

“THE PARADOX OF POWER”

Series: “Insight for the Journey,” part 15 of 16

Saturday, February 6, 2010 at 5:00 pm and

Sunday, February 7, 2010 at 9:00 and 11:00 am

Big Idea: God often ministers more powerfully through our weaknesses than through our strengths.

Text: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Bullets: Benjamin Franklin said, “The things which hurt, instruct.”
Aristotle said, “We cannot learn without pain.”

PAUL, WE FEEL YOUR PAIN!

2 Corinthians 12:1-2

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know — God knows.

2 Corinthians 12:3-4

And I know that this man — whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows — was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell.

2 Corinthians 12:5-7

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. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

2 Corinthians 12:8

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you.”

2 Corinthians 12:9

“... for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

2 Corinthians 12:9b

“Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Corinthians 12:10

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.

THE BIG IDEA: PAIN IS OFTEN THE PATHWAY TO POWER.

Benjamin Franklin said, "The things which hurt, instruct."

Aristotle said, "We cannot learn without pain."

THREE WAYS GOD USES PAIN IN OUR LIVES:

1. To _____ on spiritually.

Hebrews 12:7a,10-11

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons. For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* good, that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. {NASV}

2. To teach us _____.

{See Isaiah 31:1-2; Isaiah 30:15-18; 2 Corinthians 1:8-10}

3. To _____ our _____.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR *God's* OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. {NASV}

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; ⁸we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed. {NASV}

2 Corinthians 12:10

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.