

2 Corinthians 12:7

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself. Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

1 Samuel 17:45

Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have taunted.”

“There was given me a thorn in the flesh”

As testify begins a new year I have asked Roger if I could take over the sermon this week so that I can teach you all how this church has changed my life for the better in this past year. Testify will continue to grow and change each year but it is how each of you participates in this change that will be most beneficial to your walk with God. Therefore, today I am going to tell you how God used this church to make my relationship with Him even deeper.

I brought up two scriptures that I felt both reflected my walk with God. First of course I will address the David & Goliath story.

- How always pictured this: scraggly boy with a huge army at his back
 - Explain my life starting when I became a sophomore in High school
 - C/B student → A student
 - Decided to become a Vet
 - Worked very hard to get into College
 - In High school & college I always made getting into Vet school my top priority, going to church when I had time
 - When I was a Sophomore in college I realized I wanted more from my relationship with God and became more of an active participant but still God was never my top priority
 - Then I met Roger, from the beginning he questioned my priorities

- Though he was crazy he did have to study as much as me!!
- Continued Vet School, Roger at Yale
- Went to church in CT with Roger, when he came back we had 5 months of no church
- Friends started asking questions about God, Roger helped them
- Started Bible study, friends drifted when school got harder 7→3/2, wanted more
- Said he wanted to start a church →ARE YOU CRAZY
- Enjoyed it but as school got harder I started to get frustrated
- Prayed to God asking Him as Paul did in the scripture roger read, Please Lord remove this thorn from my flesh so that I may exalt you. Please Lord make me smarter so that I don't have to focus on school and that I may learn faster so that I can focus on being there

- **God said no you have to put me first, your weakness is what teaches you that you need me. You need to struggle and lean on me**
- God didn't grant me that request He allowed me to suffer through it, to learn that His grace was enough
- He taught me that it was in my moments of weakness that He would pick me up and carried me.
- As God responds to Paul "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness"
 - Power of faith

- **In those moments of weakness I focused on God and I prayed that I didn't suffer for taking time out of studying to go to church (even when I had three tests that week) and God never stopped delivering**
 - **He didn't make it easy but He gave me the strength to get through it**

- For the first time in my life I trusted that God would get me through it if only I put him First...and for the first time I did
- I always wanted to lay down my life for God, I prayed for that type of strength but was always afraid that if I gave up my control I would loose what I wanted
- HUGE WEIGHT LIFTED...first time I trusted God with my life where ever He took it

- Felt that getting into Vet school was my Goliath, I had this twisted in my head as a story about going against something that appeared as an impossible goal: **Missed the point: Faith that saved him**
 - It was the faith that God would protect him no matter what happened that is the point in the story
- That is what I learned this year, by putting God first my life falls into place perfectly and when the bumps in the road hit, even the big pot holes I am better able to cope because I know that nothing is a fault of mine. Its life and my life is always in God's hands. He has planned every part of my life to teach me, because it was through my weakness that I learned my greatest strength: Faith.