

“VISION, VEXATION, & VICTORY”

(2Corinthians 12:1-10)

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As a master TEACHER, Paul understood that “repetition is the mother of learning.”

One of the things we see Paul repeating is a DEFENSE of his ministry.

I. The VISION of the Apostle

Certain false apostles claimed to have had visions from God and presented that fact as “proof” they were SUPERIOR Christians.

Visions are one of God's ways of REVEALING himself and his Word to people. God ALSO gave visions to Paul:

On night, God spoke to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” Acts 18:9-10

I must go on boasting... is his way of saying its not what he prefers, but what he is FORCED to do in defense.

Whether in body or mind, God transported Paul to Paradise, to God's very presence. Even if he were to boast about it, it would simply be the TRUTH.

But, he refrains so that people don't look at HIM as somehow superior. His ultimate goal is always to point people to CHRIST.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” Romans 1:16

II. The VEXATION of the Apostle

Vexation is “the state of being annoyed, frustrated or worried.” God gave him this “thorn in the flesh” as a means to keep Paul from becoming too CONCEITED over those miraculous insights.

Whatever it was, it was a vexation – an annoyance, a frustration that caused him worry.

God sometimes allows Satan to attack even his most faithful men, but within LIMITS:

The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.” Job 2:6

Paul saw Satan as the direct SOURCE of whatever misery this was. Even so, he moves on to:

III. The VICTORY of the Apostle

Paul did what we should always do when vexed by something – he PRAYED.

Do you ever hesitate to REPEAT your prayers to God?

The Lord made this point: *And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?* Luke 18:6

Persistency in prayer is always a good thing, as long as part of that prayer is what Jesus also taught – “You're will be done.”

Paul was victorious and helps US immensely:

But he [the Lord] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” (9)

God did not ignore Paul. He answered him, but with a vision of a BIGGER picture. God's grace is ENOUGH. It is enough for any of us.

Jesus said as long as we are in THIS world, we will have troubles. It is simply part of the fallen human condition.

But there are some comforts: First, we are all in the SAME boat. Secondly, we have each OTHER.

Finally, whatever vexations you have, or will have – if you are a Christian – is TEMPORARY!

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

Revelation 21:4

All of us will suffer vexations in this life, but we can also be assured of the ultimate victory we have in Christ Jesus, IF we have put our trust in him.