

**Epistle:** Listen for words of encouragement in the second letter to the Corinthians 12:2-10

I know someone who fourteen years ago was caught up in the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—only God knows. And I know that this person—whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know, only God knows— was caught up to paradise to hear words that cannot be uttered, words that no one may speak. About this person I will boast, but I will do no boasting about myself, unless it be about my weaknesses. And even if I were to boast, it wouldn't be foolish of me, because I am speaking the truth.

But I refrain, so that no one will think more of me than is justified by what I do or say. Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh—a messenger of Satan to beat me—to keep me from exalting myself! Three times I begged God that it might leave me. And God said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I would rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. So I am content with weakness, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ; when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong.

For the encouragement of God in Holy Scripture

***We give thanks.***

**Gospel:** A reading from the Gospel of Mark 6:1-13

After leaving there, Jesus came into his own town, followed by the disciples.

When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and the many listeners were astonished and said, “Where did he learn all this? What is this wisdom that has been granted, and these miracles that are performed by his hands? Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Judah and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?” They found these things to be stumbling blocks.

Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometowns and among their own relatives and in their own households.” And he could work no miracles there, apart from laying his hands upon a few sick people and healing them; their lack of faith astounded him. He made the rounds of the neighbouring villages instead, and spent the time teaching.

Then Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs, giving them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a mere staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts. They were to wear sandals but, he added, “Do not take a spare tunic.”

And Jesus said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave town. Any place that does not receive you or listen to you, as you leave it, shake off the dust from the soles of your feet as a testimony against them.”

And so they set off, proclaiming repentance as they went. They cast out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

For the word that invites and inspires us

***We give thanks.***