

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

God Where Are You?

When God holds a Megaphone – Ian France – 26.4.2026

Scripture

2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Paul spoke openly here about the 'thorn in his flesh'. It was no secret, so people knew about it. What they did not know though, was the spiritual experience that lay behind it which Paul shares now. The word Paul uses to describe a thorn here describes a tent stake. It was no small pinprick which troubled him. Satan used it to afflict Paul; but God used it to keep Paul humble in his weakness.

Whilst many suggestions have been made as to what this thorn was, it is not revealed to us. As a result, anyone struggling with their own 'thorn' can relate to Paul's struggles as encouragement to take the problem to the Lord. Paul pleaded with the Lord three times, asking Him to remove this trouble from him, just as he had recommended others do when he wrote to the to the Philippians (4:6). The Hebrew term 'three times' describes on-going, ceaseless, continual prayer. But when nothing happened after this repeated prayer, he realised God was trying to tell him something.

God did answer Paul, in spite of not answering the apostle's prayer in the way he had hoped He would. God told him that He would give Paul His grace which would be sufficient to meet his needs, in spite of this weakness. Paul would have to accept his inability to cope alone, and would have to believe in the grace of God and rely on God to strengthen him so he could carry out the call He had made on his life. The grace of God expresses God's acceptance and pleasure in those who trust in it; it is available all the time; and it can meet every need as it strengthens the recipient.

God says His favour and love is available and is enough for you. In this way, He is not limiting His response to Paul but broadening it to all who follow Christ. Paul realised that he was

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completely dependent on the grace of God. Nothing he could do himself would enable him to do what he had to do. When he understood this, Paul found himself able to welcome his struggle as it brought him to a place of total dependence on God. It was only when he was weak, that he was able to depend on and experience the strength of God in his life. Paul tells his readers how the whole glorious experience of this response from God humbled him more than ever – and God was glorified.

Icebreaker:

When have you repeatedly asked someone for something and, eventually, they have given in. What happened? How did you feel about the situation when you got your own way? Did it affect your relationship with them? What have you learnt from the experience?

Application

- *Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world:* What was your immediate response to this statement? Can you relate to it? How?
- Why does the context of the circumstances that causes the pain matter?
- *We experience pain as compassion:* When have you been able to show empathy with someone who is struggling with an issue you have already experienced? How have you helped them? Were you aware of God in those moments? How could such an experience help you in further ministry today?
- *We experience pain as a refinement:* Looking back over your life, can you see occasions when pain has changed you and brought you closer to God? How has it helped to shape you into a person who trusts in and worships God more intensely?
- What is happening in your life and your community at the moment, that God may be using to refine you and mould you into the person He wants you to be?
- *We experience pain as a call to action:* How could God be calling you to action today? What difference could you make? What was your immediate response to the call for people to help in the children's/youth ministries? Is God calling you to take action, in this or any other area of ministry?

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- *We experience pain as a call to return home:* How does the thought of running into God's arms make you feel? Is it something you want to do? How do you think it could help you cope with the challenges you face? How will you respond?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

God respected Paul's repeated prayers. He did not mind about their quantity; their frequency or any other quality they may have contained or lacked. What mattered to God was the cry of Paul's heart. This week let your prayers come from the depths of your heart, whether they may be personal or universal. Then *listen*. Open your ears, even if the answer is not what we hoped for or expected. Receive God's response to you. And follow His call.

Service

Respond to any answers you hear from God during the week, continue to listen and then to follow.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/2-corinthians-12/>

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