

Oct 10th:Miracles Book No.12: Understanding God's No: 1Cor 12:1-10

Throughout this service.....sought to encounter.....

But it is esp at this point.....where we ask the HS to open our ears to God's word
That God delights to bless us with His thoughts....His message....explanation

PRAYER

I said b4.....that the passage of Scripture..(2 Cor 12:1-10).....is in fact....Paul..
Sharing with us an encounter He had.....and the understanding He finally took..

But in approaching...passage

We need to recognize.....that Paul writes....as a man under immense pressure

He had been the spiritual father for...& had spent a long period of time...establishing
His purpose in doing....was not to gain glory....but to present to Jesus a group..
Pleasing to Him.....A bride fit for such a glorious husband

That's what he says in 11:2.....

(*Film The Wedding Planner.....That's her job...*)

But in the church at Corinth something dreadful was happening

Paul explains it in this way in v3.....

What happened in the garden.....was likely to be repeated.....church at.....

In that leaders had come in....and were attempting to deceive....

By destroying Paul's reputation.....& thus nulifying the teaching...GIVEN....

These leaders were exhorting themselves.....boasting about all manner of things

(Paul labels them as "Super Apostles")

➔denigrating Paul as weak.....and accusing him of things...just not true

(*Film Titanic.....Leonardo's character.....For your sake....don't believe him*)

It is that same pressure.....that Paul expresses in this letter
He is really saying.....for the sake of your salvationdon't believe them

But Paul also realises that for the sake of the Gospel.....it is not enough just to say..
he must also defend himself..
and it is this that is tearing him apart

PAUL didn't want to have to reel off...list after list of his achievements....
That's what the false apostles.....were so good at
(I remember being in the audience.....)

And that's the way Paul was too
His desire was to talk about Jesus.....not himself

That these Corinthian believers
would follow after Jesus.....in a pure...dedicated....committed fashion
Was what was important

Not which leader was the best speaker...did the most miracles...attracted the biggest
Or got paid the most money

So you can see the level of pressure.....Paul was under....as he wrote this letter

BUT THEN...it's this very pressure.....that motivates Paul to share.....
A personal encounter.....that transformed his way of looking at His achievements

IT all began with claims ofthat they saw powerful visions....that proved authority..

If you want a leader that has seen visions.....says Paul....I can show you such a man
14 years ago that man was caught up to the third
He heard inexpressible things there

ARE YOU IMPRESSED.....(I can imagine Paul stopping....smiling...)

Then he continues on.....and we have what he wrote b4 us.....v7.....

What a turn up for the books

Given this wonderful Vision.....Surely empowered for great ministry.....
Ready to go and conquer the world for Jesus

Then bang.....I'm given a thorn in the flesh...a messenger of Satan

Many have tried to work out what that was.....The most likely....from Galatians
Very bad eyesight.....near blindness

It was something Paul never stopped being conscious of
Something he saw at first as restricting his ministry.....Used by Satan to negatively affect

The word THORN.....has the meaning of a sharpened post

What Paul did next was predictable

A man of great faith....and belief.....used by God to even raise the dead
He pleaded with the Lord to take it away

Yet it remained.....So he pleaded again.....And still it stayed

He saw no benefit in it remaining.....calling it A messenger of Satan...torment
So for the third time.....he pleaded

He knew that God had to remove.....

It was the only possible answer.....if God truly wanted him to be effective in ministry

Paul was telling God in prayer....what God should do

& think how often we have done that !!!!!

That's when he encountered God

God's voice touched his heart like a thunderbolt

It may well have been.....Third ...made him think about Gethsemene

Whatever.....He stopped to listen.....**And he heard God speaking to him → v9**

The Greek tense used here suggests.....that God had been saying to Paul for sometime

I am not taking this thorn from you.....This painful, humiliating, debilitating....

Because my Grace is sufficient.....Only going to discover that.....times of weakness

And whether you can see it or not.....its those times when life is hard

When ministry is such a colossal struggle...

and you only get thro...because u pray every step of the way...

THAT'S WHEN YOU ARE MOST EFFECTIVE.....When my power is made perfect

(I could not but think here of Jonnie Erickson....)

The Lord spoke to Paul then.....But He uses Paul...speak to us now

To remind us that in our desperate prayers

We need often to stop and listen

For God may well be holding back the answer we think.....

So that we can experience the true power of His enabling Grace

He truly loves each.....& what you are going thro.....**doesn't mean**...love any less

But that He has a plan...use u thro this...Bring u joy.....last for ever

**Open my eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth You have for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp, and set me free:**

***Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready my God, Your will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!***

**Open my ears that I may hear
Voices of truth You sendest clear;
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear
Ev'ry-thing false will disappear:**

***Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready my God, Your will to see;
Open my heart, illumine me,
Spirit divine***