**Sermon Research: Week 2**

**The Rescuer** – Sword

The God I Want is… a God that will destroy any hardship in my life

BUT… The Messiah arrived in the middle of hardship, is present in the middle of my hardship, and doesn’t always take away my hardships

**Ideas:**

Breaking down each passage, identifying what “The God I Want” passages actually mean, but focusing on “The Messiah” passages.

**Main Points:**

* The Rescuer VS.  **True Rescue**
  + Point #1 - The Messiah will not rescue us from every hardship we face
  + Point #2 - The Messiah is with us through every hardship we face
  + Point #3 - The Messiah will rescue us from hardship in the end

**CORE SCRIPTURE:**

“I was given 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.” (NIV 2 Co 12:7–10)

**Other Scriptures:**

“1 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,

they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

3 For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;” (NIV Is 43:1–3)

James 1:2-4 **2**Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-30269a)] whenever you face trials of many kinds, **3**because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. **4**Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Romans 5:3-5 - **3**Not only so, but we[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=romans%205%3A3-5&version=NIV#fen-NIV-28051a)] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4**perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5**And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good,  
    a refuge in times of trouble.  
He cares for those who trust in him,

Matthew 28:20 **20**..And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

2 Peter 3:13 **13**But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

**QUESTIONS TO FIND QUOTES ON:**

* What was Paul’s thorn in his flesh?
* What kinds of hardships did the apostles/twelve/disciples face? And should we expect hardships in this life?
* What is the relationship between weakness or hardship and Christ’s power?

“Paul immediately explains how he was kept from becoming too elated about it. A thorn (skolops) was given him in the flesh. The word skolops, found only here in the New Testament, was used for anything pointed, e.g. a stake, the pointed end of a fish-hook, a splinter or a thorn. The fact that Paul speaks of a thorn in the flesh suggests that the imagery is of a splinter or a thorn, rather than a stake, as some have argued.” *(Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 198.)*

“…skolops is used to denote something which frustrates and causes trouble in the lives of those afflicted. That Paul’s thorn was a trouble and frustration to him is clear from his thrice-repeated prayer for its removal (v. 8).” *(Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 198.)*

“The apostle further describes the thorn in his flesh as a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. In the story of Job, Satan is allowed to harass that great hero of faith and endurance, but only within the limits set by God (Job 1–2). In 1 Thessalonians 2:17–18 Paul tells his readers how he longed to revisit them after he was forced to leave Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:1–10), but could not do so because Satan hindered him. And in the present context Satan is allowed to harass the apostle by means of a thorn in the flesh.” *(Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 199.)*

“Many suggestions have been made concerning the nature of Paul’s ‘thorn in the flesh’. They fall into one of three broad categories: (a) some form of spiritual harassment, e.g. the limitations of a nature corrupted by sin, the torments of temptation, or oppression by a demon, (b) persecution, e.g. that instigated by Jewish opposition or by Paul’s Christian opponents, (c) some physical or mental ailment, e.g. eye trouble, attacks of fever, stammering speech, epilepsy, or a neurological disturbance. However, the plain fact is that there is simply insufficient data to decide the matter. Most modern interpreters prefer to see it as some sort of physical ailment, and the fact that Paul calls it a thorn in the flesh offers some support for this.” *(Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 199.)*

“In rabbinic literature the image is used to refer to something that causes pain, annoyance—something vexing—and does not especially refer to sickness or affliction.” (*David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 519.)*

“The ambiguity about what Paul’s stake in the flesh might be allows others to identify their own personal “thorns” with Paul’s and to appropriate the theological lesson. Stakes in the flesh are not good, but they also are not bad because they may convey a word from God if we are attuned to hear it. What is important to Paul is the theological word-to-the-wise that his stake in the flesh provided him. It was a constant reminder of God’s grace and God’s power working through him.” *(David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 521.)*

“Essentially the word of the Lord to Paul was that while the thorn would not be removed, his grace would enable him to cope with it. To this was added the explanation, ‘for my power is made perfect in weakness’. In 1 Corinthians 1:26–31 Paul pointed out to his converts that it was by God’s deliberate choice that not many of them were wise according to worldly standards, nor powerful, nor of noble birth. The reason was that God had chosen the foolish in the world to shame the wise, the weak in the world to shame the strong, and the low and despised in the world to bring to nothing those who were considered somebodies. This he did in order that no human being might boast in his presence, and so that those who do boast might boast of the Lord. So the Lord’s response to Paul’s request for the removal of the harassment was to remind him that his power is manifested in the weak. It also provides, in this context, justification for Paul’s rejection of the type of boasting indulged in by his opponents, and for his own practice of boasting in weakness.” (*Colin G. Kruse, 2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 8, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 200.)*

“Paul learns that the stake will not hamper his calling. He can make do with the grace he has already received, and the power of Christ will become more visible as it works through his weakness. We learn from the message given to Paul that God’s grace is not just the unmerited favor that saves us but a force that also sustains us throughout our lives. The modifier “my” in “my power,” is important. Paul is not speaking about power in general, but “the power of Christ” revealed in the crucifixion and resurrection: “For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him to serve you” (13:4).” *(David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 524.)*

“The verb “perfected” (teleitai) means “brought to completion” or “is made fully present.” The present tense indicates that it is not yet a finished product but that it is still in process of being made perfect. This answer from the Lord helps Paul to regard the stake no longer as the vexing mischief of Satan; instead, he recognizes that through it the grace of God operates more effectively. The stake makes him acutely aware of his own inadequacies and prevents him from thinking that he is equal to the task p 525 alone. It prevents a bloated ego from crowding out the power of God in his life. Paul now reveals why he is so willing to boast in his weakness rather than to pray for its removal. His weakness becomes the vehicle by which God’s grace and Christ’s power is most fully manifested to himself and to others. Furnish correctly points out that Paul is not saying that weakness is power. Instead, he is saying that “the weaknesses that characterize his life as an apostle—of which the Corinthians are very much aware and from which he neither seeks nor expects relief—represent the effective working of the power of the crucified Christ in his ministry.” What makes Paul seem so weak to some paradoxically allows the power of Christ to work through him all the more.” *(David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 524–525.)*

**Scriptures that people use that can be interpreted around “The God I Want”**

“1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

his love endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—

those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

3 those he gathered from the lands,

from east and west, from north and south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastelands,

finding no way to a city where they could settle.

5 They were hungry and thirsty,

and their lives ebbed away.

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,

and he delivered them from their distress.” (NIV Ps 107:1–6)

“For the LORD God is a sun and shield;

the LORD bestows favor and honor;

no good thing does he withhold

from those whose walk is blameless.” (NIV Ps 84:11)

“9 So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

11 “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (NIV Lk 11:9–13)

**OT Expectation around The Messiah that reinforces the Core Scripture**

“1 Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

2 When you pass through the waters,

I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers,

they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire,

you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

3 For I am the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;” (NIV Is 43:1–3)