

**"GOD'S STRENGTH
IN MAN'S WEAKNESS"**

Introduction

1. This Letter of Paul's
2. The list of remarkable sufferings (ch.11)
3. Why Paul comes on to speak of this experience

1. AN EXALTING EXPERIENCE

- 1) A roundabout reference: v.2
- 2) "The third heaven": v.2
- 3) An experience in "paradise": See Rev. 4-5
- 4) The unlawfulness of speaking of it
- 5) The dangerous tendency of all this
APPLICATION:
 1. Some have remarkable experiences
 2. We must beware of fanaticism, e.g. tongue-speaking, healings...

APPLICATION:

Indwelling sin is always with us, even in the best believers.

2. A HUMBLING EXPERIENCE: v.6-9

- 1) Paul now speaks of a very different experience: "thorn in the flesh"
- 2) What was its nature? (a lust? / physical)
- 3) The agency:
 - (i) from God
 - (ii) from Satan
 - (iii) how to explain both

4) The motivation:

- (i) Satan's
- (ii) God's

5) Paul's request for its removal:

- (i) reason for it – even three times
- (ii) refusal by God

APPLICATION: God does not answer every prayer – for wise reasons

LESSONS:

1. experiences may harm our soul
2. pride is a deadly foe to grace

3. A RARE AND UNCOMMON DEDUCTION: v.9-10

1) God's revelation to Paul: v.9

OBSERVE: Grace is always sufficient to compensate us in our losses.

2) How God's "strength is made perfect"

- (i) in weakness we turn to God more
- (ii) in weakness we pray better
- (iii) in weakness we attend to God's word

APPLICATION: Felt weakness is not a harm to a believer's soul.

3) Paul's rule of conduct is very uncommon;

- (i) the things he does not take pleasure in
- (ii) the things he does: stated here
- (iii) when suffered for Christ

APPLICATION: To suffer for Christ is great blessing

CONCLUSION

1. Blessing often comes in disguise
2. Let us learn from Paul's experiences here.

PSALM

125: 1 – 5

132: 12 – 18

119: 140 – 144