

How Has Christ Redeemed Your Weakness?

Have you ever had the feeling that you're a bad Christian? That no real believer in Jesus would do the things you've done? That God must be disappointed in the way you've acted? That you've simply failed in ways that must prove that you're not really saved? Or, on a lesser front, do you just feel ashamed with your weakness and struggles?

You're not alone. In fact, if you ever feel like you've "made it," there's probably a problem. Now, I don't want to dismiss your sin, make it sound like it's not that big of deal, or make you feel good by comparison, but it can be encouraging to see how people in the Bible that we look up to were just as messed up as you and me. I heard a pastor once comment that most people in the Bible could not be hired in his church. Let's look at a few just in the book of Genesis.

Adam and Eve brought all sin and death into the world by means of their afternoon snack in Genesis 3. Noah built the ark that saved humanity from being entirely wiped out and then gets drunk and naked in Genesis 9. Abraham lies about Sarah, saying she's his sister instead of his wife, which causes Pharaoh to take her as his wife in Genesis 12. Not having learned his lesson, he does pretty much the exact same thing in Genesis 20. Jacob stole his brother Esau's birthright and then his blessing by deceiving his father in Genesis 25 & 27. Two of the twelve sons of Jacob, the twelve sons who become the twelve tribes of Israel, deceptively circumcised an entire village and then murdered them for defiling their sister in Genesis 34. Then, they sell their brother Joseph into slavery because of their hatred of him in Genesis 37.

Need I continue? All the heroes of the faith had some major character flaws. The beauty is that this is why Jesus came to save us! He didn't come to make bad people good; he came to make dead people alive!

The amazing thing about how God works is that though we know the failures of the faith heroes, we don't remember them for those moments, and not because we are just overlooking the bad parts. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph tells his brothers, "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." In a similar vein, Romans 8:28 promises that "...for those who love God all things work together for good." This means that even when we fail, Christ is redeeming us and even using our sinful acts somehow for the greater good! God uses our weakness to show his strength, to show us his sovereignty, to grow us, to sanctify us, and to teach us.

Here's a couple questions to discuss in your groups:

- How have you witnessed Christ redeem your shortcomings?
- What stories from the Bible encourage you in times of weakness?
- When you experience weakness, sinfulness, failure, etc., how do you tend to move towards the Lord or away from him?