

# The Blessings of Burdens

II Corinthians 12:1 It is **not expedient for me doubtless to glory**. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven**. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was **caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words**, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself **I will not glory, but in mine infirmities**. 6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: **but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me**. 7 And lest **I should be exalted above measure** through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me **a thorn in the flesh**, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, **lest I should be exalted above measure**. 8 For this thing **I besought the Lord thrice**, that it might depart from

me. 9 And he said unto me, **My grace is sufficient for thee:** for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will **I rather glory in my infirmities**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for **when I am weak, then am I strong.**

1. Super blessed and honored

- a. Paul knows that bragging, glorying etc is not the best route to take 1 **It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory.** I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.
  - i. He had plenty he could brag about
  - ii. God had shown him great and wonderful things
  - iii. He had been greatly used of God
  - iv. The Corinthians were impressed with the credentials and letters the Judaizers had
  - v. He was tired of hearing all of that and knowing that the people in his ministry were listening to the wrong people and impressed by the wrong things
- b. Paul's blessing and honor didn't come from men but from God 2 **I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,**

(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one **caught up to the third heaven.** **3** And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

- i. Paul reverts to third person speech in an attempt to deflect some of the boasting
- ii. Paul had been greatly blessed but did not go about bragging about it
- iii. It has been 14 years since this great revelation
- iv. He had been caught up to the third heaven
  1. The first heaven is our environment, the air we breathe
  2. The second heaven is above that, where we fly, outer space
  3. The third heaven is paradise, where God is
- v. It was such a wild experience that Paul wasn't sure if he was in the body or out of it
- vi. Paul was taken up to paradise unlike anyone else, even Moses God came down to him.
- vii. Later John will be taken up but this was unheard of until now

- c. Paul was given visions and revelations **4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words,** which it is not lawful for a man to utter. **5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.**
- i. God gave Paul visions and revelations in ways that nearly no one else had ever experienced
  - ii. In this particular time they were things he couldn't take about or even know how to explain
  - iii. Paul was determined not to glory in these things but in the price he had paid to serve God
- d. Just a quick reminder of some visions and revelations
- i. Paul saw the Lord on the road to Damascus **Acts 9:3, 22:6**
  - ii. He had a vision in the Macedonian call
  - iii. An angel spoke to him in the storm on the ship
- e. It should never be Paul or anyone else's goal to be thought so highly of **6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me**

## **above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.**

- i. Paul hadn't spoke of this until now and wouldn't continue to do so
  - ii. He was confronting those that accused him and thinks maybe he has overreacted
  - iii. The thorn in the flesh that Paul had was actually a blessing from God to keep him from getting too proud
  - iv. What is the secret of Paul being able to be humble after such a great blessing and revelation: the thorn, the problems, the weaknesses, the infirmities
2. God sends the balancing burdens **7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.**
- a. Blessings from God can cause us to become proud
  - b. It was God's goodness that sent the burdens that Paul had to bear

c. Why do we suffer?

i. Sometimes because we are foolish and disobedient

**Hebrews 12:3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. **4** Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, **striving against sin.** **5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the **chastening of the Lord,** nor faint when thou art **rebuked of him:** **6** For **whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son** whom he receiveth. **7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? **8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.**

1. King David suffered greatly because of his sin

**II Samuel 12:1-22 Psalm 51**

2. God forgives our sins by His grace

3. But He allows us to reap what we sow

ii. God allows burdens and suffering to build godly

character in us **Romans 5:1-5** **Therefore being justified**

by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but **we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;** 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

1. Paul gloried in tribulations
  2. He knew that tribulations set off a chain reaction that led to the love of God being shed abroad
- iii. We do not know what Paul's thorn in the flesh was
1. Whatever it was caused him to suffer great tortures
  2. It might have been an eye affliction **Galatians 6:11** **Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. Galatians 4:15** Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, *if it had been possible, ye would have **plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.***

- iv. Know that all suffering, burdens, tribulations, and problems in the life of a believer a God allowed and God approved. Satan has no power to affect us without the consent of our Lord [Job 1-2](#)
- v. It is not always God's will to deliver us from our burdens. Paul asked 3 times
- d. How we deal with suffering depends on us
  - i. Some become bitter and blame God
  - ii. Others simply give up and fail to learn the lesson and get the blessing God has in the tribulation
  - iii. Others just try to learn to deal with it
  - iv. The right thing to do is take our burdens to the Lord, rest in Him and His grace, trust that He is doing something right, good and great in our lives
- e. Don't waste your burden or suffering.
  - i. It is not God being angry with you
  - ii. It is not God trying to hurt you or get even with you
  - iii. It is God building you and preparing you for great things
  - iv. Don't expect that God's blessing means that you will not hurt



3. Paul actually benefits from his burdens **9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee:** for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will **I rather glory in my infirmities**, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10 Therefore I take pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for **when I am weak, then am I strong.**

- a. God wanted Paul to know that He was enough for Paul
- b. We do not live by our feelings or by our strength but by His grace **John 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.**
- c. God has enough grace for you right now
  - i. He will meet your spiritual needs
  - ii. He will meet your material needs
  - iii. He will meet your physical needs
  - iv. If He can save us eternally He can surely take care of us
- d. Actually God's grace would give Paul more strength than he would normally have
- e. We do not live by understanding but by His promises

- i. He is the God of all grace [I Peter 5:10](#) But the **God of all grace**, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.
- ii. His throne is the throne of grace [Hebrews 4:16](#) Let us therefore come boldly unto **the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.
- iii. We have the Scriptures the word of His grace [Acts 20:32](#) And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to **the word of his grace**, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.
- iv. He promises to give us more grace [James 4:6](#) But he **giveth more grace**. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

#### 4. Practical lessons we can learn

- a. The spiritual growth and health are far more important than physical health
- b. The blessed usually get burdened and burdens come with blessings

- c. Pride is worse than sickness, trouble, burden or tribulations
  - d. A thorn in flesh doesn't hinder you from serving God it actually may enhance your service
  - e. We will find our strength to go on in the Word of God, His promises, His grace
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- Can you see the great blessings that God has given you?
  - Have burdens and problems come in your life that you have allowed to caused you to be bitter and even blame God
  - Are you learning to seek God and get His grace in the middle of your problems?
  - Are you problem focused or promised focused?
  - Are you learning the lesson God has for you in the problems and burdens of your life?