

by **Pastor Jason Rhodenhizer**  
**Anchorage Baptist Temple Assistant Pastor**

## **World Christian Taekwondo Federation**

Many times we think about the Apostle Paul as a man of dedication, enthusiasm and perseverance. Scripture affirms that. We read about his beatings, being shipwrecked, put in jail, etc and through it all Paul stayed committed to the cause of Christ. How was that truth developed in him? Well, we know that Paul had a little problem, probably physically. It was something that irritated him to the point that he asked God to remove it on at least 3 different occasions. But look how the Lord responds to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 the Lord says to Paul, "***My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.***" As black belts, or with our TKD background, we tend to rely upon our strength. We tend to live in the confidence that we've accomplished a major task. The apostle Paul had the same problem. He tended to rely upon his strong background as a man who understood the law of God. In the book of Philippians, Paul recounts his life with all the privileges that he grew up with. Paul was very well educated. He was committed to whatever was set before him, including the persecution of the church. He allowed his background (his pedigree) to carry him through life's struggles. These tendencies, naturally, flowed over into his Christian life. So God threw a little disruption in Paul's life. God wanted Paul to rely upon Him, so Paul was given what he called a thorn in the flesh. A little something that made Paul depend upon God. Paul came to understand that in his weakness, God provided that strength that he needed. Paul realized that he gained strength when he was weakest. That's the amazing thing about God. When we are hurting, He provides that strength that we need. God's grace is sufficient. At our weakest points, God steps in to tell us that He loves us so much that He will take care of the need. When we are weak, He takes our place and provides our strength. What an amazing picture of love.

So let's recount a few steps Paul had to take in order to complete his task in life. Look at this. Paul said in Philippians 3:13-14 ***Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind*** (you come in this morning with fear, anxiety, frustration. Maybe there are other areas of your life that you are anxious about. Maybe you have some bitterness toward someone who has mistreated you. At this point, you leave that stuff behind. You leave behind the earthly items that keep you from focusing on God's best) ***and reaching forward to those things which are ahead*** (During our board breaking training, we always tell people to look beyond the board. Your goal is to hit the board holder in the chest. The board is just an obstacle in the way. My goal in life is Godliness. Sharing a relationship with my Savior in order to gain eternal rewards in heaven. We have to focus on so much more than what we physically see around us. ***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*** I'm not only going to set my goal on God's best, but I'm going to bear down, I'm going to press or struggle, fight to accomplish the task. I give my total focus to God's plan. The prize gained in heaven is my goal and I will give everything I have to attain that goal. It's a matter of determining in your heart who you love the most.

All of us want to gain heaven, but heaven is never based upon you. It's never based upon your actions, good or bad. As men and women of this world, we are separated from God as the result of sin. Sin has always separated man from God. God has always required a payment for sin and that payment has always been death. But praise God that Jesus paid the final payment with His death on the cross. The price for your sin has been paid. All you have to do is accept the free gift. By accepting God's gift of salvation, we are made right with God. Our salvation is not based upon us, it's a work of God. Our acceptance of salvation secures heaven for us. When we accept salvation, Romans 8:1 ***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.*** The payment has been made. Our sin nature is eternally wiped out