

## “Strength in Weakness”

### 1 Corinthians 1

26 Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28 God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29 so that no one may boast before him.

31 Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

### Ch. 2

1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

### Vs. 26

Brothers and sisters, **think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise** by human standards; **not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.**

It’s a humbling thing to think about our weaknesses...

We would much rather talk about our strengths and what we’re good at...

It’s a much more comfortable subject because we’re more confident in our strengths than in our weaknesses...

This is what I’ve found:

You may be good when you rely on you...

But you’re great when you rely on God...

think of what you were when you were called...  
Not many of you were wise...  
not many were influential...  
not many were of noble birth...

It's not all were not, but that many were not...

**But God chose the foolish... God chose the weak... God chose the lowly... God chose the despised... and the things that are not...**  
29 so that no one may boast before him.

It's interesting how God picks  
The Disciples were fishermen  
One was a Zealot  
One was a Tax Collector  
Luke we know was a physician

- Can you imagine going from a Fisherman to being a preacher
- or a Religious/Political Zealot to one who learns to forgive and show grace
- Or a Tax Collector who lives for financial gain to trust God for every dollar.

Then there's Paul;  
Paul with regard to Theology was the most educated...  
Paul no doubt had the most credentials...  
He was taught by the great Gamaliel...  
Gamaliel was considered the Pharisee Doctor of Jewish Law...

3 I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

- This was a whole new orientation for Paul
- Paul learned his own strength lead him into error
- His own thinking lead him into persecuting the Lord and his Church
- Paul had to lay down his way, to do it God's way

## 2 Corinthians 12

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

It's in weakness, we learn to Pray...

It is in weakness that we learn to hear God's voice...

It's in weakness, we learn to cry out to God for Help...

It's in weakness, we learn to ask God for wisdom...

It's in weakness, we learn to rely upon God rather than our own ability...

## Isaiah 41

10

So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11

"All who rage against you  
will surely be ashamed and disgraced;  
those who oppose you  
will be as nothing and perish.

12

Though you search for your enemies,  
you will not find them.  
Those who wage war against you  
will be as nothing at all.

13

For I am the Lord your God  
who takes hold of your right hand  
and says to you, Do not fear;  
I will help you.

14

Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob,  
little Israel, do not fear,  
for I myself will help you,” declares the Lord,  
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15

“See, I will make you into a threshing sledge,  
new and sharp, with many teeth.

You will thresh the mountains and crush them,  
and reduce the hills to chaff.

16

You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up,  
and a gale will blow them away.

But you will rejoice in the Lord  
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

**Worm:** Specifically one who springs from putrefaction. A Maggot or Grub

**Threshing Sledge:** An Instrument made of wooden cylinders armed with stone or iron, drawn by cattle for the purpose of separating the grain from the ear. The wheat from the chaff.

- That’s how awesome God is, He can turn a worm into a threshing instrument. One that is new and sharp with many teeth.
- Israel in their weakness will become a mighty instrument in God’s hands.
- That is what God does...
- He takes average ordinary things and turns them into extraordinary things...

Consider David

It was God who chose David to fight the giant Goliath. David was just a young boy when God called him. He was young in age and immature in physical development. The Bible says, “And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance” (little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. NIV ) (1 Samuel 17:42).

Goliath took it as a joke when he saw who had been sent to fight with him. The giant laughed when he saw whom God had chosen!

1 Samuel 17:43 He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

Then David by the Holy Spirit said these words

### **1 Samuel 17**

45 ...“You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day the Lord will deliver you into my hands, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. This very day I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds and the wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. 47 **All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s**, and he will give all of you into our hands.”

- Who would have ever dreamed that God would select a young, inexperienced boy like David to bring down this giant?
- It may have seemed laughable in the eyes of the world, but this young boy who fearlessly faced Goliath in battle was the exact person God had chosen!

When Paul wrote this epistle, the Corinthian church was the laughingstock of the city. In fact, believers were viewed as the laughingstock of the entire Roman Empire. The governmental authorities considered Christians to be a weak, puny, pathetic, useless group of religious idiots. They were literally the center of all the jokes and were viewed as social rubbish.

Yet these same Christians turned the world upside down in their day and evangelized the Roman Empire! Through their steadfast endurance and commitment to Jesus Christ, they liberated Rome from pagan religion and paved the way for the Gospel to go into the whole world.

The unbelieving world today views the Church very much in the same way. The devil fears the church because He knows the power and authority they

possess. That's why he uses the entertainment industry, educational institutions, and other human agencies to try to belittle the Church and make it look irrelevant, inconsequential, and trivial.

## **Isaiah 40**

29

He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

It's in weakness, we learn to Pray...

It is in weakness that we learn to hear God's voice...

It's in weakness, we learn to cry out to God for Help...

It's in weakness, we learn to ask God for wisdom...

It's in weakness, we learn to rely upon God rather than our own ability...