

Made Perfect In Weakness

Sunday, July 28, 2019

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Straight Paths Bible Church

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

- I. God's strength is made perfect in OUR weakness – this is a truth that illustrated throughout the Bible.
 - A. All the people we consider to be great people in the Bible, and every situation where some person of God, or people of God were at the end of the road, that is when we see God step up and move in miraculous ways to deliver.
 - B. God does not seek strong men to use, He seeks weak men, and He strengthens them with his power – this is grace.
 - C. God does not strengthen people who are strong in their own eyes, He only strengthens people who are weak and powerless – and know it.
 1. Few are the people who truly come to the point where they realize they can do nothing of themselves.
 2. I cannot even convince anyone here today of anything I say, and some I cannot even convince you to listen.
 3. If anything is accomplished with anything I do in my life it will be God that does it – not me.
 - D. The strong man's strength is his own – the weak man's strength is God's.
 - E. Until we absolutely believe with all our heart the words of Jesus when He said, "...without me you can do nothing" we will know very little of the true grace of God.
 - F. Until we are brought completely to the end of ourselves, to the end of our strength, to the end of our pride, to the end of our resources, to the end of our recourses – we cannot know the perfect strength of God.
 - G. So to continue in our own strength and our own devices is to resist the grace of God.
 - H. Grace is the divine influence on our mind and heart that imparts to us the power to overcome sin and to obey God in this present, evil world.
 - I. Grace is the power that enables us to continue and persevere when all the circumstances of our life seem to testify against God and call us a fool for believing in Him.
 - J. Grace is the power that enables us to face death with calm assurance and happy anticipation.
 - K. Grace is the power and strength of God that picks up where man's strength leaves off – but not until.
 - L. So we can live by our own strength or we can live in the grace of God.
- II. Now if this is all true (and it is) I have to confess that I have observed very little of the true grace of God in the years I have been a Christian.
 - A. I have seen many men who thought themselves strong and their whole ministry was about proving how strong they were.
 - B. I have seen many do what they and others considered to be mighty works and take all the credit for it because they were so strong and determined and wise.
 - C. I have seen a lot of people make a lot of things happen with money and determination and politicks in the churches, and claim it was God who did it.

- D. But very few are the times when I have seen a truly humble and empty man do such impressive and showy things.
- E. God's perfect strength simply does not manifest itself in such a way.
- F. Those who have enjoyed good health and been prosperous all their lives do not know much about the strength of God, or the grace of God.
- G. We only get knowledge of the strength of God by experiencing our own weakness.
- H. We will not experience our own weakness unless we travel the thorny road that the people of God before us have traveled.
- I. Great tribulation brings out the great strength of God.

III. Everything in this world is set up to stop us from realizing the power of the grace of God.

- A. The reigning pagan philosophy of the world puts self-confidence, self-esteem, self-reliance as the way to have power.
 - 1. Believe in yourself, then others will believe in you.
 - 2. Speak boldly, confidently, with assurance, and you will convince and persuade.
 - 3. The race is to the swift, and the battle to the strong.
 - 4. God is on the side of the successful and the prosperous.
 - 5. He who claims the most will get the most.
 - 6. People seek to be "empowered" by forcing others to yield to them.
- B. But the true way to be empowered is by having self diminished to absolutely nothing.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

- 1. An infant is the weakest of all human beings, but its cry calls to its aid all the strength needed to meet its needs.

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

- C. All our pride, self-confidence, self-reliance, self-esteem, has to be annihilated, and we must truly be brought to realize we are nothing and can do nothing.

IV. There are only two ways to deal with a problem.

- A. Remove the problem
- B. Increase the strength needed to bear it.
- C. The grace of God provides the strength to bear anything that comes into our life.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

- D. If you ever see the perfect strength of God manifested in someone you will see a person who has nothing to say of themselves and much to say of the grace of God.
 - 1. It will be a person who has been completely emptied of themselves.