah 4:5, 6; Luke 1:35; Luke 9:34
- G. Whatever the answer to our prayers – result should be joy- Jam. 1:2-4

Conclusion: Satan's designs are evil- but God uses them for His good
Nothing but God's grace is sufficient for trials we go through