



beautiful COMMUNITY

***A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL CREATED
BY A TEAM OF PEOPLE AT
ADVENTURE OF FAITH***

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY (FOR GROUPS)

Have a person stand in the middle of the room with their mask on. Have another person read the words below. The rest of the room will have to guess if the person in the middle is smiling or frowning at each word (i.e. smile if you like it, frown if you don't).

Word List:

Ice cream flavors: Vanilla, Chocolate. Chocolate, Cookies & Cream, Mint Chocolate Chip, Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough, Buttered Pecan, Birthday Cake, Strawberry, Moose tracks Neapolitan.

Pizza Toppings: Pepperoni, Mushrooms, Onions, Sausage, Bacon, Extra cheese, Black olives, Green peppers, Pineapple, Spinach

REAL TALK:

THIS IS A TIME TO BE
AUTHENTIC, WITH
YOURSELF AND OTHERS.
SHARE HOW YOU'RE
DOING WITH GOD
PERSONALLY AND PRAY
FOR ONE ANOTHER.



SERMON SUMMARY:

In 2 Corinthians, we hear about Paul's struggle with a thorn in his side. He doesn't say what it is, but he says that it's constantly annoying and frustrating him, distracting from his work, and making his life really hard. The thorn is a metaphor, probably for a recurrent sin in Paul's life. Paul pleaded with God to take this thorn from him, but God responds by leaving the thorn where it is. God tells Paul that "grace is sufficient" and God's power is made perfect in Paul's weakness.

It's hard to imagine what that means -- how does a human weakness make God's power perfect? Isn't God's power already perfect? See, we remember Paul as a missionary. We don't even know what his thorn was, we just know that it grieved Paul. Maybe it was an addiction, or a toxic relationship or lustful thoughts. But we don't remember Paul the addict or Paul the codependent or Paul the womanizer. We remember Paul the missionary, Paul the disciple of Christ, Paul the redeemed and repentant, Paul the beloved. God's power is made perfect in Paul's weakness because God's power transformed Paul into a man of God, even as Paul struggled with his thorn. God's power is what kept the thorn from defining Paul. God's power overcame the power of that thorny sin in Paul's life.

God's power is working in our lives, too. Just like He overcame Paul's sin, He's overcoming our sin, even when we succumb to it. Our redemption is not just one and done, but ongoing in our lives. God has saved us from our own thorns and is still saving us; our struggles are perfecting God's power and His grace remains sufficient for us. And as we bask in God's grace and revel in the redemption and as we are moved to repentance, we are called to live differently than the world. Our world defines people by their failures and mistakes. Our God defines people by the content of their hearts -- the hidden things that only He knows. When we see our brothers and sisters succumbing to their thorns, we're called to remind them of their true identity as forgiven and loved children of God. When someone believes a sin is hopeless because they keep giving in over and over, we're called to remind them that the power of God is working in their struggle, turning their weakness into God's strength. Where most only see thorns, we're called to see roses.

GOD ENCOUNTERS:

JOURNAL, THINK ABOUT, OR
DISCUSS WITH YOUR
GROUP HOW YOU HAVE
ENCOUNTERED GOD IN YOUR
LIFE THIS WEEK.

WORSHIP SONG:

CLICK IN THIS AREA FOR A
HYPERLINK TO YOUTUBE OR
SEARCH FOR:

Kari Jobe - Heal Our
Land

—
HEAL
OUR
LAND
—

READ:

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Discuss:

What stood out to you in Sunday's sermon?

What stood out to you in today's passage?

What makes you uncomfortable about today's passage? Why?

What specific way have you seen our church family emulate the characteristics of what God is calling the church to be?

What does real world church look like?

Devotional Questions:

What is your thorn?

How are you trying to engage it?

Who knows about it?

Who is walking with you/praying with you about it?

PRAYER:

Lord,

Often, when called upon to be in service to you, I shy away from the opportunity because I feel inept and unworthy. It is at those moments of insecurity that I need to be reminded that it isn't about showcasing my abilities. It is to reveal your magnificent and omnipotent character! In Ephesians 3:20, your word tells us, "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be the glory". My weaknesses contrasts with your incredible power. May your glory shine for all to see!

In Jesus Name,

Amen