

## ***Parables of Grace***

### **“THE OTHER SIDE OF GRACE”**

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

“And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget,  
falls drop by drop upon the heart,  
and in our despair, against our will  
comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.”

*Aeschylus, 6 C.B.C. Greek playwright*

My grace is sufficient for you  
and my strength (power) is made perfect in weakness

*Paul, 2 Corinthians 12:9*

### **WE TALK ABOUT GRACE ALWAYS AS AMAZING**

- Luke’s Gospel records the GRACE PARABLES (ch. 14-16)
- Salvation is a free gift of God’s grace (Ephesians 2:8,9)
- Grace is poured out lavishly on sinners (1 Timothy 1:12-16)

### **BUT**

1. Is it possible we will never really appreciate the amazing grace of God until we have experienced the awful grace of God?
2. Could there be 2 sides to the GRACE coin in the currency of God?

For example:

JESUS: Hebrews 5:8 – learned obedience through suffering  
Matthew 3:17 - 4:1 – tempted by the devil after baptism

JACOB: Genesis 32 – dislocation brought transformation

JOSEPH: Genesis 50:20– what you meant for evil, God meant for good

PAUL: 2 Corinthians 11:23-39 – great persecution and hardship

C.S. LEWIS: refers to God’s ‘tender mercies’ vs ‘severe mercies’

### **THE AWFUL SIDE OF GRACE** (2 Corinthians 12:1-8) - a “thorn” in his flesh.

1. What is this thorn? A restraining order from God?
  - His wife
  - Alexander, the coppersmith (2 Timothy 4:14)
  - Sexual temptations
  - Calvin/Luther → spiritual temptation
  - Scoliosis of his spine
  - Malarial fever
  - Eye trouble (Galatians 6:1)

Paul didn’t say what it was so we don’t know!
2. Why is this thorn sent into his life? Delivered by demonic angel...
  - To counteract “pride” (12:1-7) after exceptional spiritual revelations/experience
  - To convince him of his vulnerability
  - To experience God’s strength in the face of his weakness (10)
  - To understand the awful side of grace
  - To demonstrate God’s sovereign care of his own

### **GOD’S GRACE IS AMAZING**

- It saves a wretch like me

### **GOD’S GRACE IS ALSO AWFUL**

- produces Jesus’ character in me
- provides consistent victory in the trials of life
- provides strength (power) in weakness  
(no pain, no power – know pain, know power)

### ***Think About This...***

*Have you experienced the amazing grace of God?*

*What would you consider to be a “thorn” of awful grace in your life?*

*What steps can you take to let the Spirit turn your weakness into spiritual power?*