

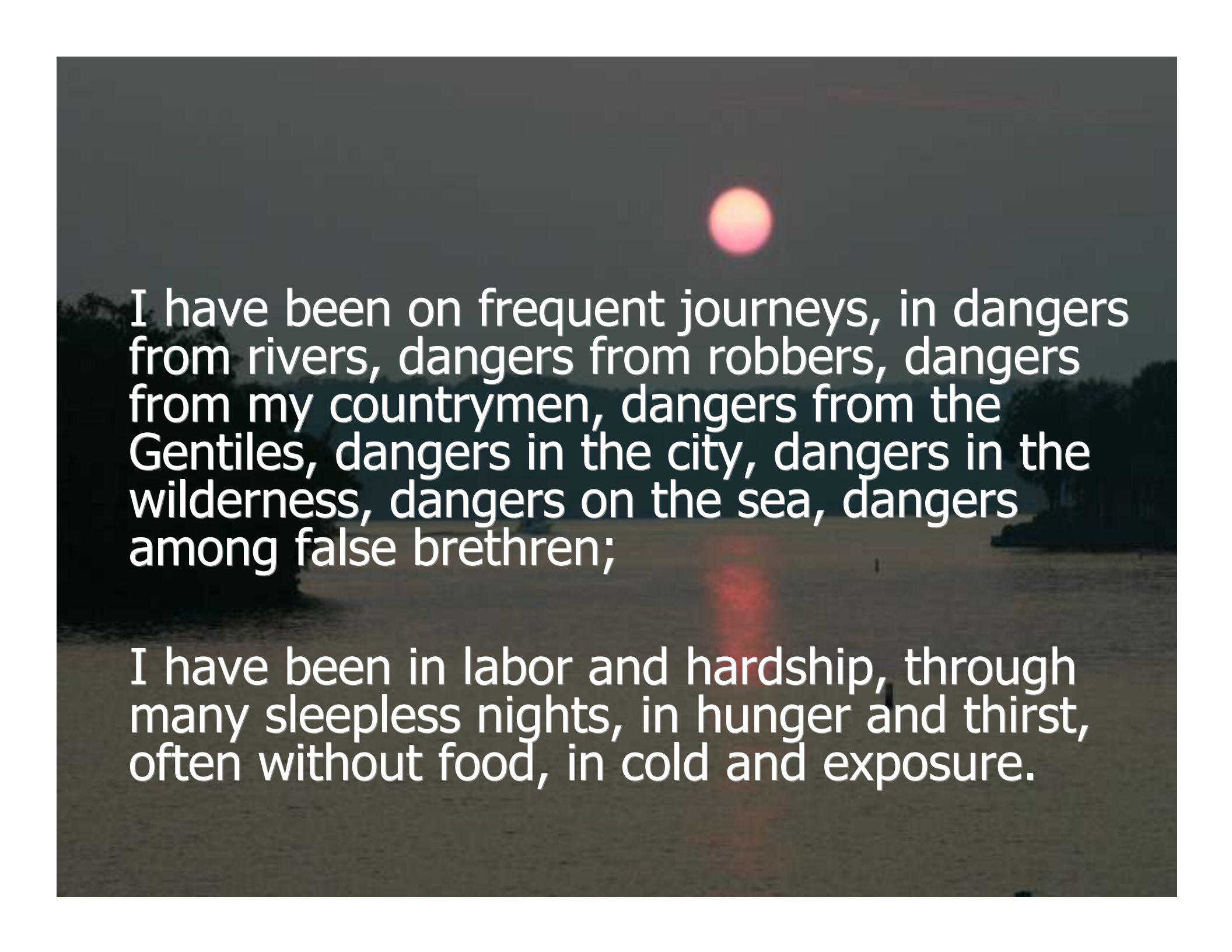
Strength in Weakness

When I am weak,
then I am strong!

Paul's Ministry ...

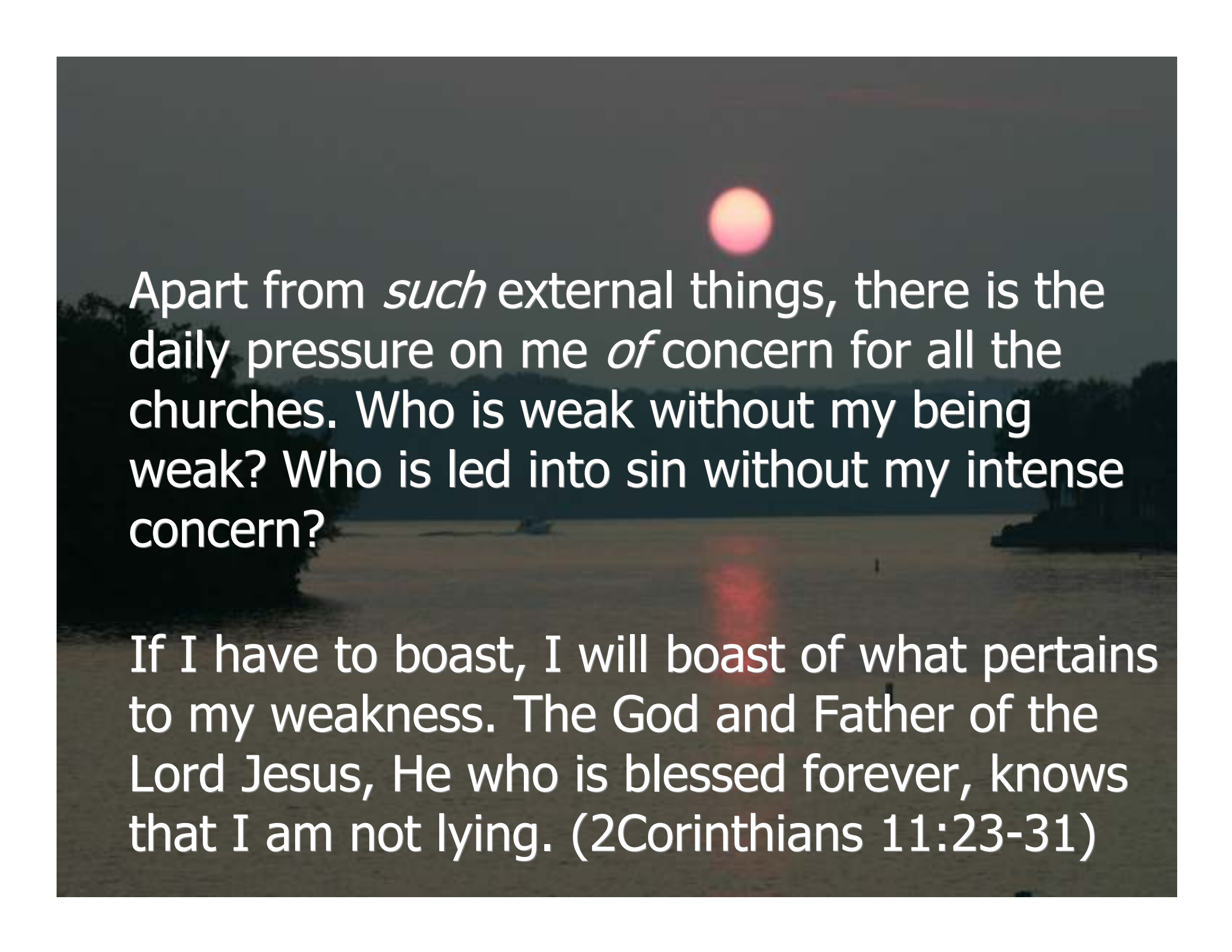
Are they servants of Christ?--I speak as if insane--I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper center, with its light reflecting on the water below. The sky is a deep, dark blue, and the water is a lighter, shimmering blue. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

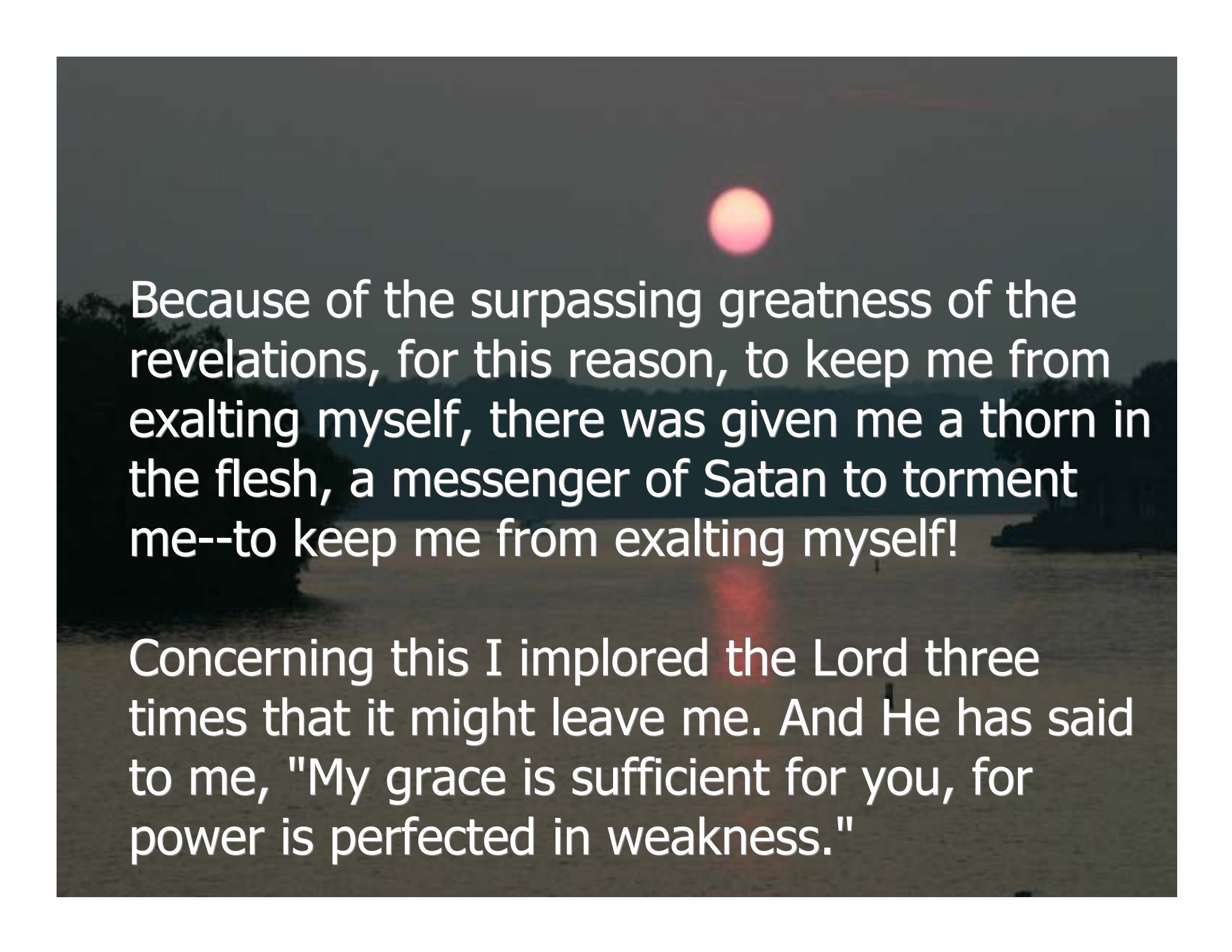
I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.



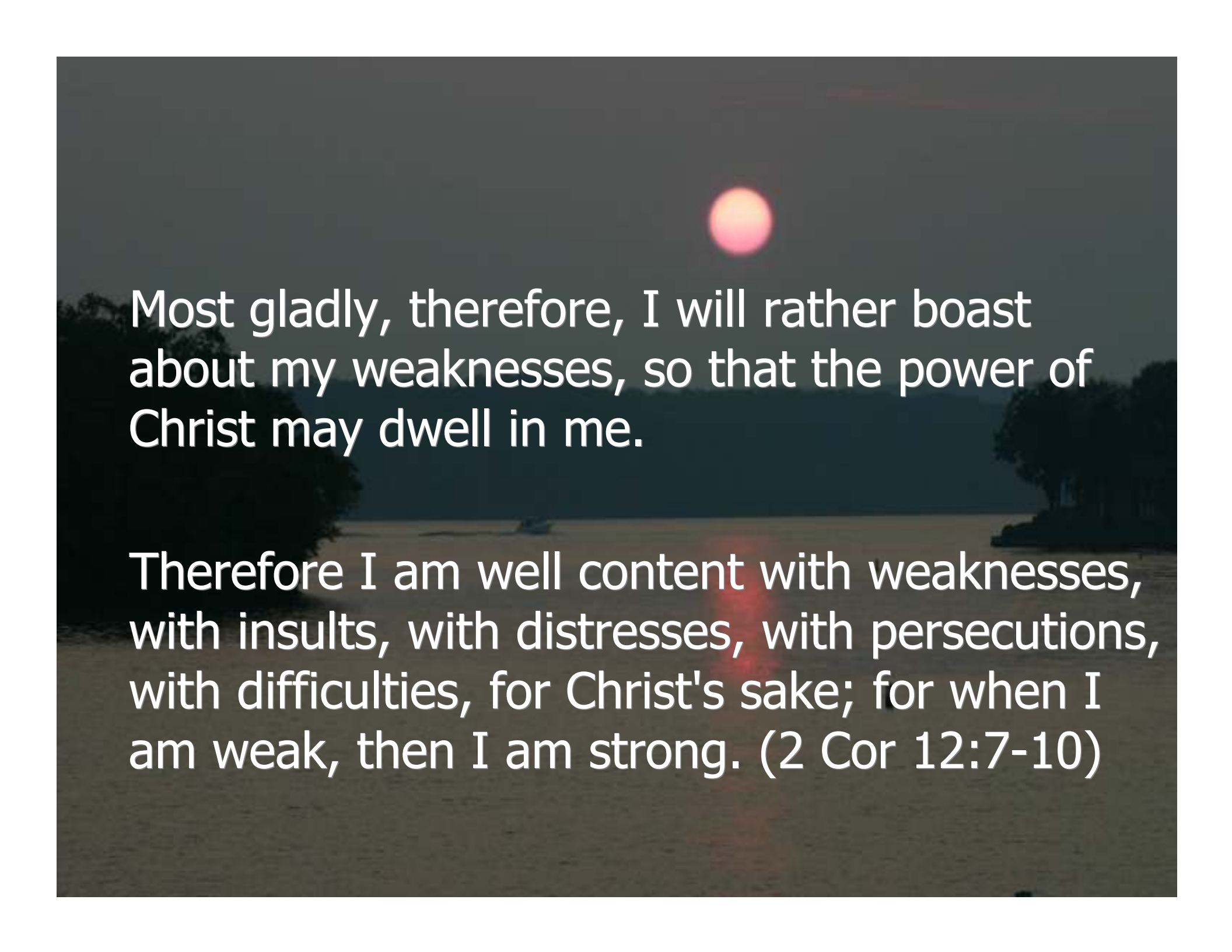
Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. (2Corinthians 11:23-31)



Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me--to keep me from exalting myself!

Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."



Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:7-10)

Themes

A sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is a bright red circle in the upper right, with its reflection visible in the water below. The sky is a dark, muted blue, and the water is a dark greyish-blue. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

- God's Sovereignty: He caused all things to work together for good in Paul's life.
- Humility: God is using events in Paul's life to teach him about the humility.
- Weakness: Paul had to be weak to be humble.

What is weakness?

..My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in **weakness**

..I will rather boast about my **weaknesses**, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me

..I am well content with **weaknesses**

..when I am **weak**, then I am strong

What is weakness?

A loss of control that results in a state where one cannot function in a manner in which they were accustomed to.

A loss of muscle control might result in bodily weakness. A loss of mental control may cause one to appear weak minded.

Weakness is all about the lack of control!

What is weakness?

..My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected when you are not in control.

..I will rather boast about my powerlessness, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me

..I am well content when I am not in control

..when I do not control, then I am strong

How do we control?

Living by Rules and Principles

Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. -Proverbs 3:5-6

How do we control?

Through Worry

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7

How do we control?

Be anxious for nothing..

..worry is an attempt to be in control

If you pray.. why worry.. if you worry.. why pray?

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength." -Corrie ten Boom

How do we control?

..in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

..prayer releases us from the need to worry

..thanksgiving acknowledges God's sovereignty

How do we control?

..And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus..

..peace is an indicator of how we prayed
..peace is meant to guard us from worry

Being strong involves having peace when things appear to be out of control.

How do we control?

By Living in the Past

..one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

-Philippians 3:13b-14

How do we control?

..one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind

..remembering is a way to be in control

..unforgiveness is all about control

..gossip is a way that we control

Being strong when we are weak is all about forgetting and giving up control.

How do we control?

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is a bright orange circle in the upper right, with its light reflecting on the water. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow. In the distance, a small boat is visible on the water. The foreground shows dark silhouettes of trees and bushes on the left and right sides.

..reaching forward to what *lies* ahead

..Hope is all about what lies ahead

..You can hope if you have given up control

How do we control?

Through Discontentment

Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. me. -Philippians 4:11-12

How do we control?

..I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

..discontentment comes when we want control
..contentment is something we learn

Are you content when God doesn't answer your prayer the way that you want?

Being strong in weakness..

Jesus' Modeled It

- ◆ Not my will but yours
- ◆ Didn't defend Himself
- ◆ Carried His cross
- ◆ Accepted suffering
- ◆ Forgave those who crucified Him