

(2 Corinthians 12:7-10, NIV84)

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. 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.

I know a pastor who is convinced that one of the reasons God led him into the public ministry was to keep him closer to Himself. By requiring that pastor to be in church every Sunday, he would be less likely to stray from the Good Shepherd.

In these times when all of us are prevented from gathering in church for worship, it is a comfort to know that our closeness to Christ is not a matter of geography. He is always with us and nearer still when read or hear His word.

We have our weaknesses, our sinful failings and shortcomings. Let's draw near to Christ and receive His assurance of forgiveness. Right now we're going through hardships and difficulties, but trust Jesus to use all these things for our ultimate good.

Strengthened in weakness with you in Christ,
Pastor Golm

April 25

My Father's Love

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9

A traveler in Palestine was conversing with a Palestinian shepherd when he noticed that one of the sheep in the fold walked with some difficulty. On one of its legs he noticed an injury which had long since been healed. The shepherd, aware of the traveler's sudden interest, explained to him:

"You see, that sheep was born partially deaf. When it was a little lamb, it persisted in straying far from the fold, where it could not hear my voice. Time and again I was called upon to rescue it from the brink of disaster,

until finally I had to inflict that injury on its leg myself. Ever since that day the sheep has limped, but it has also stayed much closer to me for guidance, safety, and protection."

The apostle Paul had a similar "injury". "A thorn in the flesh" he called it. We do not know exactly what this "thorn" was, but it is generally assumed that it was a physical affliction which caused him both pain and embarrassment. In his opinion it was a hindrance in his work, and so he called it "the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord three times, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace [my love] is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Our Father's love may have found it necessary to wound us, to visit us with some sorrow, some disappointment, some bodily affliction; but we can rest secure in the conviction that it was our Father's love that did it. His love always has a purpose, and his purposes are always right.

Beloved, "It is well!" God's ways are always right,
And perfect love is o'er them all Though far above our sight.

Beloved, "It is well!" Though deep and sore the smart,
The hand that wounds knows how to bind And heal the broken heart.