

Message Notes

Grace under fire

Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

Introduction - "When the going gets tough..."

Today's Message: *Grace under Fire*
2 Corinthians 12:1-10

The danger of boasting
2 Corinthians 12:1a

Paul's incredible spiritual high
2 Corinthians 12:1b-4

If it's true, then why don't talk about it?
2 Corinthians 12:5-6a

Paul's ultimate concern
2 Corinthians 12:6b

God's answer to keeping Paul grounded
2 Corinthians 12:7

What was Paul's thorn?

Paul's plea to take it away
2 Corinthians 12:8

Matthew 26:36-46

God's reply
2 Corinthians 12:9a

Paul's contentment with his deep struggles
2 Corinthians 12:9b-10

Gospel Application - "Pressing this incredible passage into your life"

1. The joys and dangers of spiritual highs
2. The absolute lie of prosperity theology
3. Delighting in our difficulties

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

¹I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.

Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. ³And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴was caught up to paradise.

He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. ⁵I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. ⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. ¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Matthew 26:36-46

³⁶Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

⁴⁰Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. ⁴¹"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." ⁴²He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." ⁴³When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. ⁴⁵Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

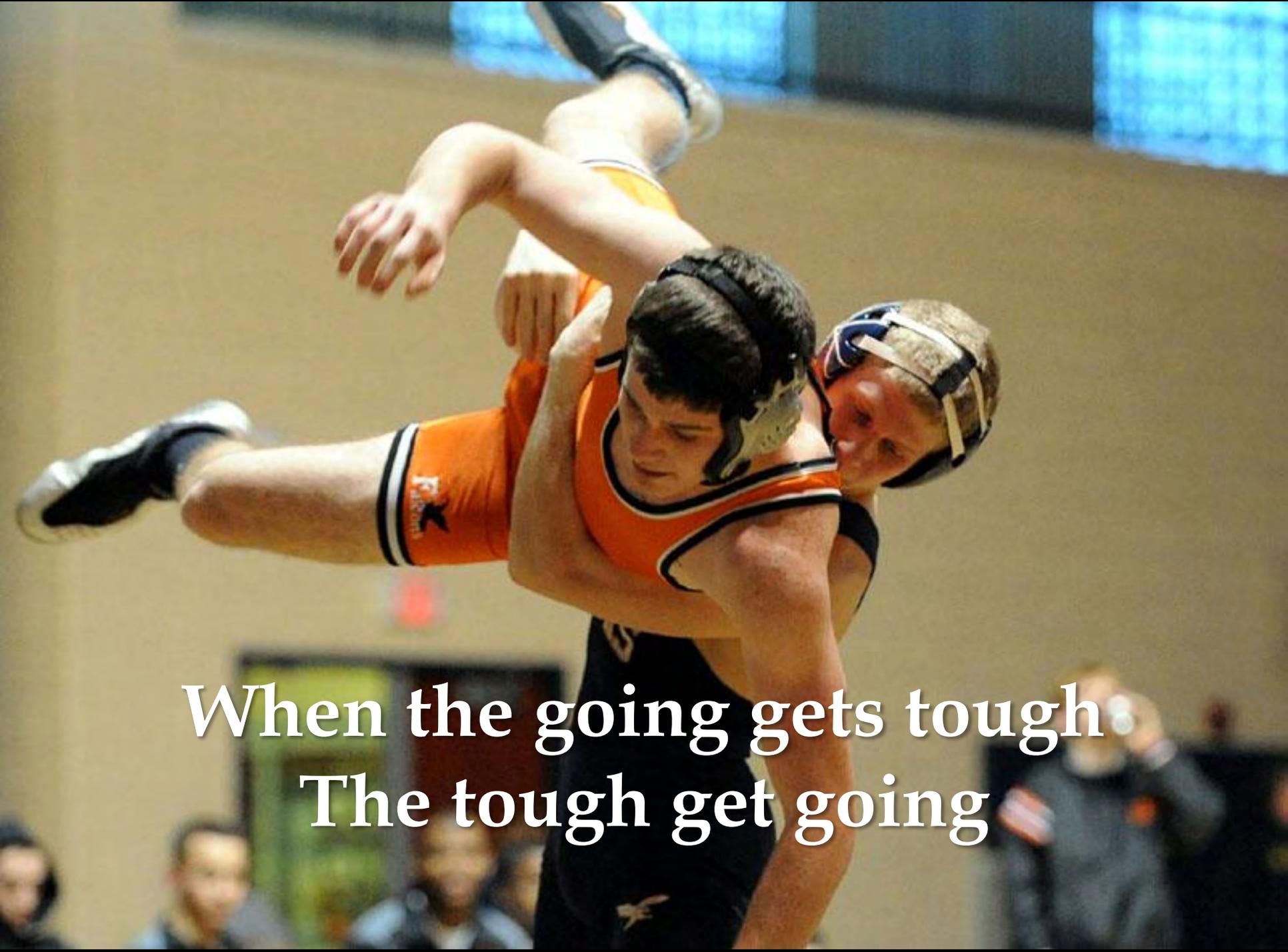
Romans 8:28-29

²⁸And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.



Congregational Vote
Sunday, August 26, 2012





When the going gets tough
The tough get going

A STUDY OF 2 CORINTHIANS



BRIDEZILLA RETURNS

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IN COLOR



**THE
JOYS &
PAINS
OF MINISTRY**

Last week's Message:
The Most Intense Pain in Ministry



2 Corinthians 11:16-33

²⁷I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

²⁸Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? ³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

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2 Corinthians 12:1-10

⁶Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. ⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

¹⁰That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

This week's Message:

GRACE

UNDER

FIRE

The danger of boasting

The danger of boasting

2 Corinthians 12:1a

¹I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained...

Paul's incredible spiritual high

Paul's incredible spiritual high

2 Corinthians 12:1b-4

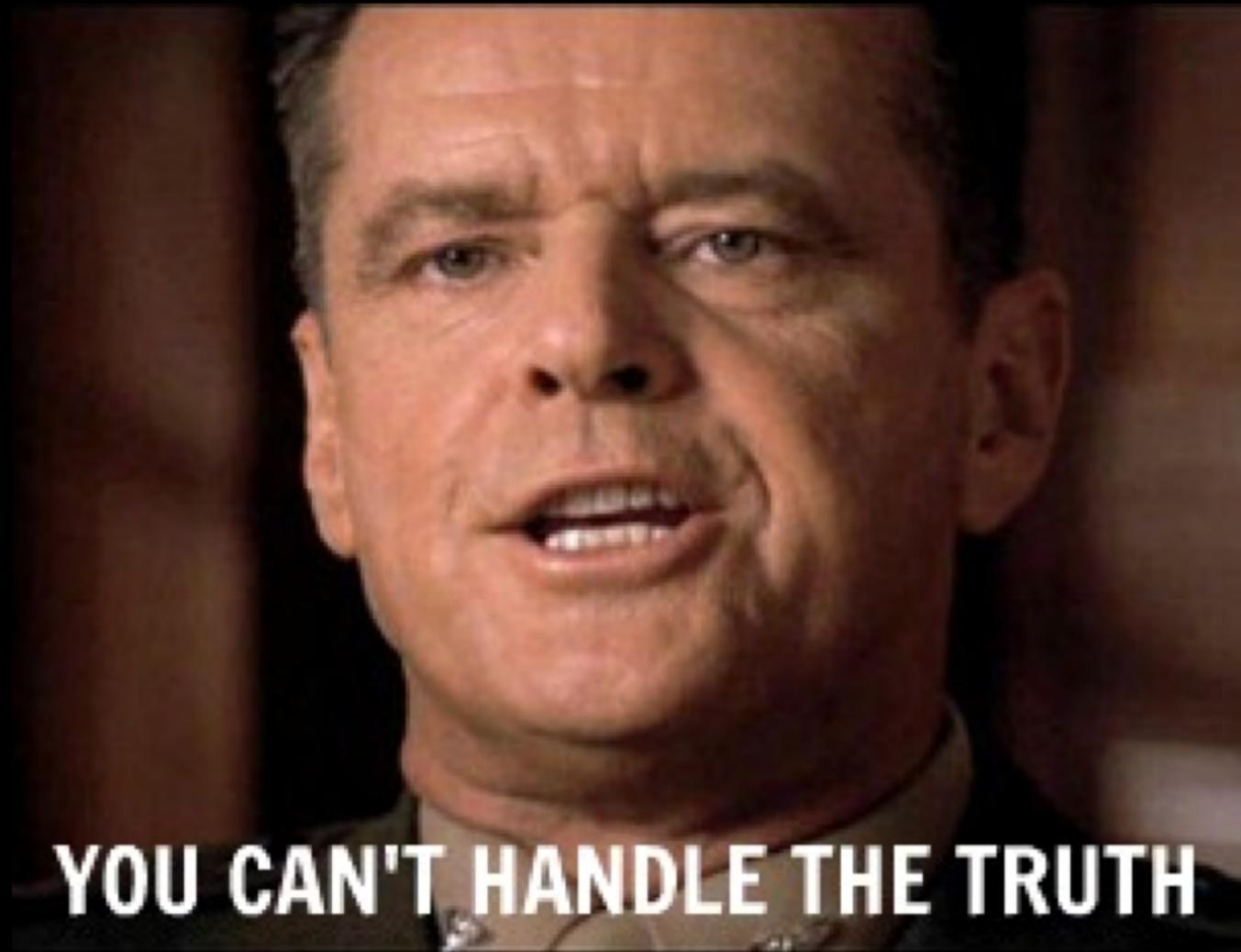
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If it's true, then why not talk about it?

If it's true, then why not talk about it?

2 Corinthians 12:5-6a

⁵I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth.



YOU CAN'T HANDLE THE TRUTH

Paul's ultimate concern

Paul's ultimate concern

2 Corinthians 12:6b

But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

God's answer to keeping Paul grounded

God's answer to keeping Paul grounded

2 Corinthians 12:7

⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

What was this thorn?



What was this thorn?

The word translated “thorn” (*skolops*) occurs only here in the New Testament. It refers to something pointed such as a stake for impaling, a medical instrument, or a thorn.

“Stake” would be a better translation, though “thorn” has dominated English renderings of the word.

~ David Garland, (1999). *Vol. 29: 2 Corinthians*. The New American Commentary, p. 519.

What was this thorn?

“the notion of something sharp and painful which sticks deeply in the flesh and in the will of God defies extracting.”

~ H. R. Minn, *The Thorn That Remained* (Auckland: Institute Press, 1972), p. 10.

What was this thorn?

Bodily ailment theory:

Debilitating illness of some kind – Galatians 3:13-14
[Pain in ear, head, malaria, epilepsy, eye problems]

What was this thorn?

Psychological Ailment theory:

Some personal anxiety or torment that left Paul deeply struggling with depression, anxiety attacks, despair and doubt.

What was this thorn?

Speech Handicap Theory:

Paul several time mentions this issue that he is “not a trained speaker”, nor was it with “wise and persuasive words” that he used when communicating. Could have been stuttering, speech impediment or other speech issues

What was this thorn?

Constant Opposition to the Gospel theory:

Paul is constantly in “danger from...” all kinds of things.
This theory states that these constant persecutions were
his thorn in the flesh.

What was this thorn?

The Temptation Theory

Some deep struggle with sin that left Paul feeling helpless in matters, like he was trapped.

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Some deep struggle with sin that left Paul feeling helpless in matters, like he was trapped.

Internet Porn

PRIDE

FATHER
GILLISPIE E.
OCT. 14, 1899
OCT. 30, 1984

MARRIED
DEC. 30,
1921

MOTHER
LOLA E.
NOV. 3, 1905
MAR. 29, 1990

Paul's plea to take it away

Paul's plea to take it away

2 Corinthians 12:8

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord
to take it away from me.

Matthew 26:36-46

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God's reply

REQUEST DENIED

God's reply

2 Corinthians 12:9a

⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

“Says God,

‘Here is one, if he could be rid of
this lust I should never hear of him more;
let him wrestle with this, or he is lost.’ “

~ John Owen, *Of The Mortification of Sin in Believers*, page 37.

God's reply

2 Corinthians 12:9a

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2 Corinthians 12:9a

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**Grace is not only "unmerited favor".
It is also a powerful force in your life!**

**Paul's contentment with his
deep struggles**

Paul's contentment with his deep struggles

2 Corinthians 12:9b-10

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

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Gospel Application

Gospel Application

Pressing this amazing passage into your life:

Gospel Application

Pressing this amazing passage into your life:

1. The joys and dangers of spiritual highs

Gospel Application

Pressing this amazing passage into your life:

1. The joys and dangers of spiritual highs
2. The absolute lie of prosperity theology

We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities, and everyone who has watched gluttons shoveling down the most exquisite foods as if they did not know what they were eating, will admit that we can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

~ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, p. 91

Gospel Application

Pressing this amazing passage into your life:

1. The joys and dangers of spiritual highs
2. The absolute lie of prosperity theology
3. Delighting in our difficulties

“God never allows pain without a purpose in the lives of His children. He never allows Satan, nor circumstances, nor any ill-intending person to afflict us unless He uses that affliction for our good. God never wastes pain. He always causes it to work together for our ultimate good, the good of conforming us more to the likeness of His Son (see Romans 8:28-29).”

~ Jerry Bridges - Transforming Grace, p. 139

Romans 8:28-29

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

