

Strength In Weakness

8-23-26

2 Corinthians 12:9 (ESV)

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.

I preached on this verse 5 years ago to the week. Literally this revelation from God can changed our life and our attitude toward every difficulty we face. The definition of grace is the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life or favor and power. Thus, God’s favor and power are sufficient for us, and this power is made perfect in weakness. Since power is made perfect in weakness, we boast in our weakness “so that” the power of Christ will rest on us. In weakness God gives us power. Difficulties, weaknesses, and sufferings train us rely on God, and experience in the body, now, on earth the power that raised Jesus from the dead.

2 Corinthians 1:9 (ESV)

Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

Not to repeat the message 5 years ago, I will use a great Biblical example of someone who God used his weakness to teach him and give him strength.

The man is Joseph. Joseph is an example of God's work and our life. In Genesis 37:2 we see that Jacob was Joseph's father. At this time Joseph was 17 years old, the second youngest to 12 brothers. We see some family tensions exposed. Jacob loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And to show his love he made him a robe of many colors. His brothers saw that their father loved him most. Thus, they grew to hate him. To top things off, Joseph had a dream, that all his brothers would bow down to him. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. Joseph is sailing through life. Most loved, most favored, plus God gives him big dreams. What possibly could go wrong. One day his father sends him to check on his brothers who are working in the fields. His brothers see him from afar and say, "Here comes that dreamer. Let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits and we will see what will become of his dreams." They threw him in a pit.

Lesson: Joseph is in the pit for no reason with nowhere to look but up and ask, "Why?"

His brothers slaughtered a goat and dipped Joseph's robe of many colors in the blood. They sent the robe to their father. He said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him."

Now Joseph's brothers thought that instead of killing him they would try and make a little money. They sold Joseph to Arab merchants who took him to Egypt. Lesson: Saved from the pit Joseph is sold as a slave. Sometimes God's plans are not clear.

Joseph brought to Egypt was sold to Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard. However, the LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴ So Potiphar made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. The LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake. Lesson: As a slave Joseph served Potiphar with dignity as if he were serving God and God blessed him and Potiphar. What possibility could go wrong. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time Potiphar's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Lie with me." She is definitely blunt, and she was persistent.

Joseph consistently avoided her. He told her, “How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?”

Lesson: As a slave in a pagan land, Joseph showed moral character being accountable to God.

However, one day she corners him and grabs his garment. But he runs off leaving his garment in her hand. She was furious with Joseph. When her husband comes home, she shows him Joseph’s garment and said, “The Hebrew servant, whom you have brought among us, attacked me, but I cried out and he ran away.” When Potiphar heard this, he was angry and threw Joseph into the prison. However, in prison the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor. The warden of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. The warden paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph’s charge, because the LORD was with Joseph. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.

Lesson: The Lord was with Joseph in prison and made everything he did succeed. God will work HIS power wherever we are. Later, two servants of Pharaoh were put into prison. One night, these two servants each have a dream. God gives Joseph the interpretation of their dreams that one will be executed and one will be restored to his position.

It happened just as Joseph said. After 2 years, Pharaoh has a dream. No one can interpret the dream and Pharaoh is very distraught. Then the servant whom Pharaoh released from prison two years before, says, “A young Hebrew who was in prison with us interpreted our dreams which turned out just like he said.” Therefore, Pharaoh sent for Joseph.

Lesson: Pharaoh over the great Egyptian empire sends for Joseph a prisoner. This is God’s Hand in our life. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” Joseph answered Pharaoh, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer. God has shown to Pharaoh what HE is about to do.” Lesson: At every opportunity rely on God and do what HE tells you. Joseph tells Pharaoh that there will come seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Then Joseph tells Pharaoh what he needs to do to prepare for the famine. This proposal pleased Pharaoh and he tells his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are.” You shall be over my house, and all my people.

Only concerning the throne will I be greater than you.” And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “You will be over all the land of Egypt.” Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Lesson: This was the man God allowed to be thrown into a pit, sold into slavery, and put into prison for no apparent reason. The account is not finished! When the famine came there was no food in Isarel, and Jacob, Joseph’s father, sent his sons to Egypt to buy food. They had to go before Joseph. They did not recognize him, but Joseph recognized them. As in Joseph’s dream, his brothers bowed down before him. Ultimately, he not only sold them food but brought all of his family to Egypt where they would live for 400 years until the time of Moses. After Jacob died, Joseph’s brothers were afraid he would punish them. Fearfully as they gathered around. Joseph did not punish them, but wept and said one of the most insightful statements in the entire Bible.

Genesis 50:20 (ESV)

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

This account of Joseph is our life. God says to us:

2 Corinthians 12:10 (ESV)

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak (like Joseph), then I am strong.

Thus, we rejoice in our weakness and declare!

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)

I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

We are confident because:

Romans 8:32 (ESV)

God who did not spare HIS own Son but gave HIM up for us all, how will HE not also with JESUS graciously give us all things?

As forgiven people, we are powerful people!