



8/1/25

*On this week's Chosen and Cherished podcast, I made a confession of my struggle... I can easily focus on failure rather than faith. I praise God that HE does NOT focus on our failures, but our faith. If you'd like to listen to this week's episode, Footsteps of the Faith, here's the link... <https://summitpoint.org/chosen-and-cherished/>*

*Side note... I have a correction to make ~ In the episode, I said that Ishmael was the father of the Muslims... Muslims actually believe that Abraham is their father and that Ishmael is the founder of Islam, the religion the Muslims follow.*

*Blessings,*

*Jonna*

*Romans 8:26-27, 2 Corinthians 12:8-10*

*If I embrace these two passages, it will be life changing for me! O Lord, please let the words of these passages dwell in me richly so that I can be a doer of the word and not a hearer only... deceiving myself. Help me to humble myself before You as I take these words to heart!*

*Romans 8:26-27 ~*

*Vs. 26 starts out, "Likewise..." So, in the same way creation groans for its suffering of futility to be over, and the coming glory to finally arrive... and in the same way believers in Christ "who have the firstfruits of the Spirit" groan for the brokenness of this world to be over and the glory of our redemption and adoption to be realized... Likewise, the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us and seals us for the day of redemption, JOINS WITH us to help us in our weakness.*

*What is our weakness? First and foremost, we don't know how to pray! I'm gonna see in 2 Corinthians 12 that Paul prayed 3 times for God to remove his thorn of suffering. He didn't know that God was allowing the suffering for a purpose. It is the Holy Spirit who joins with us to help our weak prayers. How often do I pray for God to take something away or give me*

*something that He knows will not accomplish His good and perfect purpose for me? I need to rely on the Holy Spirit who GROANS for me! He groans FOR me. He groans for ME!*

*He intercedes for me because I need His help. His groanings are so deep that words cannot describe them. I read in a book called Dying to Self that the power of the ocean illustrates my heart struggles and the Holy Spirit's work in my life. The ocean may have huge waves, even tsunamis crashing down with massive storms and powerful thunder and lightning on the surface. But below the surface, in the deepest parts, everything is calm. The circumstances of my life may bring tsunamis and overpowering storms to the thoughts and feelings of my heart, but in the depths of my heart, where the Holy Spirit dwells, all things are calm. He GROANS for me and intercedes for me according to the will of my good and faithful Father, but He NEVER panics for me. He KNOWS how to pray. He KNOWS what I need. He KNOWS how to strengthen me in my weakness.*

*The Father searches my heart. Psalm 139:1-4 shows me how fully He knows me... "O Lord, You have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, You know it altogether." God knows the weakness of my heart! He does not condemn me or crush me for my weakness. The Holy Spirit groans for me and helps me. My job is not to try to hide my weaknesses from the Lord or to try to overcome my weaknesses in my own strength. The tsunamis are too strong for me. My job is to do what I learn from the book, Dying to Self, to "waste no time trying to condemn or conquer the sin, but run into my fortress, the secret place where the Most High is, by trusting the Spirit to work in me."*

*In fact, Paul takes this even further in 2 Corinthians 12:8-10! Not only am I not expected to fix my weaknesses, Paul says he BOASTS and DELIGHTS in his weaknesses!!!*

*I learn from vs. 7 that Paul was in danger of letting visions he had received from God stir up arrogance in his heart. He said, "So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited."*

*Whoa! God allowed Satan to attack Paul with some kind of suffering. How is that love??? I have to look at the motives before I look at the circumstances. If God was evil and wanted to hurt Paul just to hurt him, it would NOT be love. But God knows that arrogance is far more dangerous to us than weakness. In fact, Paul says TWICE, "to keep me from being conceited." Arrogance drives us FROM God. Suffering, if I'm not arrogant, drives me TO God.*

*What proof do I have for this? Satan himself. He was an angel of light who became so arrogant that he was cast out of heaven and will someday face eternity in hell. Ezekiel 28:17 says of him, "Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground." His arrogance was his downfall. God wants to protect me from making the same mistake... just as He did Paul. My suffering is not God's cruelty; it is*

*His mercy. And Satan's motive for the thorn may be to hurt me, but he becomes the servant of God in his cruelty because God uses the thorn to help me.*

*Paul did not understand that at first. Three times he asked the Lord to remove the thorn. Let me just say, that alone is a heart of humble faith. Only three times??? I don't think I could count the number of times I would ask for deliverance from the suffering! I'm guessing Paul asked once... and then he waited... nothing changed. So he asked again... and he waited... nothing changed. How long did he wait these first two times? I don't know. But I'm sure it was longer than a day! That alone is convicting to me. How much time do I give the Lord to answer before I just want to take matters into my own hands, and then accuse Him of not loving me when He doesn't change things???*

*When Paul asked God the third time, God answered... but His answer proved that Paul didn't really know what to pray for... the Spirit was interceding for him with groanings too deep for words. God's answer to Paul's request was no. But God also explained His motives... the same motives He has for me.*

*"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.'" It is not removal of the suffering that I need. It's God's grace that sustains me even in the suffering that I need. His grace strengthens me and satisfies the aching of my soul. The Greek word for "sufficient" is so important to grasp. Sufficient makes it sound like I need a meal and He gives me bread and water. No... He SATISFIES me as it says in Psalm 63:5, "My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food." He satisfies my groaning soul with a feast of peace and hope and strength!*

*Now... if I were Paul, I would have responded saying, "Therefore, I got really mad at the Lord and said, 'Why don't You love me???' " But that's not what Paul said... because Paul had unwavering faith. He trusted God's motives. He said, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me."*

*When I focus on my weaknesses rather than God's grace... I necessarily push away God's power in my life, opting to handle it in my own power... but I am WEAK! Trusting that God lavishes me with His grace and believing that God's power RESTS on me gives me reason to BOAST in my WEAKNESSES! His power doesn't just show up here and there. It RESTS on me.*

*O Lord, help me to understand what Paul did... My arrogance AND my shame are far more dangerous to me than my suffering. Help me to say with Paul, "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities." What??? Seriously?*

*What does "for the sake of Christ" mean? It means "because of Christ." Because Christ has set me free from my sin and has opened the door for me to be strengthened by grace and to be free from arrogance and shame, I am CONTENT with suffering. The actual Greek word for content means I "take pleasure in, delight in, am WELL PLEASED with" weaknesses, insults,*

*hardships, persecutions, and calamities.*

*I think this is one of those times when the scripture, "With man this is IMPOSSIBLE, but with God ALL things are POSSIBLE" seriously applies. My first response to any kind of suffering is NOT delight. I cannot do this without the power of the Holy Spirit resting on me (1 Peter 4:14). But when I run to the Holy Spirit for help, He gives me the grace and the strength to delight in my suffering (even when I groan) because I know it's an opportunity to experience more of His grace and strength. "For when I am weak (in myself), then I am strong (in the Lord)."*

*O Lord, I so want my heart to trust You like Paul did. I pray that I will bring EVERYTHING to You. I am allowed to pray about ANYTHING. But help me, like Paul, to WAIT for Your answer, to humble myself before You, and to see any suffering as Your protection from letting pride or shame rise up in me. Help me to use every situation as an opportunity to grow closer to You... even when I groan.*