

2 Corinthians 13:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

Analysis

For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong—Paul rejoices in role reversal: his weakness (asthenōmen, ἀσθενῶμεν, "we are weak") alongside their strength (dynatoi, δυνατοί, "you are strong"). If they're spiritually strong, Paul appears weak (no discipline needed), but that's precisely his desire. This inverts worldly power dynamics: the apostle's joy comes from congregation's strength, not from exercising authority over them.

And this also we wish, even your perfection—The Greek katartisis (κατάρτισις, "perfection/restoration/completion") appears only here in the NT. It means "mending, restoring to proper condition" (used of mending nets in Matt 4:21), pointing to sanctification—becoming what God intends. Paul's ultimate goal is their katartisis, not his vindication. This echoes Ephesians 4:12 where leaders exist "for the perfecting (katartismos) of the saints."

Historical Context

Ancient patronage systems created dependency—benefactors maintained power by keeping clients subordinate. Paul's model radically differs: true apostolic success is measured by believers' maturity and independence in Christ, not by maintaining hierarchical control. Paul aims to work himself out of a job, producing mature saints who need less intervention.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's rejoicing in his own 'weakness' and their 'strength' challenge modern leadership models?
2. What does 'perfection' (katartisis—restoration/completion) look like in Christian sanctification?
3. How do we measure pastoral success: by leader's authority being exercised, or by congregation's maturity?

Interlinear Text

χαίρομεν	γὰρ	ὅταν	ἡμεῖς	ἀσθενῶμεν	ὕμεῖς	δὲ	δυνατοὶ
are glad	For	when	we	we are weak	ye	and	strong
G5463	G1063	G3752	G2249	G770	G5210	G1161	G1415
ἥτε·	τοῦτο	δὲ	καὶ	εὐχόμεθα	τὴν	ὑμῶν	κατάρτισιν
are	this	and	also	we wish	G3588	even your	perfection
G5600	G5124	G1161	G2532	G2172		G5216	G2676

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 13:11 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

1 Corinthians 4:10 (Parallel theme): We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

1 Thessalonians 3:10 (Parallel theme): Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

1 Peter 5:10 (Parallel theme): But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

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