



**The DAILY JESUS NEWS #354**  
**The Eternal Ministry of Jesus in Heaven**  
**The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church**

**Jesus Reveals Himself to Paul in a Time of Great Weakness**  
**II Corinthians 12.1-10**

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1 I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.

2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether it in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows-- was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know; God knows--4 was caught up to paradise and heard unspeakable things, things that are not proper for anyone to talk about. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.

6 Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I hold back, so no one will think more of me than is appropriate to what I actually do or say, 7 because of these overwhelmingly great revelations.

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming puffed up with pride, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I earnestly pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

9 But he said to me, *"My grace is constantly sufficient for you, for my power is always made perfect in weakness."*

Therefore I will be keep on boasting all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may enfold me like a tent. 10 This is why I always stay thankful in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in the toughest difficulties for Christ' sake. For when I am weak, then I am really strong.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	Somewhere in Macedonia (Central Greece)
Timeline	About 26 Years After Jesus Ascended

Jesus' Life Context	Stage IX: The Resurrection and Eternal Ministry of Jesus
	Jesus' Eternal Ministry in Heaven
	The Continuing Words and Works of the Risen Jesus in the Early Church
Title:	Jesus Encourages Paul in a Time of Severe Weakness

The promise of Jesus given to Paul in today's reading applies directly to all believers. It is one of the most encouraging and important things Jesus ever said for those who seek to follow him with all of their hearts, and it came from Jesus' eternal ministry in heaven—about 25 years after he ascended. It is also the final specific saying of the ascended Jesus that is recorded in the New Testament during Paul's ministry.

Paul experienced a physical malady that constantly irritated him. We do not know what it was, but we do know that it was painful—a “thorn” in his flesh. Paul went so far as to call it a “messenger of satan,” that “tormented” him. The condition reminded him that he was constantly being opposed by all the forces of evil, and how weak he was.

The apostle prayed three specific times for the healing of this painful malady. Jesus answered with a “no” each time. However, as is typical of the loving grace of our God, the “no” was actually a gateway to a better “yes” for Paul from Jesus. The Lord promised that his power would constantly be at work in the weakness created by the condition, so that Paul would experience a non-stop flow of grace to carry him along. This constant infusion of power was actually better for Paul than an instantaneous miraculous healing, for it kept Paul humble, and ever dependent upon the presence and power of his Lord.

Paul learned to glory in his weaknesses, for these were Jesus' specially prepared places of power in Paul's life. As he wrote: “We have this treasure (Christ) in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power may come from God, and not ourselves.” (II Cor. 4.7) Jesus our Creator made us weak, so that we must experience the greatness of his power in order to follow him in loving obedience. Like Paul, our points of greatest pain and weakness are the keys that open up the riches of his power and grace to us.

Note that Paul's first response was to pray for healing or deliverance from Jesus for his condition. This is a good starting point for us, too. Jesus does continue to heal and deliver in miraculous ways in his eternal ministry in heaven. However, when we receive a “no” answer to our prayer for a miracle, we too must learn to glory in the greater “yes” answer of constant grace and power to cope with what torments us, so we can move ahead in spite of the weakness and difficulty to follow Jesus.

It usually glorifies God more fully to give us constant grace and power to endure what torments us with sincere thanksgiving and joy, than it does to instantly deliver us. Miracles create praise and testimony for what happened to us in the past. Constant new infusions of grace and power create a non-stop testimony of God's ongoing goodness and love toward us in the present. This is the message that other people need to hear the most. Living in a sinful, fallen world means that all of us will be struggling with some form of pain and torment throughout our lives. We all need constant grace and power to move on with a triumphant attitude. This is Jesus' promise to each of us through his words to Paul.

#### APPLICATION:

What “thorn” torments you on a regular basis? How does this promise give you hope and strength to overcome your personal “thorn” with a triumphant attitude?

