

GLORY IN THE

POWER + GOSPEL

IN WEAKNESS

2 CORINTHIANS



- **What are some ways Christians brag?**
 - **Posers**
 - **Press Releasers**
 - **Unconfronted**
- **God isn't choosing people to do great things for him who have impressive resumes!**
- **Let's brag about our weaknesses and join the long line of weaklings God has empowered for his work**

2 Corinthians 12:1-6

“1 Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—4 was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. 5 On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. 6 For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.”

- The vision experience was intended to be the reason God would give Paul his thorn
- Power didn't come in the vision experience; it came in the thorn experience
- Grace celebrates consistent power in weakness, not occasional overwhelming experiences
- God wants us to trust in him, not experiences or our gifts

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

- What was Paul's thorn?
- Galatians 4 - some kind of bodily illness
- How could it be from God and satanic at the same time?
- God often uses the devil to accomplish his purposes
- Job
 - The Cross
- This demon was sent in God's providence with the intent to destroy Paul, but God's saving purpose was to save Paul from sin and pride and powerlessness
- What if your thorn is God's constant reminder to rely on him or be destroyed by sin?

- **Our strengths are more of a threat to us than our weaknesses**
- **In our pain, God isn't keeping good things from us- he's giving us something greater!**
 - **Helpless dependence on Him**
- **Pride is our most deeply rooted and destructive sin**
- **Anything God uses to get it out of us- including pain- is a grace gift**
- **God wants to protect our greatest joys from being destroyed by pride**

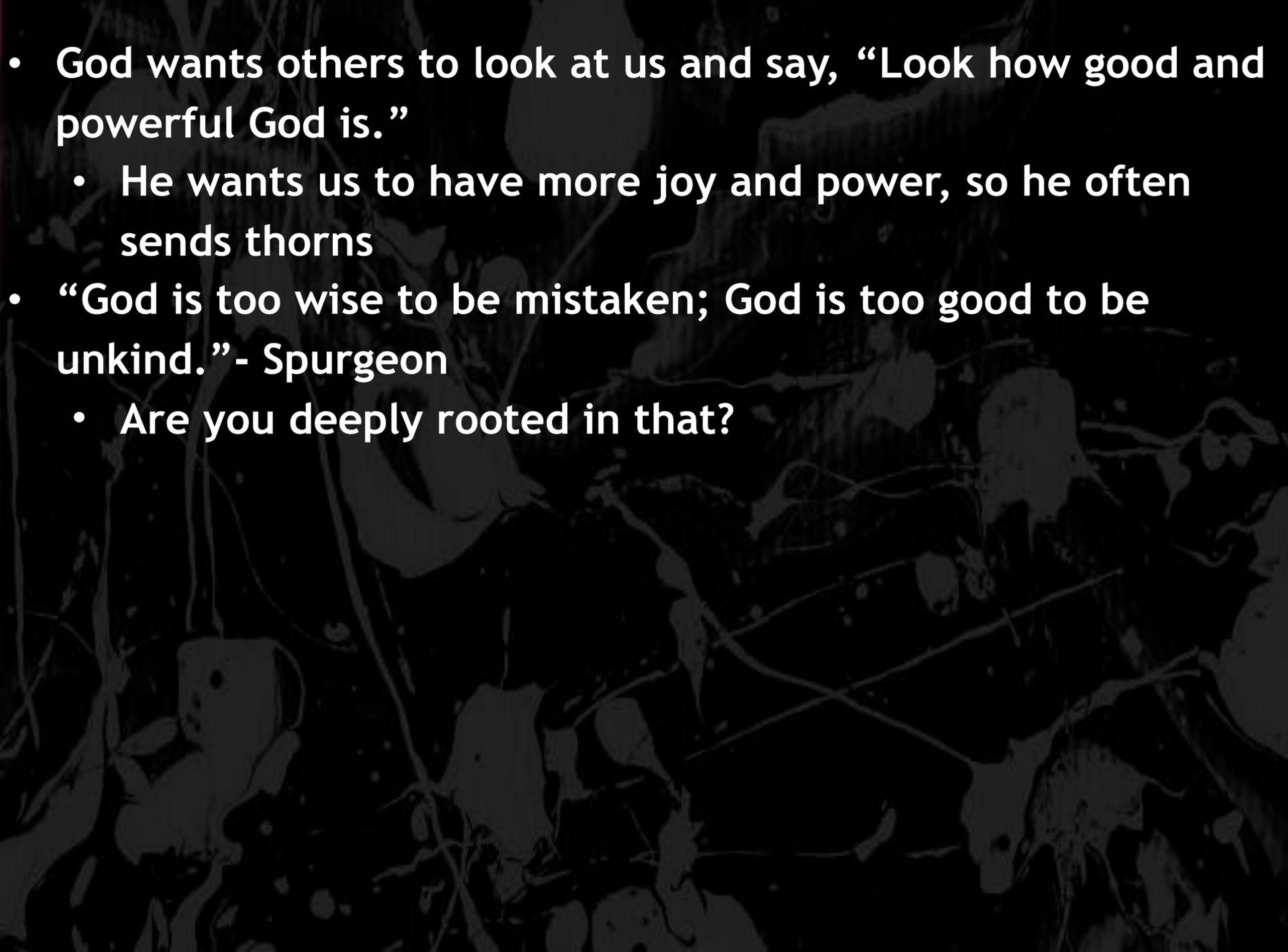
- We should pray for the removal of thorns until we move to death or we get a revelation telling us otherwise
- We must pray because fighting a thorn is spiritual warfare
- It includes our body and spirit
- How does Paul experience joy in this thorn experience?
 - Because Jesus dwells with us there; he's nearest to us in our pain and weakness
 - God's power is more important than our immediate physical relief

2 Corinthians 10:9-10

“9 And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. ”

- **Why does God weaken us like this?**
 - **Its his purpose to get us out of the way and reduce us so he can move in**
 - **We have to daily decide if we will rage against God or lean into him like never before**
- **“If dependence is the objective, then weakness is an advantage.” JD Greear**

- **Be encouraged- God is not ignoring or making light of your suffering**
 - **They highlight who God is and what he is doing in power and grace in our lives**
 - **God is teaching us that the greatest lesson in life is to learn to trust and love God**
- **There are times when God says, “My grace is enough.”**
 - **Is God still a good God when he says no?**

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- God wants others to look at us and say, “Look how good and powerful God is.”
 - He wants us to have more joy and power, so he often sends thorns
 - “God is too wise to be mistaken; God is too good to be unkind.”- Spurgeon
 - Are you deeply rooted in that?

2 Corinthians 11:30-32

“30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me...”

- TSF needs some of you who are maturing believers to really read ch. 10-11
- All of our faith would be more sincere & pure if we would take this kind of passionate, well-grounded care of one another
- What's at stake if we don't?
 - The Church in belief and practice
 - The Gospel in power for the loss
- BTW- your "failures" put you in really good company to lead and impact others with the Gospel
 - Our basket experiences lower us so God can lift us up to be used in power
 - They don't disqualify us- they are redeemable!

- **Don't let the gospel be received in vain**
 - **Take my thoughts captive so I can live in the fullness of the gospel's power daily**
 - **Don't compare myself to others without realizing who I am is safe and secure in Jesus**
 - **Stay close to Jesus and seek to live with him every day**
 - **Step in to do battle with and for others so they know the all-changing power of the Gospel fresh and new each day!**