

Power, Part 2

Hymns from "Favorite Hymns of Grace."

Greeting and Opening Prayer

Hymns of Worship and Holy Scripture

Standing on the Promises p. 21

*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: **for when I am weak, then am I strong.** 2Corinthians 12:9-10*

How Firm a Foundation p. 25

*18 For **the message of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 26 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 31 ...that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*

1Corinthians 1:18, 26-27, and 31 (NKJV)

It Is Well with My Soul p. 26

*27 Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? 28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But **they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength**; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. Isaiah 40:27-31*

Devotional Summary: "Power, Part 2"

Paradox: a statement or phenomenon apparently at variance with or in opposition to established principles yet demonstrably true. (from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1952)

Power: potency, ability, capacity. (from Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1952)

- **"When I Am Weak, then I am strong."** This statement is a paradox. We can see this famous passage of Scripture especially illuminated in the light of our identity with Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. When we really see Him as our Savior, our Deliverer, our Redeemer, our Master, our merciful, forgiving Lord, it is then we can honestly, humbly say "I AM weak and only in Christ, only through Christ am I strong!" Indeed, His strength is shown to be infinitely strong in the face of our fleshly weakness, our moral feebleness, and our frail humanity! ...is it not?

Truly, we are, as mortals, inherently weak. And most of us will readily admit it. But, ironically,

as mortals, we are given typically to self-sufficiency, self-absorption, self-righteousness, self-satisfaction, self-pity, self-love, self-exaltation, self-preservation, etc. When it comes to the imperfections of our moral performance, we chuckle and make excuses. We all are probably familiar with stretching the truth sometimes. ...harboring bad thoughts about another person. ...wanting things we should not have. ...enjoying a little gossip. ...blowing our own horn. ...being a little selfish. ...eating a little too much. ...wanting things done our way. ...getting even when someone hurts us...and on and on.

But, when it comes to our "religion" we tend to puff ourselves up with pious pride and accusingly glare down our noses at the faults of others so we can see ourselves as self-justified. We can always find someone who behaves worse than we do to compare ourselves to. Though conscious of our failings and our faults, we are naturally inclined to think of ourselves as jjuuussttt good enough to warrant God's acceptance. When we justify ourselves before God are we not blinded to the absoluteness of our own unworthiness? We are showing our ignorance and our presumption when we arrogantly appeal to God for His approval on the grounds of our human worthiness!

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23 (KJV)

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Romans 5:12 (KJV)

For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Ecclesiastes 7:20 (KJV)

O, how pregnant and ominous are the words of Holy Scripture! Again, listen to the word of God:

"God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" ...the WEAK! ...the powerless! (James 4:6 and Proverbs 3:34)

● **"The message of the cross."** Christ died *for* you.

But God commendeth [demonstrates] his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (KJV)

The Lord Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. And, what He did is enough. We will never be good enough on our own to EARN a home in heaven. We do not have the power to save ourselves from pain, much less death, not to mention what happens after death.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16 (KJV)

See here the simplicity of God's gift to you. Just believe. Just believe in Who Jesus said He was, and what He said He would do for you. No one else besides Jesus can save you, and certainly you should know by now that you cannot save yourself. All your good deeds; all your religious activity; all your money to charity; all your striving to do the right thing; all your excuses are useless. No! It is not complicated at all...just believe in Jesus Christ. This is the paradox of the Gospel - good works and self-effort will not save you - believing in Christ is the only answer.

And see also here in John 3:16 the gravity of God's grace: Eternal Life! Not just existence.

We are going to exist somewhere forever. That's a given. But to ***not perish*** in eternal separation from God and to ***not languish eternally*** without even a drop of water for your thirst or any other desire of your soul - forever - that's heavy!!! It is the deepest desire of every honest human who lives and has ever lived and who ever will live to live a life of peace and contentment and joy! And wrap such a heavenly paradise with the unhindered fellowship of the One who loves you so much that He sacrificed His own Son for your sake. That's the life! That's the life of John 3:16. O God, give me ETERNAL LIFE!

The message of the Cross is that Jesus paid it all - all to Him I owe. We have been ransomed from the auction block of slavery to sin and eternal death! And the price was the blood of Jesus. Such a great price! ...a price for which there is no substitute.

Simple faith in Christ...an eternity of heavenly Life.

- ***"They that wait upon the Lord."*** This "waiting" that Isaiah is talking about is a waiting with confident expectation. Here is that "believing" in John 3:16. This is not a passive resignation saying, "Ho, Hum. I guess I'm stuck going to heaven." Let your mind grab hold of the paradox of the power of God that works on your behalf only because you believe His Word! Imagine! You are not going to hell! You are going to heaven simply because you trust God to tell you the truth. Listen to His voice in your heart! Look into His face of love and acceptance with your mind's eye! Hold His hand...waiting with confident expectation. You are waiting in line for the endless ride of a lifetime with the King of the Universe! This is what the prophet beckons our confident expectation to see: we WILL walk and not faint, we WILL run and not grow weary, we WILL mount up like eagles...for our Eternal King says so! We can put our hope in Christ Jesus - He has the power to do for us what we are powerless to achieve.

This "mounting up like eagles," this strength to "walk and not faint" and "run and not grow weary" is the spiritual consequence to the spiritual transformation that faith in the message of the cross brings into our hearts. For those who are waiting on Him, the Lord gives power to receive from Him what they are believing for Him to freely give them: the spiritual walking, and running and taking flight. Hallelujah!

Prayer: Father God, by Your Holy Spirit in our hearts, I ask that You grant each of us a fresh revelation of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done, what He is doing, and what He will do for us...simply because we believe. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray, AMEN.

Closing Hymn

Come Thou Fount p. 27

Prayer Requests and Corporate Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Recessional