

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. So, get your coffee or tea. Get comfortable and let's talk.

Today I want to discuss what I call Thorns in the Flesh.

Maybe you've noticed my face. I have partial paralysis on my left side. I feel like I'm smiling big, but it does not always look that way. My mouth slopes when I speak and sometimes my speech is a little slurred. This is a "thorn in my flesh".

So let me ask you. Have you ever heard Christians talk about praying for healing? You might hear them say, "if you only have enough faith God will heal you." You can probably hear something like this from the TV preachers or others who claim so divine in sight.

I think most of us have something we would love God to fix. It might be health, finance, or something else. But, can we really call on God to be our Cosmic Santa Claus or Cosmic Genie. If we only believe enough then He has to grant our wishes.

I, myself have a few "Thorns in the Flesh". Many of you know I have been suffering with complications due to COVID for some time now. And I have myriad of aches and pains. But you can probably see one when you look at me. I have some partial paralysis on my left side of my face.

A few years ago in February 2019, I was coming back to Houston from Nebraska after picking up a load of donated clothes from Arnold. I was very tired and it's a 15 hour trip on good roads. As I was driving through Oklahoma the weather got colder and colder until the light rain was freezing rain. Traffic began to crawl. It was very stressful. It was at this point I started to feel something was wrong with the left side of my face. It was tingling. In the days that followed, I had my first outbreak of shingles. My case was unusual because the shingles was affecting a group of nerves which included the entire left side of my face. My facial muscles, mouth, my eye and all the way including my scalp.

I wish I could find a picture so you would see what I looked like. To say the least, my eye and face was a mess. Swollen and deformed. Obviously, I recovered but I do have nerve damage in my scalp and partial facial paralysis on my left side. Just one of those, "thorns in the flesh", I'd love God to make go away.

And I prayed to God for healing but no healing came. Was it because I did not have enough faith? In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul writes about his own "thorn in the flesh". Let's read from the NLT 2 Cor 12:7-10 *7even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given **a thorn in my flesh**, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. <sup>8</sup>**Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.** <sup>9</sup>Each time he said, "**My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.**" So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. <sup>10</sup>That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*

What a powerful scripture. Paul, is an apostle of Jesus. One of our great pillars of our faith. He prayed for healing but was told no by God. In fact, the message from Christ is even more powerful. We are representatives for Christ and His Kingdom here on earth. His power is best seen in and through our weakness. That way everyone watching can see it is not about us. It has to be God. When I do

something, it is important that it appears to be a miracle to the world. How did this guy do that, he is only...? Or he's not capable. You fill in the blank. He's not....

Now I believe we should ask for healing, and sometimes God will according to His divine providence. But when He does not, we should take notice that there is a reason. And as Paul says in v10 *"That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

In our troubles and with our "thorns in the flesh", we can show the world our true strength which is Jesus. How we deal with these things points straight to Jesus.

So yes, I wish for my many "thorns in the flesh" to be taken by God. But I also know, He can and will use my "thorns", my infirmities, my troubles for good and to His glory. In the end, my temporary inconvenience or this insult on my comfort is not significant in light of eternal life. And we are promised, an incorruptible body in heaven without all these "thorns".

So, go ahead and ask for healing but be thankful and take pleasure when God chooses to use you and include you in His plan. He can show His power, through my weakness. Amen.

**Let me close with a prayer.**

**Precious savior, Jesus. Thank you for not giving us everything we ask for. You know what is best. Thank you for allowing me to be used as part of our plan and will. Even though I wish for these thorns in the flesh to be taken. I will take pleasure in you. No matter the trouble, the trial, or infirmity, I will trust you Lord and your plan for me. I understand this is just temporary and our current situation will pale in comparison to the glory of heaven and our eternal lives and bodies. I count it a blessing to be counted as worthy to suffer as part of your plan Lord. And I pray all these things to the Father in your name Jesus. Amen.**

Thank you for joining me at the PUNLA Coffee Table. If you liked the message, please click like. And Please Subscribe to our channel. Leave comments here, or our website or mail me. I want your feedback so let me know what you think

See you next time at the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.