



## DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

December 1, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

# GATHERING STRENGTH IN GOD

*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*

2 Corinthians 12:9

### READ 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Grainger McKoy is an artist who studies and sculpts birds, capturing their grace, vulnerability, and power. One of his pieces is titled Recovery. It shows the single right wing of a pintail duck, stretched high in a vertical position. Below, a plaque describes the bird's recovery stroke as "the moment of the bird's greatest weakness in flight, yet also the moment when it gathers strength for the journey ahead." Grainger includes this verse: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The apostle Paul wrote these words to the church at Corinth. Enduring a season when he was overwhelmed with personal struggle, Paul begged God to remove what he described as "a thorn in my flesh" (v. 7). His affliction might have been a physical ailment or spiritual opposition. Like Jesus in the garden the night before His crucifixion (Luke 22:39-44), Paul repeatedly asked God to remove his suffering. The Holy Spirit responded by assuring him that He'd provide the strength needed. Paul learned, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

Oh, the thorns we experience in this life! Like a bird gathering its strength for the journey ahead, we can gather up God's strength for what we're facing. In His strength, we find our own.

By **Elisa Morgan**

### PRAY & REFLECT

**Dear Father, help me gather my strength from Yours as I face what's ahead in my life today. Amen**

Where are you experiencing weakness today? How can you—in that exact weakness—gather God's strength for your journey?

### SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Paul deliberately boasted about his many spectacular visions (2 Corinthians 12:1-7; see Acts 9:1-9; 16:6-10) to refute false teachers who said he wasn't a genuine apostle because he didn't have ecstatic spiritual experiences. Although such boasting was distasteful to him (2 Corinthians 12:1, 5), he believed it was necessary to deal with the misguided spirituality and pride of his opponents. He was given a "thorn in [his] flesh" (v. 7) so Christ's power might be proclaimed (vv. 5-10). The word *thorn* was used for anything pointed, such as a stake, the pointed end of a fishhook, or a splinter. This implied that Paul had endured severe pain. We don't know what the thorn was. Some think he had an eye affliction (see Galatians 4:15; 6:11) or a chronic ailment. But we know its intent: to keep him humble on account of his "surpassingly great revelations" (2 Corinthians 12:7). – By **K. T. Sim**

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