**Gods Strength & My Weakness**

I want you to take a few minutes to think about what the following statement means to you

* **Gods Strength is made perfect in my weakness**

Let’s take a closer look at this

If I, as an adult, was to offer a small child help picking up a feather, He would probably roll his eyes at me knowing he could pick it up Himself. (He would not appreciate the Help). But If I were to offer the Child help picking up a large heavy object then he would accept the help knowing he could not do it on his own. The Child would know that he was only able to complete the task because of the help he received from someone much stronger! It would also be apparent to others around that the Child had help completing the task.

So looking back at the statement “Gods Strength is made perfect in my weakness”, we might now understand that when we realize we are not strong enough to face some situation we can call on God for help and his strength will becomes obvious (to ourselves and others around) because we can suddenly overcome those things that we could not do ourselves before.

Let’s take a look at Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. In this letter Paul talks about having a “Thorn in the Flesh” that God gave him so he would rely on God and not himself for his strength and keep him humble.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (ESV), So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, “**My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

When Paul talks about a thorn he could be referring to a number of things such as physical illness or impairment (Eye Sight), anxiety, depression, the loss of something he needed or cared about (Home, Job).

A Thorn could be just about any difficulty situation we face in our lives (some kids may say it is a brother or sister☺). God can put a “Thorn” in your life so his Grace and strength can be seen in your life.

Sometimes God will choose to help you through a situation instead of removing it, as he did with Paul, knowing that by removing the thorn he is removing our dependence on him.

* **We should not always pray for God to get us out of a difficult situation but pray for him to help us through.**

In this way we can become more dependent on him and learn to trust him to get us through each day.

God also wants us to recognize his strength so we do not take credit for his work

Adrian Rogers told a story about a woodpecker pecking on a tree. In the middle of his pecking, a bolt of lightning hit that tree, splitting it right down the middle. The woodpecker backed off, surveyed the situation, and flew away. Later that day he returned with nine other woodpeckers. Proudly he said, "There it is, gentlemen, right there. Look what I did."

1 Corinthians 1: 27, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen."

We find God’s strength was shown through weakness in the bible:

* God’s Strength was shown when Gideon defeated 135,000 Midianites with just 300 men.
* God’s Strength was shown when a small shepherd boy defeated a giant with a sling shot and became king of the nation of Israel.
* God’s Strength was shown when an 80 year old man went up against Pharo and his mighty army saying “let my people go”.
* God’s Strength was shown when another 80 year old man was thrown into a den of hungry lions and came out without a scratch.
* God strength was shown when a young Jewish girl (Ester) was made queen and saved her people from genocide

Over and over again the Bible shows God’s strength through the meek

Today you may feel an inch tall. You may think you are the weakest link in a family or job, but God can make a hero out of a zero. If you follow His leading, nothing and no one can hold you back. He is more than enough. So we can confidently say, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?' (Hebrews 13:5).

There was a man named John Bunyan who was born in England in 1628, “of a low, inconsiderable generation” (his own words). Some called him “an illiterate tinker.” But while in jail for his Christian faith, Bunyan wrote The Pilgrim’s Progress. Some estimate that only the Bible has reached more people for Jesus than Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress. He is another example of a person of faith in the Lord emerging from humble circumstances to have a worldwide influence for God.

Having problems and thorns will not stop God from using you. If you have been struggling with some situation that will not leave you alone and you have been crying out to God repeatedly but it is still there, don’t give up. Know that:

* **His grace is sufficient to get you through each day.**

God will continue to use those that are imperfect and week to show his strength, even with all there flaws, just as he continued to use Paul to deliver his message to the world.

* Paul could have said I can’t do this and went home

Paul wrote in Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

When God is directing your path it is not what you have or how much you have that will determine the outcome. Gideon was hiding inside of a winepress from the Midianite raiders While he was working, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and called him a mighty man of valor but Gideon was the least in his family, who was the least in his tribe. God called him to wake a giant sleeping army that could have easily kill him. It was God that gave Gideon the victory. You only have to follow one step at a time to win the battle. Don’t stop, don’t turn back, don’t doubt God’s strength, keep putting one foot in front of the other and you will come out the winner as long as you are following God’s lead.

* **When God is at the center of your life you spend each day in worship and not worry**

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

* **Never should our trials make us forget the abundant goodness of God.**

God may choose to put a thorn in your life for different reasons like to remove sin (Like Paul’s Pride), to draw us closer, or to call us back when we have turned away. God wants us to see how much we need him so he can show us how much he loves us.

Sometimes we use our thorns and weaknesses as an excuse not to follow God, thinking there is no way I can do what God is calling me to do, but the point is, God wants to show his strength in your weakness so he will be glorified in you and others may seek to know him.

**Reminds me of an old story**

Once upon a time there was a farmer who had an old mule. The mule fell into a deep dry well and began to cry loudly. Hearing his mule cry, the farmer came over and assessed the situation. The well was deep and the mule was heavy. He knew it would be difficult, if not impossible, to lift the animal out. The farmer decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. So, he came up with a plan to bury the Old Mule in the well. In this way he could solve two problems: put the old mule out of his misery and have his well filled in.

He called upon his neighbors to help and they went to work shoveling dirt in to the hole and on to the mule's back. Initially, the old mule was hysterical! But as the Men continued shoveling the dirt on to the mule’s back It suddenly dawned on him that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, HE could SHAKE IT OFF AND STEP UP! This he did, blow after blow.

"Shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" he repeated to encourage himself. No matter how painful the blows or distressing the situation seemed, the old mule fought "panic" and just kept right on SHAKING IT OFF AND STEPPING UP!

It wasn't long before the old mule, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the side of the well! What seemed as though it would bury him, actually blessed him...all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.

**Final Thoughts**

THAT'S LIFE! If we face our problems, respond to them positively, and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity. The problems that come along to bury us can have the potential to bless us and others around us.

When dealing with trials, view them as an opportunity to learn something new. There is so much we can learn through adversity. It is like working out or practicing something over and over or studying a new subject. It is not fun at the time but in the end, if you are persistent, it is worth the results.

Ask God to open your eyes to see what he is trying to accomplish through the trials. Then you can Thank God for them and turn them into opportunities to glorify Him

If there is some trial you are facing today? Know that God is with you and wants to show his strength though you. You Just need to ask, shake it off and believe.

Before every resurrection there has to be a crucifixion. If you are suffering through trials today just wait the resurrection is just around the corner