

God tabernacles in our weaknesses (2 Cor 12:5-10)

I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times, I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (NIV)

Introduction

1. Corinthian culture about boasting
 2. Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. (2 Cor 11:18)
 3. If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. (2 Cor 11:30)
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Theology of Weakness

1. I will boast but I will not boast (v5)
 - Paul’s experience 14 years ago (v 2); Surpassingly great revelations (v7)
 - I was given a thorn in my flesh (v7); Pleaded with the Lord to remove it (v8)
 - Sometimes God says NO to us.
2. My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. (v9 a)
 - TELEIAO - ‘to bring perfect’ vs. TELEO - ‘come to an end’
 - Traditionally it has been translated with TELEIAO, so it is rendered as “God’s power brings to a perfection in weakness”
 - Alternative rendering with TELEO - “Paul’s power is brought to an end in weakness”

3. Reason to boast about weaknesses

- I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. (v9 b)
- rest = tabernacle; NT uses the concept of tabernacle only three times
 - John 1:14, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us (Past tense)
 - Rev 21:3, Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God (Future tense)
 - 2 Cor 12:10, God tabernacles upon us in our weaknesses (Present tense)

Conclusion/Application

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:3)
2. Translation of Matt 5:3 according to the Message Bible - "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."
3. Boast about your weaknesses in Christ!