

WALKING FREE NEWSLETTER August 25, 2011

Hi everyone

Who or what has been a thorn in your side? How have you handled it? For most of us, we struggle to handle thorny people and thorny situations. It may have been a person in your workplace; a neighbor next door; a person at church. It may be a thorny problem at work or situation within your family. Whatever it was or is thorns us irritation, sharp pain and discomfit. They are not easily pulled out!

I had a thorn in the palm of my hand from helping Liz in the garden. My hand did not feel right. It got infected and only after some time, the thorn came to the surface to be seen and thus be pulled out.

For some of us, the thorn is there for a long time. Paul suffered from a thorn in the flesh. He wrote *"To keep me from becoming conceited because of the exceptional nature of these revelations, a thorn was given to me and placed in my body. It was Satan's messenger to keep on tormenting me so that I would not become conceited."* (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Many a thesis has been written about Paul's thorn. The following have been suggested: spiritual temptations; carnal temptations; opposition and persecution; physical deformity; epilepsy; migraines; chronic eye trouble; recurring bouts of malaria.

But we are not told. What we are told is the immense suffering that Paul endured for the gospel's sake: *Five times I was given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; three times I was whipped by the Romans; and once I was stoned. I have been in three ship wrecks, and once I spent twenty-four hours in the water. In my many travels I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from my own people and from Gentiles; there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends. There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been*

hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food, shelter, or clothing. And not to mention other things, every day I am under the pressure of my concern for all the churches. □ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

So how did Paul handle these thorns?

Cross: *The Lord said to Ananias, "Go, because I have chosen him to serve me, to make my name known to Gentiles and kings and to the people of Israel. **And I myself will show him (Paul) □ all that he must suffer for my sake.**"*

Jesus spoke to Paul about his cross to bear for the gospel's sake. Jesus reminded the disciples and us that to follow Jesus, we are to carry our cross. It is acceptance of the crosses that we must bear that will help us to wear the thorns.

Contentment: *I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am (Philippians 4:11).*

Content means **1.** Desiring no more than what one has; satisfied. **2.** Ready to accept or acquiesce; willing:

She was

content to step down after four years as chief executive.

To make content or satisfied:

contented himself with one piece of cake.

n. Contentment; satisfaction. It is the lack of contentment in our lives than can really be the problem.

Cultivated Grit: *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)* Paul was able to tap into Christ and His strength to overcome all the thorns of his life and much more. There was a grittiness to Paul that enabled him not to be put off but to press through.

Claimed God's Grace: *My Grace is sufficient for you for My power is perfected in weakness (2 Corinthians 12:7)* Paul was sustained by the grace of God which he claimed on a daily basis. He understood that weakness was not a handicap but a vehicle of God's power.

In His dialogue with God, God made it clear to Paul that this thorn was not going to be removed but He will be given the grace to endure. In some cases God will remove the thorn that is in your side by His means. I have seen thorny people moved on and thorny situations transformed by the power of God. In other cases, God does not remove the thorn but gives you grace to endure.

It is important to ask God to remove the thorn. Three times Paul asked. But it is equally important to be ready for God's answer. My grace is sufficient for you.

India: We are sorting out visas at the moment. We need special permission from the local authorities to conduct meetings where non Christian people might want to attend. **THIS IS A BIG PRAYER POINT AS WE NEED AN ANSWER ASAP.**

If the visas are issued, we will be looking for finances to fund the cost of the trip to India. There are three of us and we need \$7000 to cover our costs as the local church will not be able to fund us.

Ministry: Our ministry teams have been reduced. We need more teams to pray for people. They do not need to be based at Toowoomba or Coolangatta. But we need people with a heart to set captives free and be willing to learn how to pray for the captives and give some of their time per month to help.

Healing Rooms: The local church council do not wish to sponsor Healing Rooms in the church. Some do not wish to have this ministry on the church property. We are now looking for separate place for a healing room/centre. We will grow it from small beginnings. Liz and I have suggested that this needs to come under Walking Free rather than Healing Rooms Australia if we are to be involved.

Twin Towns Church: The church continues to be blessed by people on holidays. They come with their gifts and desire to know more about God. We have had good feedback each week about the church service and sermon and how it has blessed them.

Conference: I am going to a two day conference on helping people with trauma. I will be listening to a person, Dr Colin Ross, who has spent his life helping broken people and being a light to the area of trauma and psychiatry.

Family: We head for Adelaide soon to see children and parents. Jess is back from overseas. She had a great time. Naomi is working hard with her yr 6 class and coordinator role. David and Maddy are still enjoying Chicago. Dad is recovering slowly from his broken leg. Mum is busy looking after Dad. Liz's mum is well and looking forward to seeing her children and grandchildren who will gather over Father's Day weekend.

We thank you for your support and prayers.

Prayer Points

- Thank God for HIS GRACE THAT IS SUFFICIENT.
- Thank God that He continues to heal the brokenness of people's lives.
- Thank God for the new clients that are referred to Walking Free.
- Pray for the ministry of Pastor Devadas as he ministers to Hindu people in villages in Andhra Pradesh, India. Pray for Rev Sambabu and his church. Pray for converts and healings. Pray for finances to be released for our visit in November.
- Pray for new people to become prayer team members. Pray for a team to be established at Coolangatta.
- Pray for Coolangatta church as it seeks to be open to the leading of God re the Healing Rooms.
- Pray for our prayer teams: Hal and Debbie, Robyn and Jamie, Jenny, Liz and myself. Pray for our support people Desley, Jenny, Craig, Rod and Jamie.
- Thank God for the financial provision of this ministry. We are grateful to the many that are obedient and give to our ministry weekly, monthly and one off. We have been blessed with gifts of merchandise and money, computers and printing. We have been blessed with many talented and gifted people who give of their time, talent and treasure each week to help this ministry have a Kingdom impact.

If you would like to donate to our ministry and receive a tax deduction, direct debit using the bank details below or make out your cheque to Walking Free Renewing Ministries Gift Fund. You can pay through our website.

Bank Details: Walking Free Renewing Ministries Gift Fund. National Australia Bank: BSB 084-959 Account Numbers 82-215-5845

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