



## Week Three

Pastor Jacob wrapped up our message series called Jesus Changed My Life. In this message, we focused on the strange paradox of the Christian life. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians inspire us to boast in our own weakness because the power of Christ is made known through our weakness. If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected to a Providence Small Group visit [prov.church/signup](http://prov.church/signup) and click on Small Groups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then pray this prayer together:

*Jesus, come and change my life. Your grace is all I need, through your grace my weakness becomes strength for your purposes. I say yes to your power working in me today. Amen.*

---

## DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 12.7

*in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.*

- Paul never identifies what this "thorn in the flesh" was for him. Some kind of nagging injury, criticism, or characteristic that led him to feel like he was being afflicted. Are there emotional or physical pains that have followed you around for a while? How do you react to them? Paul admitted the pain of this "thorn" but also recognized that it was keeping him humble. How have the "thorns in your flesh" impacted your view of the world?
- *Pray for an honest assessment of the challenges and pains that seem to haunt you. Name them before God and seek God's purpose in your wrestling.*

TUESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 12.8-9

*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.*

- Who models boasting in weakness for you? How does the world seem to react to such boasting? How do you react to such boasting? Are you able to see the power of Christ when you proclaim your own weakness?
- *Pray for moments of clarity and honesty when you can boast in weakness so that Christ's power might be known in and through you.*

WEDNESDAY: 1 PETER 4.12-14

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup> If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

- 1 Peter says that our ability to see the glory of Christ is subject to our ability to find joy in our testing. When we suffer for Christ, we are experiencing the suffering that Jesus experienced. And to see our story intertwined in his allows us to see and revel in his glory--when it is revealed. Have you ever seen the glory of Christ revealed? Did it feel like something that was apart from you, or a part of you?
- *Pray for the blessing of standing out for Christ even when it leads to tests, suffering and insults.*

THURSDAY: ROMANS 8.18-21

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup> For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope <sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.*

- Paul puts suffering in the context of a fallen creation. A frustrated creation goes all the way back to the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis. The hope in this frustration is that we would be called children of God and creation would be freed for its original purpose of reflecting glory to God.
- *Pray that your life would reflect the glory of God.*

FRIDAY: MATTHEW 5.10-12

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

<sup>11</sup> *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven..."*

- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shares this glimpse of a reality that is beyond what we see and experience through the world around us. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who don't always look like they've got it made. In fact, insults and persecution may come, but we still have reason to rejoice in the coming reward in heaven. Do you ever find it difficult to keep this heavenly perspective? What helps to remind you that blessings are yours?
- *Pray for a Kingdom perspective when you are facing insults for your life as a Jesus follower.*

SATURDAY: ISAIAH 53.3-5

*He was despised and rejected by mankind,  
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.*

*Like one from whom people hide their faces*

*he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

<sup>4</sup> *Surely he took up our pain*

*and bore our suffering,*

*yet we considered him punished by God,*

*stricken by him, and afflicted.*

<sup>5</sup> *But he was pierced for our transgressions,*

*he was crushed for our iniquities;*

*the punishment that brought us peace was on him,*

*and by his wounds we are healed.*

- The prophet Isaiah reveals this relationship between our pain and the suffering of Christ. Wounds don't always look life-giving, but they often lead to new life and peace for those who love God. Our brokenness and sin were the wounds that Jesus healed through his own suffering, death and resurrection. What does it mean to you that Jesus' suffering created a pathway to healing?
- *Pray your thanks to God for allowing for our healing even through the suffering and the redemption of suffering in Christ.*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Review the Jesus Changed my life stories at [prov.church/jesuschangedmylifestories](http://prov.church/jesuschangedmylifestories). How has Jesus changed your life? What role has suffering played in your faith story?
- Have you ever pleaded with God to take away your infirmities? What if it takes a long time for the redemption of your suffering? What helps you to hold on?