

THE ECSTASY AND THE AGONY

2 Corintios 12.

Introduction: False apostles boasting about their exploits. Paul has to compare notes with them and boasts of his exploits. What a remarkable boasts he makes, not what we would expect. He does not display an impressive lists of scholastic degrees, or make mention of famous converts, or the great crowds or miracles in his ministry, or about being internationally known. Rather, he begins to boasts about his hardships---beatings, fastings, imprisonments, stoning, shipwrecks, dangers on every side. An finally, about the night he had to be let down over a wall in a basket.

In Chapter 12, he gives us the story of being caught up into Paradise and a thorn in the flesh, this was one of man experiences that he had.

Vr. 1 Ciertamente no me conviene gloriarme; pero vendré a las visiones y a las revelaciones del Señor.

1. Los reclamos a su apostolado:
 - Tuvo que haber visto al Señor resucitado (escribe Luke)
 - Aun cuando no había formado parte de los 12, él vio al Señor en el Camino de Demascus
 - El había sido enseñado personalmente por Jesús
 - Después que 14 años, fue a ver a Pedro, Santiago, y Juan
 - No no le podrían agregar nada a lo que él ya conocia
2. Pablo sigue dando lo mas dramático de estas ocasiones:

Vr. 2 Conozco a un hombre en Cristo, que hace catorce años (si en el cuerpo, no lo sé; si fuera del cuerpo, no lo sé; Dios lo sabe) fue arrebatado hasta el tercer cielo. Vr. 3 Y conozco al tal hombre (si en el cuerpo, o fuera del cuerpo, no lo sé; Dios lo sabe), Vr. 4 que fue arrebatado al paraíso, donde oyó palabras inefables que no le es dado al hombre expresar

1. Lo hace en tercer persona – como si fuese alguna otra persona
2. Nos dice 3 cosas importantes:
 1. Primero, fue llevado al 3rd heaven – invisible dimension of reality
 2. Segundo, el cuerpo no era importante – “ausentes del cuerpo, y presentes al Señor” (2 Cor. 5:8) “being at home with the Lord” (rsv)
 - Home is the place where you relax
 - No strain, no pressure, kick off the shoes, stretch
 - Paul says, “it’s like being at home”
 - Paradise is a place, a great experience of relaxed enjoyment
 - Almost like it was happening to someone else.
 3. El tercero, lo que él oyó, él no podría hablar acerca

- Las cosas oídas que le dieron comprensión de la vida y la realidad "
- Un alcance fantástico de lo que existe, y de lo que Dios hace.
- Visiones son difícil para describir:
 - La rueda de Ezequiel dentro de una rueda y 4 caras de animales extraños 4
 - las visiones de Daniel
 - las visiones de Juan
- Cuando estamos con el Señor, nuestro conocimiento se aumentará;
- Conoceremos los secretos que nosotros nunca soñamos acerca, duro de describir.
- Esto es algo que Paul podría jactarse realmente acerca de --but que no será el caso. This is something that Paul could really boast about---but that will not be the case.

5 De tal hombre me gloriaré; pero de mí mismo en nada me gloriaré, sino en mis debilidades. 6 Sin embargo, si quisiera gloriarme, no sería insensato, porque diría la verdad; pero lo dejo, para que nadie piense de mí más de lo que en mí ve, u oye de mí.

1. Las razones para no jactar
 - a. No quiera que gente para mirelo de una manera que ellos no podrían ver para sí mismos
 - b. El no desea la posición especial
 - c. No quiera hacer cualquiera reclama a nada excepcional acerca de su ministerio.
2. Hoy, hay la abundancia de libros:
 - a. Las experiencias excepcionales de la tercera dimensión
 - b. La gente muere, va al cielo, o al infierno, y regresa a hablar acerca de ello.
 - c. La persona llega a una posición de la celebridad, da conferencias, hace viajes, y da entrevistas.
 - d. Pero no el apóstol Pablo, el esperó 14 años antes de mencionar algo de su experiencia.

Vr. 7 Y para que la grandeza de las revelaciones no me exaltase desmedidamente, me fue dado un aguijón en mi carne, un mensajero de Satanás que me abofetee, para que no me enaltezca sobremanera;

1. Pablo se jactaba en sus debilidades
 - a. “un aguijon en mi carne”
 - i. poor eyesight
 - ii. speech impediment
 - iii. some sort of physical ailment

- b. “un mensajero de Satanás”
 - i. ha venido para bofetearme”
 - ii. hacerme la vida miserable
 - iii. para irritarme
 - iv. un aguijon en mi carne
- 2. El proposito: “no me exaltase” it was given to keep him humble so that it wouldn’t go to his head.
 - a. The Lord and Satan were in it together:
 - i. Book of Job, Satan appears before the Lord
 - ii. At the end of the book, it was God alone.
 - iii. God’s says to Job, “I’m responsible, Job. Any questions?”
 - b. Combination of two forces:
 - i. Satan’s purpose was to destroy and harass Paul, to make his life miserable for him.
 - ii. God’s purpose was to strengthen him, to humble him and to keep him usable in his hands.
 - iii. Trials that come to Christians, have both of these elements

Vr. 8 respecto a lo cual tres veces he rogado al Señor, que lo quite de mí. 9 Y me ha dicho: Bástate mi gracia; porque mi poder se perfecciona en la debilidad.

1. How did he hear the voice: vision or an inner conviction of his mind?
 - a. “bastate mi gracia; porque mi poder se perfecciona en la debilidad.
2. If God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness, what is God busy doing in us?
 - a. Making us weak, right?
 - b. And what makes us weak?
 - c. Being under attack, feeling inadequate to handle pressures and problems that we are facing.
3. If this is what you are feeling, realize that it is not only Satan, but God is working in you as well.
 - a. God makes us feel this way to keep us from that which would render us useless in the work of the Kingdom.
 - b. Paul knew that the worst thing he could do was to become arrogant and prideful about his revelations.
 - c. It is more important to God to keep him humble than it was to make him comfortable., so He allowed this to go on.
4. Beware of Spiritual Pride!
 - a. The most dangerous threat to any ministry is pride.
 - b. Ministries have fallen because they became arrogant and boastful about what God was doing through them.

9b Por tanto, de buena gana me gloriaré más bien en mis debilidades, para que repose sobre mí el poder de Cristo. 10 Por lo cual, por amor a Cristo me gozo (I AM CONTENT WITH WEAKNESS, INSULTS, AND HARDSHIPS, RSV) en las

debilidades, en afrentas, en necesidades, en persecuciones, en angustias; porque cuando soy débil, entonces soy fuerte.

1. Paul decided to do two things:
 - a. **First: Never permit himself to brag about what he was doing**
 - i. If this became a temptation, Paul would focus his attention and find some area of weakness and boast about that.
 - ii. He would do this in order to not succumb to the temptation of pride.
 - iii. Paul said: "I'm going to remind myself of who I really am and what I really can do by boasting only in my weaknesses."
 1. Times of apparent failures,
 2. Times when I don't do very well
 - b. **Second: Whenever trouble comes, he says, "I want to be content."**
 - i. I don't want to gripe or complain, or feel sorry for me
 - ii. I want to realize that this is the best setting for God to work in my life. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
2. When is the devil being beaten?
 - a. ***"The devil is being defeated when we are feeling attacked and under the gun, when we feel weak and helpless and do not know what to do, when we are not sure how to respond, when in our perplexities and sense of weakness we come before the Lord and plead with him for strength to go on one more day, and for grace to help us stand."***
By Ray Stedman

Missionary in New Guinea: "Man, Man, it's great to be in the thick of the fight and to draw the old devil's heaviest guns, to have him at you with depression and discouragement, slander and disease! He doesn't waste time on a lukewarm bunch; he hits good and hard when a fellow is hitting him. You can always measure the weight of your blow by the one you get back. When you're on your back with fever and at your last ounce of strength, when some of your converts backslide, when you learn that your most promising enquirers are fooling, when your mail gets held up and some don't bother to answer your letters, is that time to put on mourning? No sir, that's the time to pull out the stops and shout hallelujah! The old fellow's getting it in the neck and hitting back. Heaven is leaning over the battlements and watching. Will he stick it? And as they see Who is with us, as they see the unlimited reserves, the boundless resources, as they see the impossibility of failure, how disgusted and sad they must be when we run away. Glory to God! We're not going to run away!"

