

**November 9, 2025**

**God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing**

**The Book of 2 Corinthians – Part 9**

**Grace-Fueled Humility**

Today we continue on our multi-year journey through the New Testament where we are seeking to understand the historical, chronological & missiological of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Church so that we in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church can keep the “CHURCH ALIVE & GROWING”. We pick up where we left off with Paul at the end of his 1<sup>st</sup> Letter to the Church in Corinth. As I mentioned before, Paul had spent 1 ½ years previously in Corinth evangelizing, discipling and planting churches. He then left to go to Ephesus where he stayed 3 years. During this time, Paul received news of the chaos that had erupted in the Corinth Church. That’s when he wrote we know of as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. It appears that he left Ephesus and made a quick ‘painful visit’ as we will learn in Chapter 2:1,2. Paul then left and promised to return for a longer visit and then he went to Macedonia. It appears he stayed in Macedonia longer than expected by him and by the Corinth church and they began to accuse him of forgetting them and seemed to question his integrity and intentions. This prompted Paul to **write the letter we know of as 2 Corinthians** about 1 year after he had sent them 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. Approximately 55/56 BC. In this letter Paul has been addressing various issues that will help them to fulfill their ...**Call to be Ambassadors of Christ and be active in a Ministry of Comfort & Reconciliation.**

The last two Sundays we have been revealing how Grace is so vital to our relationship with God and to maturing in our Faith. We discussed the Grace -Generosity Connection two weeks ago and last Sunday the Grace – Spiritual Warfare Connection.

Today we look at the **Grace -Humility** Connection with the sermon entitled ‘**Grace-Fueled Humility**’. Today’s Bible selection is probably one of the longest I have ever preached from, but don’t be alarmed, I will not go long as much of the material is similar and Paul has addressed before. Paul is a very intelligent, passionate and wordy preacher. It is easy to get a little ‘lost in translation’ when we read some of Paul’s writing. It is important to try to understand where Paul is coming from and who his audience is. This week I had an encounter with a person from my gym that reminded me of the need to clearly understand someone’s point of view and reference so as to not misunderstand or be misunderstood.

#### **Key Passages:**

**Chapter 10:17-18...<sup>17</sup> But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. <sup>18</sup> For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.**

**Chapter 11:30... If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.**

**Chapter 12:9-10...<sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

A summary of these chapters could be said this way...

“True humility is not self-deprecation or weakness—it is strength rooted in grace, shaped by dependence on Christ, and displayed through sacrificial service.” (copilot)

### Overview: Paul Presents a ‘Paradox of Power’.

Paul’s writings he seems to relish in being at opposites with the view of the world and its values. We live in a world today much like the time of Paul, that celebrates strength—physical, intellectual, financial, and social. In today’s passage from 2 Corinthians 10–12, Paul confronts critics who equate strength with dominance, eloquence, and outward success. But Paul’s defense is not self-promotion, it’s a radical redefinition of power through the lens of grace. You are probably familiar with this oft quoted verse from [2 Cor. 12:9](#)...

*“But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’”*

Paul, in these chapters, flips the script. He shows us that true spiritual power is found not in boasting, but in brokenness. Not in self-promotion, but in surrender. Not in pride, but in grace-filled humility.

[2 Cor. 12:10](#)...“*For when I am weak, then I am strong.*”

## Chapter 10

### 1. Paul Presents a Paradigm for Leadership – Humility

Key Verses: [Chapter 10:17-18](#)...<sup>17</sup> *But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.* <sup>18</sup> *For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.*

If we go back to the start of this chapter in verse 1 we read... “*I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...*” ([10:1](#))

Paul begins with a tone of gentleness, not aggression. His authority is real, but it’s exercised through Christlike meekness. Paul contrasts worldly weapons with spiritual ones: “*The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh...*” ([10:4](#))

Grace-fueled humility leads us to lead not by manipulation or force, but by truth, prayer, and love. In leadership, humility is not weakness. It’s Christlikeness. We lead not by dominating, but by serving.

**Consider This:** True Godly Leadership and Authority is for Building Up, Not tearing Down.

Questions to consider... Are we more concerned with appearances or with authenticity? Do we defend ourselves, or do we let grace speak?

## Chapter 11

### 2. Paul Presents a Portrait of Absurdity – Boasting

Key Verse: [Chapter 11:30](#)... *If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.*

After Paul had Presented a Positive Paradigm for Leadership in Humility, he then Presents an Absurd Portrait of Boasting. Pride and boasting were sadly rampant in the past as well in our world today. People seem obsessed with titles, awards, recognitions, how many ‘Friends’ and ‘Followers’ you have on social media. We see comparisons between people’s looks, money, position and talents. It comes down to a self-centered, pride-based mentality.

Paul geniusly and pointedly uses absurd comments and comparisons to reveal the foolishness of pride and human self-edification. Paul sarcastically engages in “foolish boasting”, not to elevate himself, but to expose the absurdity of the Corinthians’ obsession with credentials. Paul warns them of these false teachers who try to impress and delude people with their credentials and false teachings.

He then reinforces his true heart and authority by boasting not in his credentials and triumphs, but in his character and his trials. Not in his strength, but in his sacrificial scars. He lists sufferings, not successes—shipwrecks, beatings, sleepless nights—as his resume.

Look at [2 Cor. 11:30](#)... *“If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.”*

**Consider This:** Avoid Comparison and Self-Commendation. Grace-fueled humility frees us from comparison. We don’t need to prove ourselves—we need to point to Christ. Grace shines brightest in the dark. Humility is not pretending we’re perfect—it’s proclaiming that God is faithful even when we’re not.

## Chapter 12

### 3. Paul Presents a Personal Testimony – Grace Dependent

**Key Verses:** [Chapter 12:9-10](#)... <sup>9</sup> *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.* <sup>10</sup> *Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses,*

*with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.*

This chapter fleshes out Paul’s theology of grace. After describing a heavenly vision, which he could easily in his human flesh, glorify himself as having had a ‘special revelation from God’; he shares with us the fact that he has not received any special blessing from this encounter but actually, as he phrases it was given a “thorn in the flesh”—a persistent weakness that God refuses to remove. Instead of healing, God offers grace. Instead of relief, He offers power through dependence. Paul learns that grace is not just for salvation—it’s for sustenance. It’s not just a past event—it’s a present power. His thorn becomes a testimony. His weakness becomes a pulpit. What if the very thing we want God to remove is the thing He’s using to reveal His grace?

**Consider This:** Grace-fueled humility embraces weakness as a platform for God’s strength. When we trust God enough to believe that *“His strength is sufficient”*; we are then usable by God to do great and mighty things in His Name and through His Power. Let’s begin using our lives as a testimony of the power and sufficiency of God. “Ultimately, the only evaluation that matters is the Lord’s. The goal of ministry and the Christian life is not self-vindication or human applause, but to be found approved by God”. (Co-pilot)

**Take-Away:** Let us ‘Embrace the Grace’ that we discover in our weakness. Let us choose to walk in humility that reflects the heart of Christ. Let us boast—not in ourselves—but in the God who says, *“My grace is sufficient.”*

## Full Passage for Reference 2 Cor. 10:7-12:13

**Chapter 10: 7-13...** <sup>7</sup> You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. <sup>8</sup> For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, <sup>9</sup> for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. <sup>10</sup> For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." <sup>11</sup> Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present. <sup>12</sup> For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. <sup>13</sup> But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. <sup>14</sup> For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; <sup>15</sup> not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, <sup>16</sup> so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. <sup>17</sup> But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD. <sup>18</sup> For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

**Chapter 11...** <sup>1</sup> I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. <sup>2</sup> For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a

pure virgin. <sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. <sup>4</sup> For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. <sup>5</sup> For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. <sup>6</sup> But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things. <sup>7</sup> Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? <sup>8</sup> I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; <sup>9</sup> and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. <sup>10</sup> As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. <sup>11</sup> Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! <sup>12</sup> But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. <sup>13</sup> For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. <sup>15</sup> Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds. <sup>16</sup> Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if you do, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little. <sup>17</sup> What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. <sup>18</sup> Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. <sup>19</sup> For you, being so wise, tolerate the

foolish gladly. <sup>20</sup> For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face. <sup>21</sup> To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison. But in whatever respect anyone else is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. <sup>26</sup> I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. <sup>28</sup> Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. <sup>29</sup> Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern? <sup>30</sup> If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. <sup>31</sup> The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. <sup>32</sup> In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, <sup>33</sup> and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

**Chapter 12...** <sup>1</sup> Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. <sup>2</sup> I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. <sup>3</sup> And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—<sup>4</sup> was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. <sup>5</sup> On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup> For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me. <sup>7</sup> 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! <sup>8</sup> Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. <sup>11</sup> I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. <sup>12</sup> The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. <sup>13</sup> For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!