

When I Am Weak, Then I Am Strong

Theme: Power perfected in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Introduction:

- A. **This world loves** accomplishments, strength, speed, strategy, wisdom ... of man.
- B. **This world loves** to be "in control": If not anxiety, questions, and doubts creep into our minds.
- C. As Christians, however, is our goal to be "in control" or "under control"? cp. **Gal. 2:20**
- D. In other words, where does our "strength lay"?
- E. **This week we look at how God is glorified:**
 - 1. By contrasting this world's view and God's word in how He is glorified.
 - 2. How God's greatness (not ours) magnifies His name.
 - 3. And, how we are actually strengthened spiritually through our personal weaknesses.

Discussion:

- I. Contrasting The World with the Word
 - A. **In the natural world the course of nature is evident:**
 - 1. **Life in general:** The stronger, faster, and more cunning survive.
 - 2. **In business and athletics:** The stronger, faster, smarter, most efficient, wins.
 - 3. It is understandable then, that – as men who live in the flesh – we strive to live with this mindset.
 - B. **While this *law of nature* is the way of the world, it is not the way of the Lord.**
 - 1. While we live in the world, *we are not of the world.* **Jn. 17:16**
 - 2. We cannot apply a truly successful walk in the Lord by this mindset or way of living.
 - 3. To the world, weaknesses are unbecoming ... even among professing Christians.
 - 4. To God, however: His power is perfected through our weakness. cp. **Jdg. 7:2**
- II. Why? Because God is Glorified When His Power is Seen
 - A. **God used men in the most unimaginable manner to bring glory to His name.**
 - 1. He used a small nation of stubborn shepherds/slaves to be His chosen people. **Dt. 9:6**
 - 2. He used a small statured people who did not know war and afraid to leave the Egyptians. **Ex. 14:10-12**
 - 3. In this way the salvation of the Lord (for Israel) would glorify His name among all nations. **Ex. 14:13; Josh. 2:8ff**
- III. God Glorified Through Our Weakness
 - A. **God used these untrained men to battle against the giants of Canaan and armies far more numerous than they.**
 - 1. He used 300 men against two armies over 135,000 strong. **Jdg. 7:1-2, 7; 8:10**
 - 2. He used a young and small shepherd, with no experience of war to slay a giant. **1 Sam. 17:41-42, 45-49**
 - 3. In cases like these God makes it clear where the glory should reside. **Jdg. 7:2**
 - B. **God uses the seemingly *worthless* to deliver the invaluable souls of the lost.**
 - 1. He used the unlikeliest of men to preach His message: fishermen, tax collector, the humbled. **Acts 2:7 (Lk. 5:10, 27);**
 - 2. He uses a foolish message. **1 Cor. 1:21**
 - 3. He uses the humble and meek recipients to enter and flourish in His kingdom. cp. **Rom. 6:17-18; Matt. 5:2-12**
- IV. Our Faith is Strengthened through Our Own Weaknesses
 - A. **Our faith is not in us, but in Him.**
 - B. **In like manner: our strength lies not in us, but in Him. Eph. 6:10**
 - C. **And, like the apostle Paul, thorns may be given to us to humble us so that we learn to trust in God's grace. Cp. 2 Cor. 12:7ff**

Conclusion:

- A. **Our fleshly mind works with a mindset trained by our experiences in the world: only the strong survive.**
- B. **Yet, God is greatly magnified or glorified when (by faith) we serve Him through our weaknesses.**