

Intro: Turn with me to 2 Cor Page 816 in your bible

Continue our Study of 2 Cor which I have titled: *"Finding God's Strength In Your Weakness"*

Theme: Finding God's Strength in Your Weakness

Woven throughout the book Paul over and over again tells us...God is With you...He will strengthen you, Empower
No matter what is going on in your life, God is with you...He will strengthen you, He will walk with you. Help you.

Key Verse

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." 2Cor 12:9-10

Started Last week by talking about finding Purpose in Pain: Today Part 2

Last week: Reason #1: Not WHY, But WHO? Based on Vs 4: *"Comforts us so that we can comfort others."*
We are to be looking for those God wants us to comfort the way he comforted us

Today: God's Purpose In The Pain Pt 2

Today: Reason #2: Another WHO: Vs 9: *"So that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God!"*

This week we are saying, God allows pain...and its about US...to make us stronger and better

READ VERSES 8-11

1. First, Look At WHAT Happened In Paul's Life.

Vs 8

- What we DON'T know: Not sure exactly what the issue was
 - ~Some Ephesus Riots
 - ~Some Physical danger or Medical problem
 - ~Some, Attacked by bandits or had something happen on his journey: Not really sure:
 - ~Many Options: 2 Cor 11:23ff
 - What We DO Know:
 - ~Crushed Him spiritually: It was awful: Paul stacks up 3 words, one on top of the other to communicate how bad
Pressed down + Beyond/Above + Strength
 - ~Caused him to despair: To be utterly at a loss, to be ready to surrender and give up, throw in towel:
 - ~Resigned himself to death: Felt the sentence (Verdict or Answer) of death Sometimes used Judicially
Perfect tense: I am feeling it...and it is finished, or accomplished
I feel it in my heart, I have resigned myself to the fact that it is over
- Illus:** MMA Tap or Snap:

ILLUS: It is possible for ANY of us to get to that place in our lives, with all different kinds of situations

- ~Relationship: *I'm done: No more counselors, No more talking, No more future: I want a divorce*
- ~Medical: *There are no more treatments, nothing else to try, nothing else I can do. I can't help*
- ~Financial: *The hole is just too deep, you will never be able to dig your way out, Bankruptcy*

2. Next, Understand WHY God Allows Those Painful Things To Take Place.

Vs 9

- Purpose Clause: Remember that discussion fm last week: Grammatical structure: Points to purpose?
This happened...So THAT....There is a specific purpose...don't miss it
 - ~Last week: Comfort Others: *So we can comfort others*
 - ~This week: Grow Us: *So we can learn how to rely upon Him, and not ourselves*
- Rely:** Lit = *That we would not put our trust in ourselves*
God is growing us to the place that we learn how to trust him, and find strength in Him
Why? Because, sooner or later we are going to be in a place where OUR strength isn't enough
He DEVELOPS us over time, stretching us beyond what we think we can endure, so we are ready
- Illus:** Like going to trainer: There on Friday AM Pushups, Other exercises, works me to point of failure:
When she does that the muscle gets stronger, bigger, better equipped for the future
Left to ourselves, we would NEVER stretch ourselves that much spiritually!
We say, I can't do that, it's too much, too painful, too hurtful, too difficult God says, yes you can!
Trainer: almost 30 mins in: 10 more pushups! *"You believe in miracles...!!! But I did them!"*
- Applic:** That is what God did with Paul spiritually, and what he does with us
We don't like it, we don't agree with it, we would avoid it if we could...But he stretches us
Listen: Because HE knows there is something coming down the road that we are going to need strength for!
- Quote: *"When hope has left us and death is the only prospect, then God stands forth, the God who raises the dead. Such situations are his opportunity, for he, and he alone, is able to meet them."*
German proverb: *"When the NEED is greatest, God is nearest."*

God allows painful times to come into our lives us train us to lean on Him. Most of us are stubborn, unwilling to admit need. So God allows us to find ourselves in a place where WE are not strong enough....WE are not determined enough..We need
When at the hour of need we reach out to Him, and find Him faithful...strong...available...present...we have learned

3. Remember The Faithfulness Of God.

Vs 10

This is an amazing verse. Here Paul becomes almost poetic and make sure he covers all the bases.

God IS Faithful

God HAS BEEN Faithful

God WILL BE Faithful.

Past, Present and Future: The nature and character of God is to be Faithful. He never lets us down!

What Paul Does is, he uses the same word for salvation, (*to rescue from danger*) 3 times...With different verb tenses

Now Deliver: Lit = *to rescue from danger*: (Can be physical, Spiritual) same word used, the context determines meaning
Here, Paul is talking about Physical deliverance.

Whatever it was, it was too great for Paul to handle, and he had resigned himself to death. Verdict was in, heart was settled

Then GOD: Because the NEED was Greatest...God Stood Forth and delivered Paul

- He HAS delivered: IN the past God was faithful
- He WILL deliver: I KNOW I can put my trust in Him (whatever it was...God delivered!) I can trust he will!
- He IS delivering: Right now, where I am, with what is going on...God is faithfully present, sustaining, empowering, energizing, protecting, enabling: God is here, all I need!

Listen: Though Paul is speaking here about what God has done for him PHYSICALLY, There is a SPIRITUAL TRUTH

- He HAS delivered us from the PENALTY of Sin: Accepted Jesus, my debt was paid, my sin forgiven
- He WILL deliver us from the PRESENCE of Sin: One day, return for us, take to heaven, no more sin!
- He IS delivering us today from the POWER of Sin: As we lean on Him, trust Him, reach out to him
Which is what this verse is all about

SO>>>HOW DOES THAT HAPPEN IN OUR LIFE PRACTICALLY?

4. Understand HOW God Delivers Us.

Vs 11

This is an AMAZING verse of scripture...tells us about the work of God in our life!

First, understand the process of deliverance: Not always the same...and sometimes not at all like what we desire!

- The Process
~*God sometimes delivers us FROM danger*: Totally removes it from our life. We Like that...Take it away, He does!
~*God sometimes delivers us IN danger*: Is 43:1-3
~*God sometimes us THROUGH danger*: Dan 3:16-27 Shadrach, Meshack, Abednego
- The People: Vs 11 “*as you help us with your prayers, the prayers of many!*”
Beautiful Image! Lit = “*by means of many faces lifted up in prayer for us*”
Applic: Ok, here you go...who do you have praying for you?
When God looks down on you and your situation...what does he see?
Get on the prayer chain!
Illus: Hospital, Stroke....When you going to call the Elders to pray? “Im not!”
- The Power: Oh...this is where it gets GOOD!
Remember the first thing we talked about: Paul took three words to describe how he felt!
Vs 8 We were under great: *Pressure + Beyond + Ability to endure!*

NOW, when he talks about where he will find the strength to stand up under the strain....

Vs 11: As you Help us: Is REALLY 3 words all rolled into one!

Lit = You are *Working + Under + With* me to get me through this!

Do you see it! When the pressure was TOO great for Paul to bear it alone...and He was CRUSHED by it!

God empowered Him, sustained him, by the PRAYERS of others who came alongside under the burden

Worked Under With Him...To get Him through!

That's why he says...there is a SEA of upturned faces to God on his behalf...and He was delivered from deaths door!

CONCL: So What should you do this morning in response to this?

1. Make SURE you know His deliverance...both physically and spiritually
(Do you KNOW him, delivered from penalty of sin?)
2. If you are weighed down...reach out to God... Do you know Him well enough to KNOW he will deliver you today?
But also...reach out to others. Let them come along with you under the burden....and lift you up!
3. Don't despair...Start praying...Pray God deliver me
From In Through
4. If you are in a good place...find someone weighed down...be one of a SEA of faces...lifting them up