

WHEN WEAKNESS IS STRENGTH

“Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me... For when I am weak, then I am strong.” —2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10

Failure is so often the prelude to discovering that the ability to survive and live is found in Christ Himself. The Apostle Paul records his own experience of this discovery. To the Corinthians, he catalogues a list of qualities and experiences of which he could legitimately boast, but then he says into his life comes a “messenger of Satan to torment me”. Three times he pleaded with the Lord to take it away, but the Lord said to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

No one can ever be too weak for Christ to work in them and through them, but they can be too strong. No one can ever be too simple, but they can be too clever and no one can ever be too poor, but they can be too rich. The danger when we feel strong is that we believe it! It is only as God exposes our weaknesses that we are ready to trust Him for a strength that is not our own. It is for this reason Paul later states, “We are weak... yet by God’s power we live” (13:4).

In the Christian life, it is our sense of strength that becomes our weakness and our sense of weakness that becomes our strength. The extent of our strength is the measure of our self-sufficiency which will, in turn, become the cause of spiritual barrenness. Conversely, it

will be to the extent of our weakness that will become the measure of our dependency on God which then becomes the cause of our fruitfulness. Hence, Paul's affirmation, "We are glad when we are weak!"

If praise is to be given, it belongs exclusively to God. His power is displayed in people who know they cannot claim credit for it themselves. Many in Corinth were taking themselves or their leaders far too seriously. Some claimed to be of Paul's persuasion, some of Apollos and some of Peter, as though these men held responsibility for their spiritual lives or were free to market their own brand of Christianity. Paul asks indignantly, "What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants through whom you came to believe... I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:5-6).

It is not to the servant but to the Lord Jesus Christ we give credit, for it is only from Him we derive our resources. It is in our weaknesses we discover the strength of Christ, which is why the true servant of God will always lead people to become dependent upon God.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me your strength and help me to become dependent upon You in my weaknesses. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I praying for God's strength in my weakness?