

# *Mt. Lebanon Church*

Adult Sunday School Lesson

5.29.2022

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you what he would have you to see through the study of God's word.

Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

## 2 Corinthians 12: 1 – 10

We learn today that Christians should expect hardships in their life. The word of God specifically warns us of this, so as to prevent our discouragement as we face these hardships. Those who teach that health, wealth, and prosperity are awaiting those that follow God as a means of worldly success is just not biblical. To prevent Christians from being prideful and conceited concerning the knowledge of God, often time, God will send unexpected hardships so that we might maintain our spiritual humility. These hardships may be physical, or they may come as some type of emotional distress, which could come from trials, tribulations or even temptations, if we fall to the deceptiveness of these temptations. Even though we may still continually experience these hardships, even after we have cried out to a loving, compassionate God, he will proclaim his grace unto us, so that we might endure our sufferings. For this reason, are we able to gladly boast while going through these hardships in our lives. As we do this, Gods power will become evident in those areas, where as Christians, we seem to be the weakest. If we are willing, God will make use of these sufferings in our life, to accomplish his own purpose. Gods answer to our prayers are based upon his overall will for us and not our own. As this suffering strengthens our lives, we become more dependent upon God, who is accomplishing in us exactly what he wants to accomplish. Gods primary concern for us is not for us to have a mortal life of leisure in the world, but for us to trust completely in him. Therefore, we should not turn away from God, just because he is allowing us to experience weaknesses in our life.

**2 Corinthians 12: 1 – 4,....**it is not expedient for me doubtless to glory....I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord....I knew a man in Christ....such an one caught up to the third heaven....I know such a man....how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter....

Humanity wants to boast about their accomplishments. As Christians, the word teaches us that it is better to boast in what the Lord has accomplished in our life, especially in those times when we feel that we are at our weakest. As believers, we must make the choice not to dwell on our own accomplishments because this would be following after our own self-righteousness. Nothing will ever be gained by boasting in worldliness, even though mankind is always looking to those who claim to have impressive credentials, and even when they claim that these credentials are spiritual and come by the power of God. If we boast, we should boast only in the Lord. As we look at this passage of scripture and the details that Paul gives, these details could only be provided by the one who actually saw the vision. So, it was Paul that was caught up, he did not go up personally, because no one can ascend to God on their own. This is why that he said that he did not know whether he was in the body or not. Paul did not describe every detail, because our human minds lack the knowledge to describe the sovereignty of God. No matter what knowledge Paul received, we learn from this passage of scripture that as Christians, we should not compare our life here upon this earth to the glory that we will experience eternally, but that we should live our life here on earth in preparation for our eternal life with God.

**2 Corinthians 4: 17 – 18,....**for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory....for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal....

Gods purpose and plan for us on this earth is not going to be easy, especially when we compare it to humanities standard of life. When we begin to compare our experiences to Gods glory of eternity, we will find out that this life is far outweighed by the glory of our eternal life to come. This life is temporary, Gods glory is forever. Therefore, this life is just preparation for the eternal life to come. If we use this life to serve Gods purpose, then will we allow it to produce endurance, and endurance will produce Christlike character, and Christlike character will always produce heavenly hope. This hope will help us to carry out Gods mission for us in our life.

**2 Corinthians 12: 5 – 7,....**of such an one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities....for though I would desire to glory, I shall not....for I will say the truth....lest I should be exalted above measure....I was given a thorn in the flesh....lest I should be exalted above measure....

Our spiritual maturity should give unto us the goal that we would not brag about that which we have done in our own life, which benefits no one, including ourselves. We must be content in our weaknesses so that the glory and power of God might be revealed. We must be careful not to allow our intimate relationship with the Lord to bring us into worldly conceit which will cause us to look down upon others. We must not let our pride turn Gods precious gift in us into a hindrance or stumbling block to others. Satan's goal is to use these weaknesses to bring us to arrogance and pridefulness, but God will use them to place a unique calling in our life and to spread the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ to all that we come in contact with.

**1 Corinthians 2: 2,....**for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified....

We must call attention to ourselves when presenting the gospel of Christ saving grace. We are not to be entertainers, which only confuses the truth of the gospel. We should not try to display our knowledge of Christ and the cross. Gods plan and purpose for us is not to impress people, but to deliver Christ message to them. Living a life in the wisdom of the world will influence our thoughts and cause worldly emotions to bring about spiritual weaknesses. Christ, crucifixion and resurrection was so that we might die to sin and live to God, through the power of Christ.

**2 Corinthians 12: 8 – 10,....**for this thing I besought the Lord....and he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness....therefore I take pleasure in infirmities....for when I am weak, then am I strong....

In our Christian life, we soon learn, that we cannot relieve ourselves of the difficulties that we come to experience. For this reason, we ask God to remove these infirmities, but God does not always remove them, but by his grace he will help us to go through them, because he knows that we need much more in our life than just to be relieved of these trials and tribulations. When we learn to joy in our weaknesses instead of boasting in our strength, we will learn that it is through these weaknesses that we magnify the power of God. This will allow us to be content in knowing that God is working through us, to produce something that is of eternal value within us.

God knows if and when that we might become puffed up with pride in our spiritual life. Therefore, he will allow his servant to experience sufferings and persecutions. These sufferings and persecutions however are not without meaning, for they will serve as a comfort to others in our testimony of faith. Even still, we continue to plead with the Lord to remove these hardships, whatever they may be. Although God does not remove them, he gives unto us grace to bear. What a great testimony this is to others. No matter what we might face, we have Gods full assurance that his grace is sufficient for all that we might experience in life.

**Philippians 4: 11,....**not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content....

Humble and content is where Christ wants us to be. We learn that regardless of the circumstance, we do not need to show a false sense of strength through gimmicks and elaborate entertaining, but we show our strength in God by portraying the simple plan of the saving grace of Jesus Christ. This is essential for us, so that we might find joy in all circumstances.

Let us Pray.

If anyone has any questions, comments or would just like to discuss any of the scriptures, feel free to call, text or email me. Keep praying for each other and all the God lays upon your heart. Hope to see everyone soon. God Bless.

*Tim Hughes*

304.376.3177 – Text or talk.

Tim.hughes1962@gmail.com

<https://hollowowlfarm.com/>





