

The Recipe for the Power of Christ to Work Through You

On July 4, 2021, I was in Brooklyn, New York, speaking at a healing service. I had not slept the night before, I could barely breathe, and I had sharp pains in my chest. Here I was, a healing minister at a healing service and feeling like death warmed over!

I stood up before the congregation feeling like I would fall over if a feather touched me. My voice was faint and trembling. I was certain that no one could hear me, even with the microphone.

After I was done speaking, it was time to minister to those in attendance. The service was a success, with many people coming forward and being healed in spite of how I was feeling. Thank You, Jesus!

I remember how I felt that day, but what the congregation saw and heard was totally different. Those in attendance raved about how filled with the Holy Spirit the service was. In fact, when I arrived home and watched the video myself, I was amazed. The way I'd been feeling at the time wasn't apparent on the video at all.

This is a real-life example of how I will gladly boast about my weaknesses, for when I am weak, He is strong, that the power of Christ will work through me. That is exactly how I made it through that day.

I knew that I was weak and admitted it to myself and others. I also knew the only way I would make it through was by the Holy Spirit who resides in me. In fact, I often use this very incident as an example. Once we know and acknowledge our weaknesses and our lack of ability, God's power flows through us freely. It is by acknowledging that God's grace

(empowerment) is sufficient for us that His power is released. It is through our reliance on Him, not our self-effort, that the miraculous happens.

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to relieve me of this. But he answered me, ‘My grace is always more than enough for you, and my power finds its full expression through your weakness.’ So I will celebrate my weaknesses, for when I’m weak I sense more deeply the mighty power of Christ living in me. So I’m not defeated by my weakness, but delighted! For when I feel my weakness and endure mistreatment—when I’m surrounded with troubles on every side and face persecution because of my love for Christ—I am made yet stronger. For my weakness becomes a portal to God’s power” (2 Cor. 12:8-10, TPT).

Paul was not saying that God’s answer was no; rather he was stating that God’s empowerment is more than enough for any circumstances. This thorn in Paul’s flesh wasn’t a mystery illness either, it was persecution, and he states that it was a recipe for releasing the power of Christ into his situation.

Notice two key phrases: *“My grace is always more than enough for you, and my power finds its full expression through your weakness”* and *“I am made yet stronger. For my weakness becomes a portal to God’s power.”* In other words, it is through our lack that God unleashes His power through us. In my viewpoint this is one of the most victorious scriptures the apostle Paul ever wrote.

In chapter 11 of 2 Corinthians, Paul writes of his many trials, including being stoned (and resurrected), whipped and beaten with rods, all of which he miraculously survived through the power of Christ. Was God’s grace more than enough for Paul? Absolutely. And it is through Paul’s example that we learn how to let God’s power be unleashed in and through us.

“If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because

I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud" (2 Cor. 12:6-7, NLT).

The above scriptures are where the confusion sets in. Paul laid out the exact reason why he refused to boast. He was writing this in retrospect based upon how the Lord had answered him. He was not writing as the Lord was answering him; he'd been given the answer long before he wrote this letter. He was explaining how he viewed the persecution and trials that he underwent, because of what the Lord had told him. He used them to keep himself humble so that God's power would work in him and through him, because he was reliant upon God's empowerment, not his own strength and merit.

The fact that Paul describes the situation as a thorn in the flesh shows that it was persecution that Paul was facing. He specifically states that it was a messenger from Satan, which is to say human beings. The phrase "thorn in the flesh" is derived from the Book of Numbers, which is the fourth book in the Torah, and as a Pharisee, Paul knew the Torah quite well. Our modern version of "thorn in the flesh" would be "pain in the neck."

"But if you fail to drive out the people who live in the land, those who remain will be like splinters in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will harass you in the land where you live" (Num. 33:55, NLT).

"Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you" (Josh. 23:13, KJV).

This is why there is no doubt about what Paul meant by a thorn in the flesh. It was persecution by human beings, not a mystery disease.

Paul lays out exactly how to experience God's power: by admitting that we can't achieve it through our wisdom, knowledge or strength but only by God's empowerment, which is always available. When we admit that we are weak, then He is strong in us. {eo}

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