



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Hope in the Power of God

SPEAKER Elder Lok Vi Ming

THEME Hope in Hopeless Times

DATE 5 & 6 Dec 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

As we enter the third part of the series *Hope in Hopeless Times* in the month of December, we are reminded of the hope we have because of the gift of Jesus Christ. Expounding on the word from 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Elder Lok expositis how we can continue to have hope in the power of God and not give up even when we are weak.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“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. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Cor 12:7-10 (NKJV)

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
7	<u>“a thorn in the flesh was given to me”</u>	The word “thorn” in Greek “skolops” refers to a pointed piece of wood, a pale or a stake. Contrary to our common impression that the “thorn” may just be a minor irritation in Paul’s life, the word “skolops” implies something far more agonizing. It may be an impalement, an agony, a stake driven in the flesh, a painful experience that the devil uses to discourage Paul from time to time.
8	<u>“I (Paul) pleaded with the Lord three times”</u>	The word “pleaded” in Greek “parakaleo”, related to the word “paraclete”, is related to the greek word used in the bible for the Holy Spirit. It suggests commitment and deep agony similar to the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ in the garden of Gethsemane asking the Lord to take away the cup of suffering which he was about to partake - crucifixion at the cross - might be taken away from Him. When faced with situations similar to Paul’s, we can learn to “parakaleo” the Lord for our condition to be taken away from us if it is in accordance with His will and if it pleases Him.
9a	<u>“My grace is sufficient for you”</u>	Although God did not remove Paul’s condition from him, God assures him that His grace is sufficient for him.

God's grace is sufficient for us at the time when we are ready to receive it. The grace of God uplifts us and reminds us that God is good and He is full of lovingkindness.

When we have exhausted all resources and options, God's grace will suffice.

9b "My strength is made perfect in weakness"

The word "perfect" in greek "teleo" does not refer to something without limits or without stains. It refers to completion or accomplishment of a mission.

Paul receives the assurance of God's strength that will be enough to accomplish what God wants to accomplish in the situation for him.

Whatever is our struggles, God gives us strength to accomplish the mission that He would be glorified. When we surrender our weakness to Him, God converts it to strength for us to accomplish what He wants us to accomplish.

9c "Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities"

When we surrender to God and talk to Him about our infirmities, our faith boast to others about the strength the Lord gives to us.

9d "that the power of Christ may rest upon me"

The word "rest" comes from the greek word "episkenose". Epi- means outer layer or covering e.g. epidermis while -skene means tabernacle or tent, dwelling. The power of Christ will rest upon us like a tabernacle we can dwell in when our weakness is exchange for the strength of Christ.

Despite our difficult circumstances, God tells us to exchange our weakness for His strength.

10 "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

For Paul, he gives thanks for his infirmities because he knows that it is when he is weak that he is made strong.

CONCLUSION

When our world is being turned upside down and we think that our life is being sucked out of us, sometimes, we just have to hold on to our faith and know that the hand that was reaching out to us is not to harm us, but to bring us to safety.

We have to surrender. When we have surrendered our weakness, God will give us strength. The power of God is what God can do with nothing and nobodies. That is the all-sufficiency of God.

We are strong when we recognize our weakness. And, we are weak only when we see only our own strength. His strength is made perfect in our weakness. So, let us hope in the power of God **especially** when we are weak!

QUESTIONS

1. In 2 Cor 12:7, the apostle Paul was given a “thorn in the flesh”. Describe your understanding about this “thorn in the flesh” from this sermon. How does your own ‘thorn in the flesh’ compare?

2. The Lord Jesus said to Apostle Paul in 2 Cor 12:9, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."* Recall and share a recent experience of God's goodness where He provided the grace that is sufficient to meet your needs.

3. What is an area of your life that you feel victorious about? Your work? Your marriage? Your relationship with friends? Your finances? Your generous giving of your time and money? Why have you been victorious in this area? Where does God come into the picture?