**WOODLANDS CHURCH**

**February 25th 2017. Amazing Grace**

**Discussion notes: Grace for suffering: 2 Corinthians 12:9**

‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’. This is what the Lord said to Paul when Paul pleaded for his ‘thorn in the flesh’ to be taken away. How do we handle the idea of a God of Love giving us grace for suffering rather than removing it?

1. What was Paul’s thorn in the flesh? There are many theories ranging from a persistent persecuting adversary (like a stalker) to bad eyesight! What do you think? Do you have a ‘thorn in the flesh’? What is it?
2. Suffering for Christians can be differentiated between ‘suffering for following Christ’ and ‘suffering because of life/living in a fallen world’. Where do you think these verses most apply?
3. The life and death of Jesus (the cruciform life) is a demonstration of power made perfect in weakness. This is a challenging way to live. What does it mean for Christians to imitate Christ in taking up their cross and following Him?
4. Jesus said ‘In this world you will have trouble, but take heart for I have overcome the world’. John 16:33. What does it mean for Jesus to have overcome the world?
5. In what ways might grace manifest for the sick and terminally ill?
6. What does this idea mean for the persecuted Church?

Suffering may be the hardest thing to ever happen to us, but it is not the worst thing. The worst thing is to lose our selves. It is a challenge for us sometimes not to disobey God in order to avoid suffering. How can we access grace for suffering however it presents?