



**When God Says No,
Just Be Thankful!
2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

Christians are Encouraged to Pray Without Ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17)

But the Truth Is:

There is no Guarantee in the Fulfillment of Our Prayers

- **There is no guarantee we will receive what we ask**
- **There is no guarantee our goals will be reached**
- **There is no guarantee we get the job for which we have constantly prayed**
- **There is no guarantee we will all survive Covid 19**

So How Do We React When God Says No!

- When God gives someone else the job we've prayed for
- When the child we have has some permanent medical challenges, or when we aren't blessed with one
- When we, or our family members, acquire COVID 19
- When God in effect says, *"what I've already given you is grace enough," will you be satisfied?*

My Overriding Theme This Morning Is:

If God Did Nothing More Than Save Us From Eternal Punishment, Should We Complain?

If God promises us the riches of Heaven (Salvation), can we complain about what we don't have materially right now?

Christians Who Are Promised Salvation Have More In America (Than “Just Salvation”)

- **If you own your own car, you are richer than 95% of the world’s population (some have more cars than individuals at home to drive them)**
- **The overwhelming majority of us have Eyes to see with, Feet to walk with, Brains to think rationally with, and the Knowledge that we have already received more than our share of blessings, Acts 17:28 (in Him we live and move...)**
- **But the question remains: When we don’t get the answer that we want from God, is He still our God when He says NO?**

The Accomplished Apostle Paul Knew What NO From God Felt Like

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.” 2 Corinthians 12:7-8

- This thorn is more than the usual annoyances of life
- This thorn is a tragedy in your home
- This thorn is a sickness for which there is no cure (chronic)
- This thorn is a disability that dogs your life
- This thorn is a circumstance that you’ve prayed to have removed, and rather than removal, you are given the grace to keep on going and behave in such a way that glorifies God

The Thorn in the Flesh

- **Some may live without the thorn others experience (Keep on living); others know what I mean**
- **Paul's Thorn was like some of our thorns (we don't know his)**
Whenever he had a private thought
Whenever he met somebody new in town
Whenever he stepped in front of a mirror
Whenever he stood to speak or tried to write
People sometimes recognize you by your thorn (breast cancer lady, man with one eye, man/woman with the disabled child)

Paul's Answer From God Wasn't What He Wanted But What He Needed

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.’” 2 Corinthians 12:9

- **Jesus is saying, “Paul, I am all that you need.”**
- **“You think you need a healing; I think you need Me!”**
- **“You think you need a blessing; I think you need Me!”**
- **“You think you need that Job; I think you need this God!”**
- **“You think you need that man; I think you need THIS MAN!”**
- **Jesus says, “my grace is sufficient” (it’s present tense, perfect tense, sufficient tense, ongoing tense; “I will always be there for you”)**

Paul Details God's Answer to His Chronic Problem in Scripture

“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given me, messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.”

- To keep Paul from being proud, arrogant, and having the big head about what he could do, God gave him a Chronic Problem
- I think that this gives us some important insight into God's character
- God would rather see us “limp around” sometimes, than see us “strut around all the time!”
- If it takes giving us a “chronic thorn,” to make His point, then He loves us too much to take it out!

Observations

Someone says: *“But Lord, I can have the thorn removed and still have You, please.”*

God says: *“No You Can’t!” “If you get it removed, you will lose Me!”* Philippians 2:5-11

Someone else says: *“Lord I just want to be like I was before!”*

God says: *“I don’t want you like you were before!”*

Peter had to be taught. Matt 17; 1Peter 5:7

- **Why doesn't God remove our thorns?**

Maybe He wants us to lean on Him and not our own strength (or is '*Leaning...*' just in a song we sing)

- **Why doesn't He remove our enemies from our lives?**

Maybe He wants us to love like He loves

- **Why doesn't He erase our physical flaws?**

Maybe He wants us to know we are loved in spite of them

- **Why doesn't God heal us?**

Maybe He wants us to be a little more sensitive to others so that we not only can *Sympathize with people, but rather Empathize with them!* *Hebrews 4:15 says that in effect, Jesus "empathizes" with us*

Finally, God's Sustaining Grace Allows Us to Rise Above Our Circumstances

- **God's grace to us is not just for the endurance of the thorn but to TRIUMPH OVER IT**
- **Paul, in the end, not only accepted his affliction, but decided to glory in it (put God on display in it)**
- **Paul says in 2 Corinthians 12:9, *"...Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."***
- **When you can share the story of your own infirmities to help others grow through theirs, that's growth in character**
- **Members of this congregation have shared stories of their chronic thorns that have helped others deal with their own**

IN THIS WAY WE BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS!

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38