

Humility, the Great Emptier

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

- [0 : 00] 2 Corinthians chapter 12. And we're going to read the first 10 verses of 2 Corinthians 12. The gospel turns all sorts of things on its head.
- ! I think you're going to see that in this passage. 2 Corinthians 12, 1-10. Paul speaks, I must go on boasting, although there is nothing to be gained.
- I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. I know a man in Christ who, 14 years ago, was caught up into the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know.
- God knows. And I know that this man, whether in the body or apart from the body, I do not know, but God knows, was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things.
- Things that man is not permitted to tell. I will boast about a man like that. But I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.
- [1 : 04] Even if I should choose to boast, I would 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.
- To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, that there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me.
- Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But 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.
- That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses and insults and hardships and persecutions and difficulties.
- [2 : 09] For when I am weak, then I am strong. Let's hear the word of God preached. Welcome back, Webbs.
- It's good to see you. Last week, we began a new series of studies on four graces of the Christian life. Four, Christ-like character qualities that God in his grace is working in his people and that we as his people are to be making every effort after.
- Three of those graces are the familiar triad of graces that are often grouped together in Scripture, faith, hope, and love. And the fourth is humility, which is the very foundation of all other Christian graces.
- As Augustine said, that the soul in which this virtue of humility is not found will not have any other virtue in it except in appearance, but not the real thing.
- So vital is humility to every other character quality, Christ-like character quality or grace in the Christian life. So these are not the only graces there are, but they are four prominent ones that we will be studying.
- [3 : 36] We're wanting to understand them better. We're wanting to grow in them so that being filled with these fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, glory might come to our Father.

Well, these graces of God's Spirit are active in the Christian's heart and life. They're doing things. And so we gave to each one of them a defining activity, one major thing that they do.

So I'd ask for the overhead at this point. And here are the four graces along with the one activity, the major activity that we're highlighting. So humility is the great emptier.

Humility is simply a right view of ourselves. Whereas pride is an inflated view, a puffed up view of ourself. Humility is a true view of ourself.

Whereas pride is a deceived view of ourselves. So humility then is the great emptier of pride.

[4 : 41] It empties us of our wrong and inflated views of self. And it just brings us right back down to reality, which is that we are poor and needy.

So that's humility. Say it with me. Humility, the great emptier. Just go right on through them. Faith, the great receiver.

Love, the great giver. And hope, the great motivator. I'm challenging you to memorize those as we make our way through them on these Lord's Days.

Well, last week we focused on the interaction between the first two. The way that humility and faith work together. How humility must empty if faith is to receive.

You remember how Gage stood here and how unable he was to receive all the gifts that I had to give him. Why was he unable? Because he was full. His hands were full.

[5 : 45] And until he emptied his hands, he could not receive what I had to give him. Well, that's a picture of how the gospel finds every one of us by nature.

It finds us full. Full of ourselves. Full of self-righteousness. Full of self-reliance. Self-will. Self-dependence.

Self-sufficiency. Self. All the other selves. That are just the expression of pride. So, in Jesus' parable of those two men who went into the temple to pray.

We saw that the Pharisee. He, too, was full of himself. Puffed up with himself. He was impressed, wasn't he? With his own righteousness. And he thought God ought to be impressed, too.

And he ought to accept him into heaven just because of what he had and had not done. Well, full of himself, he saw no need for mercy.

[6 : 46] He asked for none and he received none. But the tax collector who had lived a wicked life had been humbled by God. The grace of God had come to this heart and humbled him so that he had no good thing to say for himself.

I'm a sinner. He claimed no righteousness. He claimed no reason why God should ever accept him into his heaven. And with the empty hands of faith, he threw himself upon the mercy of God and received it.

Because we're told that man and not the other went home justified. That is, he went home declared right with God.

Not because of his own righteousness. But that righteousness of God which is by Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ received by faith alone. And Jesus closes out that parable by saying, For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.

And he who humbles himself will be exalted. So, humility and faith. Those two graces are essential at the outset of the Christian life as that parable of Jesus taught us.

[8 : 03] But what I want to demonstrate today is that these two same graces are needed at every step of the Christian life on our journey to heaven. We're constantly in need of the grace of humility to empty us of pride's high view of ourselves.

So that by faith, the empty hands of faith, we might receive all that we need from God. Now, these many forms of a proud view of self are not only sins of lost people.

We need to hear that. Sadly, they're also found in those who have been saved by Jesus Christ. So, for instance, though self-righteousness dominates in the lost.

It nevertheless remains in the saints to be battled with. And when it gains the upper hand, we need to be emptied of it.

Humbling ourselves. Confessing it. Renouncing it. And clinging to Christ's righteousness alone. Like the hearers of Jesus' parable in Luke 18, we too, as believers, can be full of the sin of confidence in our own righteousness that causes us to look down on everyone else.

[9 : 23] Let's see how this works out in the life of one of God's people. A choice servant of God. We go back 3,500 years to Aaron.

Aaron. The brother of Moses. The leaders of Israel. And God has led them out of bondage in Egypt.

He's taking them safely through the Red Sea. And he's brought them out in the desert to Mount Sinai. And there God gathered this newborn nation into a covenant with himself and himself audibly proclaimed the Ten Commandments to them.

And they were terrified. So scared that they said, Moses, don't let this happen again. You go talk to God. And then you bring back to us what God has said so that we do not die.

Well. That's what happened. And Moses goes up the mountain. Well. To meet with God while Aaron and the Israelites are waiting down below.

[10 : 30] But he was so long in coming down from the mountain. Forty days in all that the people grew impatient and they gathered around Aaron saying, come. Make us gods who will go before us.

As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt. We don't know what has happened to him. So Aaron said, take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and daughters are wearing and bring them to me.

When they did, he took what they had handed him and he made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf. Fashioning it with a tool.

Now remember that. It's important to the story. He took the gold. He melted it down. And in liquid form, he poured it into a casting in the shape of a calf.

So that when it cooled, it came out looking like a calf, but sort of like a calf. So he took a tool and he really worked it over to make it look more like a calf. And then.

[11 : 31] The people said, these are your gods, oh, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. So Aaron built an altar in front of the calf and he called for sacrifices and a festival to Jehovah the next day.

Clearly in violation of the second commandment that God thundered from Sinai. That Israel was not allowed to worship Jehovah in the ways that the nations did. Channeling their worship through idols.

But that's what they're doing now. So the people got up early. They made their sacrifices. They sat down to eat and drink. And they got up to indulge in revelry. Dancing and running wild.

Well, about that time, Moses is coming down the mountain. After the 40 days. And when he sees what's going on, he's angry. He takes the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments and throws them down, breaking them to pieces.

He then gets a hold of this golden calf. And he burns it and ground up the gold to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

[12 : 37] And now it's accountability time. And he comes to his brother Aaron. And he says, what did these people do to you? That you led them into such great sin.

Now, I want you to listen to Aaron's response and tell me what he's full of. Okay? Aaron says, do not be angry, my Lord. You know how prone these people are to evil.

They said to me, make us gods who will go up before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him. True? Yeah. So I told them, whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.

True? Yeah. And then they gave me the gold and I threw it into the fire and out came this calf. True? False.

False. What is Aaron full of? He's full of self-righteousness. I mean, really full at this moment.

[13 : 48] And that's why he's so defensive. And that's why he's denying his sin. Why he's twisting the truth. Why he's pointing the finger at the people instead of confessing his own sin.

Why? All to justify himself. That is, to declare himself righteous. It's incredible what ends he will go to to cling to the delusion of his own self-righteousness.

I just threw these earrings into the fire and voila, out came this calf. It was amazing, Moses.

You should have seen it. No, what's amazing is the ends to which you will go, Aaron, to hold on to your self-righteousness. Your innocence. The sin of self-righteousness.

It's far more pervasive in Christians than we may realize. It's what makes us ultra-sensitive to any criticism, any accusation, any blame, any guilt laid at our door.

[14 : 58] And it sets us immediately to defending ourselves. Wasn't me. I didn't do anything wrong. Blaming others. They did this. He said that. Twisting the truth.

Yes, lying. To make us look good. To maintain this righteous self-image. When God and we know differently about us.

I wonder if you are familiar with that self-defense lawyer within, as Paul Tripp calls him. Have you seen him?

Have you heard him? How quick he is, as soon as we're accused of anything. Rises up to defend us. Now, we can understand why the unconverted do this.

They're still under the covenant of works. Do you realize that? They're still under the covenant that Adam and Eve were under. That they must obey everything. They must obey everything. If they're to have life.

[16 : 05] And if they just mess up in one thing. It's damnation. So you see why they must defend themselves. They can't be guilty.

Their eternity. Their whole self-worth depends upon their performance. Oh, but the believer has the remedy for sin. It's the perfect righteousness of Christ.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us. So that we could become the righteousness of God.

You see, it's Christ's perfect obedience to that law of God. That he deserved eternal life.

And so he has eternal life to give. He has perfect obedience to give. And not only did he obey perfectly. He also took the punishment that we deserve for not obeying.

[17 : 03] And that's the righteousness. His blood and righteousness that we've come to put our trust in. We renounced all righteousness of our own, didn't we?

Just like the tax collector. And we came and we said, Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I claim. I don't claim any goodness in me. I look away to what Jesus has done for me.

A poor sinner in need of mercy. That's how we got in. That's how we became Christians. We came humbled.

And with empty hands of faith received Christ and his righteousness in exchange for our sins. So being justified by faith in Christ, we don't have to try to justify ourselves anymore.

When we sin as Aaron did, and we do, And we're called out by the Holy Spirit, or by others, or by our conscience, we can readily admit it.

[18 : 08] Owning it is our sin. Confessing it. Calling it what God calls it. And so by faith, receiving the forgiveness and the cleansing from all unrighteousness that's found in Christ.

We are Christians precisely because we reputed any claim to self-righteousness and threw ourselves as guilty sinners upon a Savior that was perfect and had died for sinners.

How strange then that afterwards we should ever revert to trying to justify ourselves. Trying to maintain an image of righteousness.

And to defend our sinlessness. Do you see how we need to continue to live upon Christ? And his righteousness. We continue to need the grace of humility to be emptied of our own self-righteousness that's so quick to defend ourselves.

We continually need faith to look away from anything in us. And to look away to him who has all the grace, the forgiveness, the power, the righteousness that I need.

[19 : 15] And to receive it from him. You see, the real Christian can afford to own his sin. We have a Savior for them. The poor unbeliever.

He needs to defend himself. Since he has no Savior. But himself. So we have this ongoing need of humility and faith as the answer for our self-righteousness.

But we need humility not only to empty us of self-righteousness. We also need it to empty us of self-reliance. Self-sufficiency. And here we go to Peter.

On the night of Christ's betrayal, he's preparing his men for the event. His betrayal. Arrest. Trial. Condemnation. Crucifixion. Death. All these things threaten to shatter their faith.

So he's telling them about it. And he tells them, one of you is going to betray me. And then as they're looking around wondering who is it. He says, all of you.

[20 : 22] This very night. Will fall away. On account of me. And Peter replied, even if all fall away from you.

I never will. Maybe these other guys. Whose devotion is not quite as good as mine. But I never will. Never me.

And Jesus answered Peter. Okay, Peter. You say so? I tell you the truth. This very night before the rooster crows. You will disown me three times.

Peter's not done. We see just how tightly we hold to self-reliance. Even if I have to die with you, Lord.

I will never disown you. And lest we think Peter's worse than the others. We just need to read the next line. And all the other disciples said the same. You see, this self-reliance.

[21 : 25] Was shot through the whole bunch. Peter's full of himself. Relying on self. Confident of the strength of his own devotion.

To carry him through any trial. No doubt he really felt that devotion that night in the upper room. Jesus had just washed their feet.

He said, you will not wash me. And he says, if I don't wash you, you don't have any part of me. Then all of me. I'm going to wash you tomorrow at Calvary. That was the point. This was a picture of that.

But I will wash your feet now. Peter's seeing something of the humility and love of his Savior for him. He's ready to die for him that night. But he's proudly overestimating his own strength of devotion.

And he's way underestimating his own weakness in the face of temptation. So how does God teach the grace of humility? How does he empty us of self-confidence?

[22 : 29] Well, sometimes it's just by letting us see how far we can go. Leaning on our own strength. The disciples didn't even make it through the night. All of them abandoned Christ and ran for their lives.

John and Peter circled back around to where Jesus was being tried. Peter was incognito until someone recognized him and asked him if he was not one of these followers of Jesus.

No, I don't know the man. And the first denial that tumbled out of his mouth just led the way for two more. And the last one, he added oaths calling on God to curse him if he ever did know this man, Jesus of Nazareth.

And then the rooster crowed. And Jesus, from his standing point, turned and looked eyes with Peter. Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Humbled. Emptied. Of the pride of his self-sufficiency. The strength of my devotion. Stripped from him.

[23 : 38] He didn't make it far, did he? Leaning on his own strength. His high view of self was shattered. And remember, it wasn't just Peter. It was all the rest.

This is the 12. This is the cream of the crop. Those who spent three years in the school of Jesus. Living with and learning from the humblest man that ever walked the planet.

How we Christians still need the emptying grace of humility. So sometimes our proud view of self has us leaning on our own righteousness. Like Aaron. And hence so self-defensive.

Other times our proud view of sense has us leaning on our own strength. A la Peter. As we've just seen him. And at other times it has us leaning on our own wisdom.

And understanding. Like Joshua. Like Joshua. Now God knows our propensity to this sin. And so he tells us.

[24 : 40] In Proverbs 3.5. Trust in the Lord. With all your heart. And lean not on your own understanding. He knows we have this tendency to lean on our own understanding.

So Joshua. He was conquering the nations in the promised land like God told them to do. They were forbidden to make a treaty with any nation in the promised land.

And Joshua is on a roll. They had a hiccup with Ai where Achan kept some of the devoted things. But that was confessed and dealt with and judged. And now they're back on to victories and victories.

And these Gibeonites are scared to death. Because they can see the trajectory. That they're going to be curtains in just a matter of weeks. And so they sent a delegation to Israel.

And to Joshua. Saying that they had come from a country of a long distance away. And they wanted to make a treaty with him. Not here in this land. No. We're from a distance. You see this dry moldy bread.

[25 : 40] It was fresh and warm from the oven when we left. And you see these wine skins all cracked and dried. They were brand new when we left. And you can see what the heat and the long trip has done to our sandals and our clothes.

That they were lying through their teeth. In fact, they were a neighboring people nearby. And then we have this tell-all statement.

Joshua and the leader sampled their provisions but did not inquire of the Lord. Did not inquire. No, their heads were too full of their own wisdom to see any need of seeking wisdom from God.

We don't need to pray about this one, fellas. We've got it. We can detect deception a mile away. But they missed it.

So they examined the evidence. And they made a peace treaty with them. And they ratified it with an oath. They leaned on their own understanding. God's wisdom wasn't sought.

[26 : 49] And so it wasn't given. And they lived to regret it. They needed humility, you see, to empty them of leaning on their own wisdom and understanding.

And instead to turn from their emptiness to the fullness of wisdom that's found in the all-wise God. And to inquire of Him what they should do with these Gibeonites.

David also learned the hard way, didn't he? When he was bringing up the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Oh, I can make plans on my own. I think we'll have a new cart made. Yes, that's what we'll do. And that's what he did. He made a new cart. And he found a team of oxen to pull that cart and to transport that.

And we'll have a parade. And we'll have music and singing. And then the oxen stumbled. And Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark.

[27 : 55] And the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah. And he struck him down because he had put his hand on the Ark. And so he died there before the Lord. And David was angry.

Because God's wrath had rained on his happy parade. Three months later, a much more humbled David went again to fetch the Ark.

He'd given it up and left it in the home of Obed-Edom. And God blessed Obed-Edom for three months. And now David's going back to fetch the Ark and bring it up to Jerusalem. But this time there's no Ark.

There's no cart. There's no oxen. There's only Levites carrying the Ark of God. And our problem the first time, David says, was that we did not inquire of God about how to do it in the prescribed way.

You see, it had been prescribed. It had been written in the law of Moses. And we didn't ask God. We didn't inquire. So here he is now, the second time, humbled, emptied of his own wisdom.

[29 : 08] He turns away from his own ideas. And looks in faith to God for his. And he finds it in God's word. That's where wisdom speaks.

And so David waits at the doors of wisdom. And he, oh, yes. The Ark is to only be carried by the Levites. And only with these poles that go through the rings on it.

So that they do not touch it. And so the Levites carried the Ark of God with the poles on their shoulders. As Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord. First Chronicles 15, 15.

The grace of humility emptied him from leaning on his own ideas. So that faith's empty hands might look to God and receive wisdom from God.

Now, all these examples should say at least this much to us. That this is not just a problem of lost sinners. This high view of self.

[30 : 10] Self-righteousness, self-reliance, self-wisdom, and all the other selves. They're not rare problems with followers of Jesus either. These have an insidious way of worming into our own hearts.

Where we get to thinking way too highly of ourselves. In fact, there was a whole church full of them down in Laodicea. Revelation chapter 3.

Now, this is one of Christ's own churches. We talk about church plants. This is a church plant by the Lord Jesus. The head of the church. And it's true that Jesus does threaten them in this letter that he sends to them in Revelation 3.

He threatens to vomit them out if they do not repent. But at this point, they are still regarded as his own church. And it shows us just how bad off we Christians can be.

Notice their high views of themselves and how far out of touch they were with reality. With the true view of themselves. It's the difference between what they said about themselves and what they really were.

[31 : 18] Listen. Revelation 3.17. The church at Laodicea. You say, I am rich. I have acquired wealth. And do not need a thing.

But you do not realize that you are wretched. Pitiful. Poor. Blind. And naked.

In other words, in need of everything. What you say, I am in need of nothing. And what you are, in need of everything.

Those are worlds apart. And sometimes what we think about ourselves and what is really true about ourselves have no resemblance at all. That's what happened in Laodicea.

You don't have a clue how needy you are, Jesus is telling them. And when you don't need, you don't pray. Only needy people pray.

[32 : 20] Do Christians and churches really get such smug, self-satisfied, over-inflated views of themselves? You bet they do. That's why Jesus wrote this letter. That's why it's still in our Bibles.

To instruct every other church that professes Jesus Christ as head. And so Jesus writes the letter to wake us up from this delusionary dream that we are self-sufficient and in need of nothing.

It was meant to call them back to reality. To bring them right back down to their feet on the real planet. This is the way things are. To humble them.

To empty them. Their vain thinking that they didn't need a thing. Now, do you know that Christ was all that they needed? Do you know he's everything that you need?

All that I need is in Jesus. He satisfies. Every need supplies. Life would be worthless without him.

[33 : 25] All things in Jesus, I find. And that's what he tells them. You say you have need of nothing. You have tremendous needs.

And so I counsel you. But you see, they were so full. They had the luggage of self-righteousness and all this other self-reliance. So that they couldn't receive anything from Christ.

Though he was full for them. And so Jesus says to them, I counsel you to buy from me. You see, you're hanging on to your own stuff. And I counsel you to buy from me.

The same way he counseled them in Isaiah 55. To buy without price. Without money. Come to Jesus Christ and buy. What should we buy from Jesus?

You see, you need to see that what you need is not in you, but it's in me. It's humbling, isn't it, to acknowledge that I am poor and needy.

[34 : 21] I need, I need, I need. It's me. It's me, oh Lord. Standing in need.

So come and buy from me. Buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you can become rich.

Really rich. With true spiritual riches to have me as your portion and your eternal inheritance. And I counsel you to come to me and buy from me white clothes to wear.

So you can cover your shameful nakedness. Robes of real righteousness. Not these delusionary dreams of your own righteousness. Real righteousness that God can look at and say, there's nothing wrong here.

And buy from me salve to put on your eyes so you can see. See life as it really. See yourself with true wisdom and understanding. So come.

[35 : 26] All this is found outside of yourselves. You don't have it. It's in me. So come to me and receive it from me. You see, we bring empty hands of faith to receive this from him.

It's only those who are self-consciously poor and needy, though, that will come to God seeking and receiving with the empty hands of faith. Now, that's what drives a man or woman to pray.

You see, it's a sense of need. Listen to David. Psalm 40 and verse 17. I'm poor and needy. May the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer.

86.1. Hear, O Lord. Answer me, for I am poor and needy. 107.21 and 22. O sovereign Lord, deal well with me. For your name's sake and out of the goodness of your love, deliver me.

For I am poor and needy. Do you know I am never less than poor and needy?

[36 : 28] I'm never more than poor and needy. I am poor and needy. What a contrast with our prayerlessness that says, I have need of nothing.

Now, of course, we don't say that to God. But it's what our prayerlessness says, loud and clear. I have need of nothing. That's why you haven't heard from me for a few days.

I'm doing fine. I'm rich. I have all I need. I have need of nothing outside of myself. Humility.

The great emptier. I'm poor and needy. So, Lord, please have mercy. Have mercy on me. Oh, for more of that habitual self-awareness that I don't have what I need, but he does.

But he does. You know what a pivot is? Basketball. Some of you ever play basketball? You go in one direction and you plant your pivot foot. And you pivot and you go off in a different direction.

[37 : 41] And that's what we have here with humility and faith. You see, we're going along smug and self-satisfied. I have need of nothing. And then we're humble.

And that's the pivot foot. And we turn from our emptiness to his fullness. And with empty hands, we come and receive his fullness because he's ready to give out of his fullness of all we received in grace upon grace.

But he gives grace to the humble. According to Jesus, that's the first beatitude marking the citizens of his kingdom.

They are poor in spirit. There's a spiritual poverty about them. They know. They don't have what it takes. I need forgiveness.

I need. I need. I need everything that God has to give. I need forgiveness. I need forgiveness. I said it.

[38 : 44] And I'll say it again. I need forgiveness. I need forgiveness today. For my sins today. I need forgiveness. I need cleansing.

From this vile heart and mind and thoughts. And. I don't have either one forgiveness or cleansing. I need healing of my waywardness.

That propensity to step out of the way and to try my own way for a while. Some by-path meadow. I need healing from that waywardness. I need wisdom.

I need strength. I need righteousness beyond my own. I need help in everything I do. I can't do anything right without Jesus. Isn't that what he taught us?

John 15 5. I am the vine. You are the branches. And. Apart from me. You. Can do.

[39 : 44] Nothing. Nothing. I can't father. You can't mother. You can't obey father and mother.

I can't work. I can't play. I can't plan. I can't pray. I can't worship. I can't love my friends. Let alone my enemies. I can't be patient. Forbearing.

Forgiving. I can't consider others better than me. I can't think straight. I can't eat and drink or drive or shop as I ought. I can't create one holy thought or desire.

I can't do anything without Christ. How often is the branch dependent upon the vine? Always.

And for everything. Right? And that's why in all my ways I'm to acknowledge him. Acknowledge my need of him. Acknowledge that he has what I need. Not leaning on my own understanding.

[40 : 44] Wisdom. Strength. Talent. Experience. To get me through. No. It's from morning to evening. Learning to lean on Jesus. Abiding. Remaining in him.

Communing. Union and communion with Christ. Drawing from him. All that I need. I don't have it in me. But I have it in him. I can't do anything without him.

But I can do all things with him. And through him. As Philipians 4.13 says. I can be strong in the Lord. And in his mighty power. Ephesians 6.10.

Then I must have Christ. I must have that divine sap. That flows from the vine. Out to the branches. So how do I draw from Christ. All that I need.

Well I look to him. With faith. That are now the empty hands of faith. To receive from him. With no delusion.

[41 : 46] That I can have it. Some other way. Than in Christ. And so in Christ alone. I come. And put my confidence. And I receive.

From him. Now sometimes God teaches us. Humility by taking us. Into overwhelming trials. That are far beyond. Our ability to endure. That's what Paul says. In 2nd Corinthians chapter 1.

And he will empty us. By taking us into. Those kind of trials. No strength. No strength. To deal with this sort of thing.

No wisdom. It's so overwhelming. I don't even know. What to do. Where to start. Where to. Start thinking. About this situation. I've never been here before.

That's his way of emptiness. So that faith might look away. From ourselves. To God himself. Who knows all things. And receive from him. All that we need.

[42 : 50] Now King Jehoshaphat. Is an example of this for us. He had a whole coalition of nations. Come to make war against Judah. He's the king you see. And he's alarmed by it. To see the vast numbers.

Of this army. That's coming against him. And he resolved. To inquire of the Lord. Now we've heard that. Three times this morning. The other two. They didn't inquire of the Lord.

He resolved to inquire of the Lord. And so he called a national fast. Called all the people. To fast and to pray. He had them gather together. To seek the Lord.

And then King Jehoshaphat. Wouldn't this be wonderful. Led them in prayer. Crying out to him in distress.

To hear. And to save them. Now I want you to listen. For his emptiness. That turns him away. From any kind of self-help. Wisdom or power. And instead turns him in faith.

[43 : 46] Number two. To receive help from the Lord. Listen to his prayer. Or God. Will you not judge them? Look at them. You see them. Will you not judge them? For we have no power.

To face this vast army. That is attacking us. We do not know. What to do. No wisdom. But our eyes.

Are upon you. You see. Emptiness. In ourselves. And our eyes. Are upon you. And we are reaching our hands out.

To receive from you. All the wisdom. All the power. That we need. For this battle. And that is what they received. You see the pivot again. Away from any power.

And wisdom in ourselves. Our eyes are on you. On you. And God gave them. They did receive from him. An amazing victory. That only God could do.

[44 : 44] I doubt that you are going to be up. Against the battle of Munites. And Ammonites. And Moabites. And all the other bites. That were fighting against. Jehoshaphat that day. But I will bet. Somewhere in your trials.

You are having to deal with some people. It is just that way. We do not live on the planet alone. We are all sinners. And some are worse than others. And can get under our skin.

And we have to figure it out. No we don't. We say I have no wisdom. I have no power. My eyes are on you Lord. Teach me. Help me. Strengthen me. So sometimes God leads us into trials.

To empty us. Sometimes a severe trial is sent. Not to empty us of pride in ourselves. So much as to keep us from growing proud. In ourselves. And that is what we had in 2 Corinthians.

Chapter 12. Verses 1 through 10. Paul had these great. Visions. Revelations. Of heaven.

[45 : 42] And he says. So that. I might not become conceited. Get the big head. Become proud. Because of these surpassingly great.

Revelations. There was given to me a thorn in the flesh. A messenger of Satan to torment me. Would God really send.

A messenger from Satan. To torment his dear servant. Yes. Yes. If it would keep him. Humble. Humble.

Able to go on receiving. From God. Rather than to allow him to get puffed up. Because of all the. The spiritual gifts.

And blessings. That God had bestowed upon his servant. And he. Paul begged three times for the Lord to take it away. And he didn't. He just said. My grace will be sufficient for you.

[46 : 41] For my. My power is made perfect in weakness. All that Paul might be kept from the delusion that. He had. In himself.

What he needed. No. Paul you don't. My grace. My grace is sufficient for you. And my power. Is made perfect. In your weakness. So Paul came to see that.

My weakness is no disadvantage. For me. And Christian. Your weakness. Is no disadvantage. That. That painful thorn. That thing that just. You can't.

But help feel it. Like a thorn. That's stuck. In your finger. That thing is no disadvantage. To you. In fact.

Those things. Are the kinds of things. That we can learn. To gladly. Rejoice in. If they will do.

[47 : 38] What they were sent to do. To keep us low. To keep us empty. To keep us humble. So that we can go on. Receiving from God. And being.

Blessed. Can then be a blessing. To others. Blessed thorn. Blessed weakness. If used.
To keep us proud. From proudly. Relying on ourselves. And instead. Sends us running.
With the open hands of faith. To receive from Jesus Christ. To have his power.

Rest on us. So where are you? Have you been to Jesus. With nothing good to say. For
yourself. Maybe that's where you need to be. This morning.

First time. I see now Lord. That you're so holy. And I'm so sinful. That the only way for. Me
to get into heaven. To pass the muster. Is if Jesus. Would give me. His righteousness.

[48 : 33] And if he would be damned. Instead of me. Because. I have sinned. And that's what I
deserve. So I come. With nothing good. To say of myself. Just. God have mercy on me. A
sinner.

For Jesus sake. And as our pastor said earlier. He will rejoice. To welcome you home. He
delights. To give salvation. To such humble sinners.

And. And. And maybe. You've been a Christian. For many many years. And you've seen
in a new way. Your own self-righteousness. Your own self-reliance. Your own self. Your
own self. Wisdom. And you say.

I need to come strict again. I need to come. And just. Recognize. I don't have it. And to
look to Jesus. Who does have.

Everything that you need. So. A moment of consecration. Let's bow our heads. And. And
have dealings. With this savior. Turn from your emptiness.

[49 : 30] To his fullness. Yes. Yes. Confess your need. And trust. In his provision.
From heaven.

The Lord looks down. On all mankind. From his dwelling place. He watches all who live on
earth. He forms the hearts of all. Who considers everything they do.

Lord. You see our thoughts. Our thoughts about you. Our thoughts about ourselves. About
our righteousness. Our goodness. Our abilities.

Our wisdom. And we do confess. Lord. That we. We need you. This is a grace. This
humility. We've been talking about. Is not something.

[50 : 30] We can work up. We can't even get to first base. It's a grace of humility. So give it to us.
We pray. To see our emptiness. And give us grace.

To see in Jesus Christ. Everything that we need. That. That this would be. The default
setting. Of our hearts. From the beginning.

Of each day. Till we pillow our heads at night. To live as needy people. Upon a rich. And
generous king. For your glory.

For our good. For. For the good of others around us. Bless us. That we might be a
blessing. That we might receive from you. And then therefore. Give out of love to others.
We ask this in Jesus powerful name.

And for his sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well it's a wonderful thing. For poor and needy
sinners. To find a promise in the Bible. That says that he will.

[51 : 25] Indeed provide. All that we have need of. We sing it. From the overhead. The Lord will
provide. Let's stand. Confess our confidence. In. What he has.

I love the last verse. No strength of our own. No goodness we claim. The Lord is our
power. The Lord will provide. Thank you. Amen.