

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Glory of Weakness **Selected Passages**

I. Introduction.

- A. The message I want to bring to you today is the glory of weakness.
 - 1. We tend to not like weakness, seeking to do things from a position of strength.
 - 2. But this is not always the way of God, often God does things to us and through us that is weak, and yet somehow it does amazing things.
 - 3. There is a real message within the Word of that weakness that is used by God for His glory.
- B. Examples of this weakness, this is most fully seen in the two letters written by Paul to the church in Corinth.
 - 1. I suspect that the reason for this is that the Corinthians were in many ways like us, lovers of self and of personal ability and strength.
 - a. Just as we tend to resist weakness, they too seemed to boast about their skills and abilities.
 - b. And so Paul frames much of his words in the imagery of weakness.
 - c. And so I want us to look at several passages that are quite familiar to most of you to prepare our minds to consider the ultimate display of glorious, God-exalting weakness.
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 1:18ff.

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3. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

4. 1 Corinthians 4:10-16.

5. 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:4.

6. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

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- C. Now it is here that I can talk about the Christmas story for a bit to bring this all into perspective.

II. The Glory of Weakness.

- A. The whole Christmas story is one of infinite weakness and humiliation. But to see this requires a backdrop upon which to paint the picture.
 - 1. Colossians 1:15-17.
 - 2. In Isaiah 6 the prophet saw that great vision, Isaiah 6:1-4. In John 12 Jesus explains that the vision was a vision of Him!
 - 3. 1 Corinthians 10:26.
 - 4. This is our Lord. This is who we worship.
- B. But the story of Christmas is utterly different from this.
 - 1. The mystery of the incarnation—God with us.
 - 2. The mystery of the virgin birth—the glory and the shame.
 - 3. The mystery of his growing up—Luke 2:51-52.
 - 4. The mystery of his temptation—Luke 4:1-13.
- C. All of this is described for us in Philippians 2.
- D. The purpose of this death was not vague, it was to accomplish a great work, but it had to be done out of weakness rather than strength.
 - 1. Galatians 4:4 says that God sent forth His son into the world at the right time. But it also says that he was born under the dominion of the Law.
 - 2. Why? Verse 5 tells us.
 - 3. The curse of sin had to be broken and the power of sin is in death. The penalty for sin was death, and so death was what He must do on our behalf that we might live.
 - 4. The whole Christmas story is one of weakness.
- E. Is it any wonder then, that we are called to be content in our weakness?
 - 1. 2 Corinthians 8:9
 - 2. 2 Corinthians 13:3-5.

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III. Conclusion.

- A. If we are unwise people we will think that we have progressed beyond the cross of Christ. We shall seek the abundant life here and now and seek our leisure and pleasures as if they are our rights.
- B. But if we are wise we shall rest in the glory of weakness that was fully displayed on that Christmas day, when our Lord humbled himself, taking on human flesh that he might dwell with sinners and redeem them from the curse and power of sin.

Benediction

May our merciful God and Father open our eyes to the glory and vastness of His love toward us through Jesus His Son. May we see ourselves seated with Him in heaven as recipients of His grace. And may God grant us through the Spirit, eyes to grasp the many good works He has called us to love and do. Amen