

Thought For The Week

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There Is Always Something

Sufficient Grace for the Trouble That Stays

Sunday morning, October 11, 2026 — Tom Freed

There is always something. Not sometimes. Not only in the hard year. An ache that will not quite leave. A bill that arrives the week you thought you were finally clear. A person who wears you down. A body that will not stay fixed. A plan that looked simple until you started it. You settle one thing and another shows up before the relief has time to settle in. It can feel as though only days pass between problems. That is not pessimism. It is the ordinary shape of life under the sun. Scripture has been saying this longer than any of us have been living it, and God has already told His people what to do with the thing that will not leave.

Life Under the Sun Is Full of Trouble

Job 14:1 puts the matter plainly: “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” Jacob, standing before Pharaoh at 130 years old, did not dress it up either. “The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage” (Genesis 47:9). Jacob had covenant promises. He had seen the work of God. He still called his days few and evil. If he called it that, what chance do we have? The back finally eases and two days later the knee goes, and that is not the end of the list.

Scripture does not flatter us about life in this world. Moses, in the only psalm attributed to him, writes that the days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off and we fly away (Psalm 90:10). Labor and sorrow is not a footnote. It is a normal description of life. Ecclesiastes says the same thing from another angle. Man does not know his time. As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falls suddenly upon them (Ecclesiastes 9:12). The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, for time and chance happen to them all (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

Careful people still meet trouble they did not schedule. Faithful people still bury people they love. Honest workers still watch a simple job turn hard. Aging people watch a list of what hurts get longer, not shorter. This is especially plain in a congregation that has lived a while. You treat one condition and the doctor names another. The spouse declines. Money that was finally under control gets hit by something you did not have planned. None of that means God has forgotten the church. It means we are still living in the world Job and Jacob described.

Trouble Is Not Strange for the Christian

Jesus did not promise His disciples a clear calendar. He told them the opposite: “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Mark that order. Tribulation is promised. Cheer is commanded. The ground of the cheer is not that the tribulation leaves. The ground of the cheer is the One who has already overcome the world from which the tribulation comes.

Peter wrote to brethren who were already under pressure: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Peter 4:12). The trial feels strange when it lands. Peter says do not treat it as strange. It is part of the path, not proof that you left the path.

Some of the trouble is simply the fallen world. Bodies break, wood rots, water turns, economies shift, and people sin against each other. Genesis 3 is still in force. The ground brings forth thorns, and so does a good bit of ordinary life. You can do the work carefully and still meet something underneath that you did not know was there.

Some of the trouble is the devil. If the devil cannot keep a man from Christ, he will spend what God permits trying to wear him down after that. He cannot stop us from becoming a Christian, but he can make it as difficult as possible. He can irritate us and do whatever God permits him to do. Job is the clearest picture we have of that. God set a limit, and inside that limit Satan took the oxen, the servants, the sheep, the camels, the children, and finally Job’s health. Job’s friends then made it worse by explaining his suffering back to him as they understood the counsel of heaven. They did not understand, and most of the time neither do we. Do not do their work for them. A hard week is not a verdict you are qualified to pronounce on yourself or on the brother next to you. If you see somebody struggling, do not be like Job’s friends.

Paul’s Thorn and the Answer God Actually Gives

Paul knew a version of this that would not leave. To keep him from becoming conceited because of the surpassingly great revelations, there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment him. Three times he pleaded with the Lord to take it away (2 Corinthians 12:7-8). He calls it a messenger of Satan. He also says it was given, and the purpose he names is that he not be exalted above measure. Both of those things can be true at once. The enemy strikes. God governs the blow and uses it.

Everybody has a plan until they get hit. The Christian life is no different. You can have the week mapped, the budget set, the project scoped, and the health feeling steady, and the punch lands. The question is not whether the punch is coming. The question is what you do once you are on the ground.

Paul asked three times for the thorn to depart. The answer he received was not the answer he asked for: “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9). That is one of the hardest sentences in the New Testament to actually believe while the thorn is still in. We want departure. God often gives sufficiency instead. Some things leave when we pray. Some things stay. And the staying becomes a place where His strength is proved. Paul did not pretend the thorn felt good. He did not call the weakness pleasant. He did decide that if

the power of Christ rested on him inside the weakness, he would rather have that than a smooth life that left him trusting in himself.

This is also why some of the troubles are permitted in the first place. A life with no thorn, no bill, no limitation, and no recurring grief can quietly train a man to live as if he did not need the Lord. Trouble interrupts that. It does not feel like mercy while it is happening. It feels like interference. But more than a few of us would not be in Christ if life had stayed smooth. The frustration that drives you to pray is not wasted, even when the frustration itself does not leave on your schedule.

James says, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience” (James 1:2-3). He does not say the trial feels like joy. He says count it joy because of what the trial is producing in a faith that stays put. Romans 5 says tribulation works patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. A chain only works if we do not quit in the middle of it. Patience is not produced by a trouble that ends before it has done its work.

What to Do When There Is Always Something

So what do you do when there is always something? Tom offered five practical responses.

1. **Stop reading the latest trouble as proof that you are off the path.** John 16:33 already told you tribulation is coming. First Peter 4:12 already told you not to treat the fiery trial as strange. A hard week is not a verdict on your faithfulness. It may be the ordinary week of a disciple who is still in the world.
2. **Take the thing to the Lord more than once, and receive the answer He actually gives.** Paul asked three times. We ought to ask, and we ought to ask specifically. Pray about the need, the bill, the diagnosis, the work that will not cooperate. Then be ready for the answer to be “My grace is sufficient” rather than “It is gone.” Sufficient grace is not a slogan for an easy week. It is a supply for a week that has already gone sideways. If it stays, ask what obedience looks like while it is still there. Removal is mercy, and sufficiency is also mercy. Do not despise the second because you asked for the first.
3. **Refuse to let the latest thing become the whole story.** Paul could speak of glorying in infirmities without pretending they were pleasant because he knew where the power rested. Romans 8 does not deny the groaning. Creation groans, we groan, and the Spirit groans with us. The chapter still ends with nothing able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord—not tribulation, not distress, not persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or the sword (Romans 8:35-39). The something that is always there is real; it is not ultimate. Paul says the light affliction which is but for a moment works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). An aging body makes the contrast sharper, not weaker. The days are few, the trouble is full, and the glory on the other side of faithfulness is heavier than both.
4. **Practice the small obediences the latest frustration tries to cancel.** Contentment is not the absence of irritation; it is the decision inside the irritation not to let it set the terms. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). That peace guards the heart

even when the circumstances do not move on your schedule. Speak the truth about the trouble. Jacob did. Job did. Paul did. Then do the next faithful thing. Show up and finish the work that you can finish. Sit with a person who is not improving. Open the Scriptures when you would rather rehearse your issues. Assemble with the saints when the week has already taken more out of you than you want to give.

5. **Remember that the Christian has no retirement plan from faithfulness.** The body slows and the list of trouble grows, but the assignments we have do not expire. We work while it is day. “Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). Moses was 80 when God sent him back to Egypt. The thorn did not end Paul’s ministry; it traveled with him. The something that is always there may change what you can do. It does not cancel the call to keep doing what you still can, unto the Lord and not unto men. Even with the issues, we still have our duties as a Christian. It did not stop Paul, and it did not stop Moses.

Conclusion

A man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. Jacob was right to call his years few and evil. Paul was right that the fiery trial is not a strange thing. He was also right to ask for the thorn to leave and right to glory in the weakness when the answer was grace instead of removal. Scripture tells you that trouble is coming and that it is not a strange thing, and it tells you grace is already measured to the size of your thorn. God’s strength is made perfect in weakness. The days of trouble are not the end of your journey.

So get up. The punch has already landed or it will, and there will be another one after that. The Lord who kept Paul on his feet with a thorn that will not leave is the same Lord who walks with this congregation through the aches, the bills, the diagnoses, and the week that did not go the way you planned it. God’s grace is sufficient for the something that is always there.

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Scripture has never pretended otherwise. Job said a man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. Jacob, at 130 years old and standing before Pharaoh, still called his days few and evil. Moses wrote that even if strength carries us to eighty years, their strength is labor and sorrow. Ecclesiastes reminds us that time and chance happen to everyone. Careful people still meet trouble they did not schedule. Faithful people still bury people they love. Aging people still watch the list of what hurts grow longer.

Jesus did not promise His disciples a clear calendar. He said, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” Peter told suffering brethren not to think the fiery trial strange. Trouble is part of the path, not proof that you have left it. Some of it is simply the fallen world. Some of it is the enemy working inside the limits God sets. Paul knew a version of this that would not leave—a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan. He asked three times for it to depart. The answer he received was not the one he requested: “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”

We want departure. God often gives sufficiency instead. Some things leave when we pray. Some things stay, and the staying becomes the place where His strength is proved. A hard week is not a verdict on your faithfulness. Take the thing to the Lord more than once and receive the answer He actually gives. Refuse to let the latest trouble become the whole story. Practice the small obediences the frustration tries to cancel. There is no retirement from faithfulness.

The days of trouble are not the end of the journey. The Lord who kept Paul on his feet with a thorn that would not leave is the same Lord who walks with us through the aches, the bills, and the week that did not go as planned. His grace is sufficient for the something that is always there.

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