

**Dig Deeper / 2 Corinthians 10:13-12:10 and Luke 3:1-17
Otisville Church of Christ / December 16-22, 2012**

2 Corinthians 10:13-12:10

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in part to defend himself against criticism from the Corinthian believers over his apostolic ministry and over his organization of the collection for the believers in Judea (chapters 8-9). The critics appear to have targeted Paul for suffering too much to be a genuine apostle. Their reasoning is that someone truly sent by God would not have the hardships that Paul has had. In his response to them, Paul develops a teaching of suffering and the Spirit that demonstrates that God's strength and power is found and seen in our weaknesses. It is only there that his grace is found by us to be sufficient for all our needs.

Weakness and Power (or Strength) in 1-2 Corinthians

Verse	Weakness	Power (or Strength)
1 Cor. 1:25	The weakness of God	Is stronger than men
1 Cor. 1:27	God chose what is weak	To shame the strong
1 Cor. 2:3, 5	With you in weakness and fear	But in the power of God
1 Cor. 15:43	Sown in weakness	Raised in power
2 Cor. 12:9	I will boast...of my weaknesses	So that the power of Christ may rest upon you
2 Cor. 13:3	Not weak in dealing with you	But powerful among you
2 Cor. 13:4	He was crucified in weakness	But lives by the power of God
2 Cor. 13:4	We also are weak in him	But live with him by the power of God
2 Cor. 13:9	We are glad when we are weak	And you are strong

(From the ESV Study Bible)

(Reflection questions on back)

Reflection Questions for 2 Corinthians 10:13-12:10

1. What reasons does Paul give in this section (10:13-12:10) for why we should not boast in our strengths?
2. What reasons does Paul give for why he could boast more than all of them but does not?
3. What did Paul learn through his “thorn in the flesh”?
4. How do you need to become weaker in order to allow the strength of God to work through you?
5. How is the gospel a message of strength in weakness?

Luke 3:1-17

John the Baptist was like a revival preacher. He arrived on the scene, sent by God, to preach God's message. The message was simple: Repent and get ready for God's kingdom. This was a big deal. Devout Jews had been awaiting God's kingdom to be made real among them for a long time. So John's preaching drew a lot of interest.

His job was to prepare the way of the Lord, to get people ready to follow the one who was coming. This meant repentance, because only in repentance do our hearts change to follow God instead of ourselves. Repentance means change, and so John's message was concrete. We often think of repentance as a feeling, of feeling “sorry” for what he did. But biblical repentance requires action.

John's message was practical and simple. The action required to repent meant changing views of other people to begin viewing them as God does. This is how it works in God's kingdom. So, “bear fruits in keeping with repentance.” The fruit of repentance is different for each, so John tells soldiers and tax collectors to repent in different ways. The key is this: When you take God seriously, you know how you need to repent.

Traditions don't matter. How we think we can please God doesn't matter. What matters is the gospel—the message of good news and hope that through Christ we can enter into God's kingdom. Let us repent.

Reflection Questions for Luke 3:1-17

1. What is most striking to you about John's message? Why?
2. How does John fulfill the prophecy spoken about in him verses 4-6?
3. How does repentance fit with John's message of judgment? (7-9)
4. How did John encourage repentance among the different people?
5. How did John view himself in light of Jesus?
6. How do you need to repent?