

# The Upside Down Kingdom: Strength through Weakness

Wylie United Methodist Church

Pastor Jeff Hatcher – February 7, 2016

## 2 Cor 12:2-10

2 I 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. 3 And I know that this man — whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— 4 was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. 5 I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6 Even 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. 7 To 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. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 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. 10 That 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.

In God's upside down kingdom...

## 1. THORNS INSPIRE RELIANCE UPON GOD

2 Cor 12:8, 5

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

5 ... I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.

In God's upside down kingdom...

## 2. THORNS KEEP US HUMBLE AND PRODUCE GROWTH

2 Cor 12:7, 10

7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh... 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties...

James 1:2-4

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

In God's upside down kingdom...

## 3. THORNS REVEAL GOD'S POWER

2 Cor 12:9-10

9 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. 10... when I am weak, then I am strong.