

2 Corinthians

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Date: 01 January 1900

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- [0 : 00] Trusting that the Lord may help us, let us turn to the second epistle to the Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 10.
- The second epistle to the Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 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. And it is especially the latter phrase for when I am weak, then am I strong.
- It seems that a phrase such as this comes very close and is very personal when addressed unto us with power by the Holy Ghost.
- Sometimes such phrases as these are not perhaps regarded in the same way as a word perhaps such as this.
- [1 : 47] How much more shall the blood of Christ, who offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
- Now a phrase like that seems to have such glories in it. Whereas a phrase as this, while it is personal, seems to be on a more homely, more lowly level.
- And yet I am convinced that as in every word of truth, the same glory shine, even in such a phrase as this.
- For when I am weak, then am I strong. For it cannot be applicable to nature.
- For it is a contradiction of terms according to natural understanding. For this, I believe, is a spiritual experience that is spoken of here.
- [3 : 10] When I am weak, then am I strong. I want to notice that one word, I.
- When I was sitting this afternoon, thinking a little concerning these words.
- How often we use the word, I. And we use it usually, in those places and circumstances where our natural strengths are concerned.
- If we want to talk of our wisdom, in our conversations to our fellows, we say, but I know, I understand, I declare, I state.
- And we are speaking of the strength of our natural wisdom. We also say, I can and I can't.
- [4 : 32] I will and I won't. And these things are the measure of what we suppose to be our strength of mind and will and purpose.
- We often undertake to do certain things. And naturally speaking, we say that we will. We undertake to do them without any reservations.
- But the word of God reminds us that we ought to say, if the Lord will.
- We often speak of our desires and our intentions, our longings, our aspirations.
- And we profess them all by the word I. I shall. I want. And so on.
- [5 : 40] And all these things speak of a natural strength.

But dear friend, consider what we say. When set up against the Lord's law, against his truth, against his righteousness, I won't.

Or we say, I'll have my own way. I will not have this man to rule over me.

And we think we have the strength so to speak and oppose the things, the purposes, the will, the almighty power of God.

We read in that chapter this evening what the apostle had to say of his strength.

[6 : 57] If any man, if any other man, thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.

And I have never felt it in the same way.

How often we say I, to preface our words. And we set up ourselves as though we have both ability, power, wisdom, skill, understanding.

And that I is a setting up of self. For the most part in opposition to God's word, his purposes, his will, his love, his grace and his mercy.

And certainly in opposition to his holy law. And then I thought of those words which declare God himself, I am.

[8 : 11] It's a solemn thought, isn't it?

We would put ourselves in his place. For Satan has ever sought to take God's throne. And when you think of self and what we do, we set up self in his place.

But all that we might ever be brought to realize that while we may say I, we can never say I am. The days of our years are three score years and ten.

They may be longer, the Lord says. They may be four score years, but they shall be labor and sorrow.

We can never say I am. But dear friend, we do at times say I.

[9 : 23] And we get as near to it as we can, supposing that we are strong. But the text says, when I am weak, then I am strong.

And I want to mention, first of all, weakness. And the weakness of sin.

We all know the record respecting Samson. And we read in that record how sin blinds the eye, hardens the heart, dulls the conscience.

And instead of fleeing from its approach, he was taken in of it. He was a strong man physically.

But he was a weak man in many other respects. Sin took his reason. So that he acted without any wisdom.

[10 : 37] Without any understanding. In opposition and contrariness to all those things that were laid upon him.

He put himself in the hands of his enemies. Three times. He could not see that they had no thought but to rob and to despoil him.

He wouldn't believe it. His heart wouldn't accept it. And they put out his eyes and pettered him and put him in prison to grind.

As his sins had done, so did his enemies unto him. His sins had made him blind. His enemies put out his eyes.

His sins had made him blind. But the solemn thing is that the word of God declares and the Lord departed from him and he knew it not. Oh dear friend, what a solemn state.

[11 : 49] All the weakness of a man overtaken in sin. And we have no ground whereby we can look at Samson and say, Well, that can't come to me.

That won't come to me. Oh, that we might ever be mindful. That we might be brought to know our weaknesses.

Our dependence. Our need. Before a holy God. The Lord says, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.

The Lord did not purpose to leave Samson in this place. He loved him. And he was brought out.

For we know that Samson came to himself. His solemn state was revealed unto him. His real weakness was made known. For while he had known a physical weakness as the consequence of his hair being cut.

[13:12] As he grew, his strength came back. Returned unto him. But he felt his weakness. As before a holy God.

And I believe that he knew. What it was. To be weak. Truly.

As taught by the Spirit of God. And he prayed unto the Lord for strength. And the Lord gave him strength. And the glory of that strength imparted.

Is passed down through the generations. And we see Samson. Delivered.

Or not delivered from the prison. Or from the fetters. But delivered from all his enemies. Both the natural.

[14:13] And the old enemy of sin. I remarked. I remarked. Concerning.

The apostle. And what he had to say. Concerning. His standing. His strength. In his own eyes.

Before the Lord met with him. He was strong. He had everything. That he could have desired. As far as he could see and understand.

He was favored. In every respect. And yet the Lord came. And met with him. And his strength was reduced to weakness.

And I. Have often. Savored the sweetness. Of that prayer.

[15:18] Which the weakness. Of Saul of Tarsus. Brought forth. From his soul. When the Lord spoke to him. Lord what wilt thou have me.

To do. And by the very prayer. He began. To sip. Of the fullness.

Of strength. That is in Christ. Jesus the Lord. But I believe. That he was brought to know.

Much of its depth. And of its fullness. And of its sweetness. But surely in those. Early moments. By that very prayer.

By the desire. Wrought in his heart. He. New his weakness. But manifests his strength. Lord. What wilt thou have me.

[16:17] To do. Or that. Anyone. Whose soul. So cries out. After God. Should.

Should. Not be. Left. To wonder. And to question. To fear. Respecting their standing.

Before him. That the Lord. Has been pleased. So to arrest. To turn about.

To speak. And to draw. Each of these. Is testimonies. Of his. Own work. In the soul.

It isn't the work. Of any man. Or any angel. It isn't the work. Of any creature. Only God alone. Is able.

[17:15] To do these things. For us. You may say. Well. Some people. Can say so much. And I can seem. To say so little. Dear Lord.

Dear friend. Can you say. Before the Lord. There are those things. Which you desire. Of him. And of him alone.

And that none other. Can afford unto you. Or what are you saying. When I am weak. Then am I strong.

There has been that teaching. That has brought you unto him. In need. In weakness. In dependence. In trust. In hope.

In expectation. That he will hear. And answer. And bless. And comfort your soul. In the Bible. In the Bible. In the Bible. In the Bible. I want to.

[18 : 12] Mention. Also. Another. Record. In God's word. Wherein. Weakness. Is evident.

And strength. And strength. Is brought forth. When. David. Went. Down. To his brothers.

At his father's request. To take them food. For they were. Gathered. With the armies. Of Israel. For the Philistines. And Goliath. Stood.

Opposed. Unto them. And we each know. The record. Concerning. David. His words. And his activities. But I want to notice this.

In these matters. Carnal. Reason. Can never. Rise.

[19 : 11] Above. What the eye. Can see. And the natural. Intellect. Understand. And therefore. It leaves. God. Out of every.

Consideration. If you read. The record. Carefully. What. Saul. Has to say.

To. David. He declares. Him. To be. A youth. While. The Philistine. Has been. A man. Of war. All his days. You cannot. Go out.

Against him. And then. When. David. Pursues. The matter. For. The honor. And glory. Of God. He.

Tries. To give. Him. A suit. Of armor. And weapons. To go forth. In. Which. David.

[20 : 05] Is unaccustomed. To. Has no experience. Of. And has never proved. His ability. Or. Their strength. In. Battle.

To. To. And. It is. At this time. Of apparent. Weakness. Naturally. Speaking. He had no power.

To oppose. Goliath. Even. Man. For man. But. Goliath. Was a skilled. Warrior. David. Was. A lad.

From. The sheepfold. There seemed. No. Comparison. Between. The two. It seemed. An impossibility. That one. Should. Go out. Against. Another. Foolish.

But. It is. At this time. That. David. Introduces. The name. Of the Lord. God. Of Israel. Into the matter. Dear friend.

[21 : 04] I wonder. If. In the times. Of. Your. Weakness. Felt. Experienced. Known. There is.

That in your. Heart. In your. Soul. That brings. The Lord. Into the matter. You know.

It is. A wonderful. Thing. To have. A knowledge. Of the name. Of the Lord. Of his glory. Of his attributes. Of his grace. And of his love.

Put. The years. Into the place. Into the circumstance. And I believe in.

These things also. One. Is enabled to say. And that. With a quiet. Confidence. When I am weak.

[22 : 03] Then am I strong. You know. There are times. When. Circumstances. Are such. So distressing.

That. We can't seem. To find. Any way. Out of the circumstance. The dilemma. In which we.

Are found. They overwhelm. The mind. Yes. We may have been. Strong. In our. Wisdom. As natural men.

Pride of our. Proud of our. Abilities. Confident. In our. Strength. To achieve. And to attain. Whatsoever we want.

But the Lord. Sometimes. Brings us. Into places. Where. All our. Wisdom. In self. Is overthrown.

[23 : 01] Overwhelmed. If you think. Of. David. When. He was sent. Back. From. Fighting.

With the Philistines. Against Israel. To Ziklag. When he. Got there. With his men. They had.

Had been sent. Home. Like naughty. Children. For the Philistines. Had said. They'll be. As traitors. In the midst. Of the battle. So they'd been.

Dismissed. And they were angry. And they were upset. They were hurt. Their minds. Seethed. With indignation. And then. When they returned. Home. And found.

That in their absence. The Amalekites. Had come. And taken everything. That they had. All their goods. Their wives. Their children. The whole thing. Was despoiled. They turned.

[23 : 55] Immediately. He was powerless. His. Every. Thought. Were. Futile. In these circumstances. The matter. Was accomplished.

And because. Of their indignation. They even. Threatened. His life. What did David do? David.

David encouraged himself. In the Lord. Oh. What a wondrous thing. In the times. Of extremity. In the times. Of dire need.

To be able. To encourage. Oneself. In the Lord. We read. Many.

Many. Records. In God's word. Of those. Who were found. In weakness. And in the midst. Of weakness. Were made strong.

[24 : 57] If you think. Of. That woman. That went. Unto the Lord. And she asked. A boon. Of the Lord. And the Lord.

Answered her. Apparently. Roughly. It seemed.

That he. Refused. To give. Children's. Children's. Meat. To dogs. And that woman.

Did not revile. That woman. Was. Humble. Truth.

Lord. Oh. I believe. That where. Truth. Is applied. It brings. Down. All the strength. Of nature. And that weakness.

[25 : 58] Which is. Of spiritual. Experience. And of the Lord's. Doing. Is manifested. In the hearts. Of his people. Truth. Lord. But even.

The dogs. Eat. Of the crumbs. That fall. From the master's table. What a strength. In the woman's plea. Seemingly. At the lowest ebb.

A dog. And yet. Favoured. To obtain. From the Lord.

Such a great blessing. Think of that woman also. That was. Bent. To. So that she could not.

Lift up herself. In her weakness. There was that revealed. Unto her. In her mind.

[26 : 52] And spirit. That if she could. But so much. As touch the hem. Of his garment. She should be made whole. Now this woman.

Had had an infirmity. Many many years. She'd spent all. That she had. And rather than. Being restored. She was rather. The worse. Think of.

Her state. Think of the weakness. That she felt. But in the midst. Of that weakness. There was a strength. In faith.

In hope. Being confident. Of his ability. So to do. These things. For her. When the apostle.

- Says. When I am weak. Then am I strong. He doesn't speak. Only.
- [27 : 55] As he has proved. As he has experienced. You know. That he. Says. In the chapter. That we. Read together. I count. All things. But loss. For the excellency. Of the knowledge.
- Of Christ. Jesus. My Lord. Now. All. That is. Of flesh. He says. I count. All. Those things. But loss. Dung. Nothing. And this. He declares. To be. That which is. To be. Prized. That which is. To be. Sought after. That which is. Demonstrative. Of God's. Grace. And mercy. Unto poor sinners.
- [28 : 47] The source. Of all strength. The excellency. Of the knowledge. Of Christ. Jesus. My Lord. God. Oh.
- We sing that hymn. Sometimes. And it is a sweet hymn. A fullness resides. In Jesus. Our head. And ever abides. To answer.
- Our need. The Father's good pleasure. Has laid up in store. A plentiful treasure. To give to the poor. Dear friend. Do you feel your weakness?
- Do you seek after your strength. In him? Well. There is a fullness. In God's word.
- And the hymn writer. Also says. That none. Shall ever be empty. Sent back. Now there is a gracious. Encouragement.
- [29 : 46] In God's word. For every poor. And needy soul. When the poor. And needy. Seek water. And there is none. And their tongue. Faileth for thirst.
- Now the Lord. Gives his gracious promise. Unto such. Do you think. That a man. Or woman. Who is without water.
- Who is. So. Straightened. That their tongue. Is swollen. And fills the mouth. So that. They can no more speak. Do you think.
- They can be. Other than in. A state. Of. Absolute weakness. We might say.
- It's an impossibility. That the Lord. Will hear their cry. What a mercy. That the strength. Of the Lord. Is. Unto them.
- [30 : 48] It is not withheld. For it is not dependent. On their ability. To cry. For he says. I know the thoughts. And the intents. Of the heart. The word. That is under the tongue.
- Or we may not be able. To put it into words. But he knows. He hears. And he has compassion. His mercy is great. Do we.
- Suppose sometimes. That. We are beyond. Recalling. Beyond helping. Because we have sinned.
- And sinned. And sinned. Do we. Look upon. Those. Who. Know the favours.
- Of the Lord. Who. Enjoy his comfort. Who. Rejoice. In his word. And there's a desire.
- [31 : 47] In. Our hearts. To be partakers. With them. But the arrows. Of the evil one. Come.
- And. Bruise. And wound. And cut us. Our own heart. Condemns us. Well.
- I believe. In the midst. Of. Such weakness. The Lord. Is pleased. So to put forth. His strength. If you think.
- Of that man. That hung. On the other side. Of our Lord Jesus. He. Suffered.
- For. His sin. Or even. A crucifixion. For his sins.
- [32 : 46] In the eyes. Of all. Those that beheld. An unspeakable character. And yet.
- That man. Who had lived. All his life. In that solemn. State. Separation. And opposition.

To almighty God. And his word. And his law. Was enlivened. And enlightened. In those. Last moments. To see. And understand. We. Suffer. Justly. Oh. What a wonderful thing. That it pleased. Almighty God. So at that last moment. Almost. To convince. That man. And in that.

[33 : 48] Convincing. Of the Holy Spirit. In those. Last moments. The weakness. Of that man. Was conveyed.

Unto him. With such power. That all the things. That he had formerly. Relied on. In his. Life. Of.

Wickedness. Were seen. For what they are. And he looks. Upon. The Lord. Who. Hangs. Beside him. And sees.

His glory. This man. Has done. Nothing. Amiss. Or to see. The glory. Of Christ. His. Purity. His. Holiness. His. Majesty. His. Power. God. Because. This man. Evidently.

[34 : 41] Did. Though. He had been. A sinner. Almost. All his life. A renegade. Seemingly. Beyond. Redemption. As man.

Would say. But. It pleased. Almighty God. To have mercy. Upon him.

Oh. What an evidence. And what a proof. That it is not of him. That willeth. It is not of him. That runneth. It is of God. Who showeth mercy. And this man.

Cried unto the Lord. All the strength. Of that plea. In the midst. Of such weakness. His natural life. Draining away. All his.

Bodily. Strengths. Dismissed. His strength. Of will. And purpose. Reduced to nothing.

[35 : 46] Wrought upon of the spirit. To know the truth. To be convinced. Of sin. And he cries.

Lord. Remember me. When thou comest. Into thy kingdom. All the strength. Of that plea. And all the glory.

Of the response. That was conveyed. Unto him. Today. Thou shalt be with me. In paradise. Amen. Sometimes.

Sometimes we. Look at ourselves. And we. Feel our weakness. Perhaps increasingly. As we. Grow older.

Fear. But I trust. That the weakness. That we. Feel. Shall be. Much more than. A sense of natural weakness.

[36 : 43] happiness. But it will be. That which we are. Taught. By the Holy Spirit. And caused. To feel. In. Every respect.

Of our lives. Christ. God. In the morning. When we. Rise. In the morning. We. Rise. Because.

The Lord. Has spared us. As we go. Through the day. And each hour. It is because. He has.

Had mercy. Upon us. all those things that we have and that we enjoy are the consequence of his favour and his goodness but you know if the Lord were to take his hand in any of these matters where should we be our strength is in him in every respect but when we come to spiritual things never let us suppose that we can maintain or sustain our own soul or one good thought in us we are dependent in him and upon him for all things

I rarely say anything personal but I want to say this over the last few months I believe that I have truly known in a way never known before how frail I am every thought every thought every right thought can only spring as he calls it forth and as he has put the root of the matter there every single thought every desire every longing every hope and if the Lord depart from us oh what a solemn state no strength no joy no comfort no help no health no joyful countenance all these things we depend upon him and upon his mercy and his goodness all that we might realize it but oh that we might go unto him daily and hourly for supplies

[39 : 40] Lord help me you know it's left on record concerning the Lord's dear people and I believe that though it's very short its significance is beyond compare but it's something that we need to express every day and every hour no matter what our circumstances may appear to be without him we can do nothing and ought to be brought to live our lives as long as he shall spare us in that knowledge and with that dependence upon him upon his love upon his grace and upon his mercy for when I am weak then I am strong may the Lord add his blessing

Amen