

Strength in weakness and help with infirmity

(Quality: Average)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 January 1978

Preacher: Broome, Leonard Robert James (1905-1986)

- [0 : 00] Dependent upon the Lord's help, we will speak again from the second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 12 and verse 9.
- Second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 12 and the ninth verse. 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, the power of Christ may rest upon me.
- There are two kinds of weakness that we creatures are subject to. One is physical, another is spiritual.
- Both of these are seasons of learning, instruction, whether we're young or old.
- [1 : 24] And they are profitable times. Times when we have, as you've just been singing, recourse to the Lord.
- And you feel your own inability, either naturally or spiritually.
- This is the work of grace. This grace that is sufficient. That has in it everything that is needful.
- That is graciously dispensed. When it is needed. At the time it is needed.
- And therefore it is part of the Christian experience. I say Christian in the sweetest sense of the world.
- [2 : 30] The sacred company. The sacred company. To bear the name of Christ. Upon their forehead.
- The years are brought. To understand that weakness isn't something to be pretty. A time of disaster.
- Complete and lost. The time of instruction. The time of instruction. And as we were saying this morning with regard to this sacred text.
- God's grace was manifested in weakness.
- It was made perfect. It was made perfect. In weakness. It was at its best. This is so true.
- [3 : 35] Words cannot express. Your heart need not. Because, dad, because of weakness.
- Cast down because of weakness. Because it is the place where the grace of God shines the most.
- Where it is perfected. It is matured. And it is in this way that God's holy name and work and gospel is magnified.
- So don't be alarmed at how unworthiness, sinfulness, weakness, that you cannot do the things that you would after spiritual order.
- And that you are solemnly lacking your own judgment. Because this is exactly how you will feel.

[4 : 43] It was part of the apostles' deeper experience underneath. Though he appears strong and bold on the surface, it is often possible to pick out under his travels, meetings with different ones, the spirit of weakness.

I was with you, he says, in weakness. And in fear. And in much trembling. You can't imagine it.

You cannot picture this great disciple and apostle of Christ in such a state. Can you? You cannot picture this great disciple.

But this is one of his opening remarks in this epistle. And yet how gloriously God's strength shone through it.

Had he come in the ability of his native strength. And he had not. Had he introduced something called the soul of Tarsus.

[6 : 04] Where should we have been today? Who are so far behind him with regard to our little knowledge. We can't hold a candle to it.

But no, grace brings him down to the level of the chief of sinners. Less than the least of all saints.

Unworthy to be called an apostle. And then you feel you can at least walk side by side with him and have some fellowship with him in his power.

So that in reality the subject of weakness, which we didn't touch this morning, is the pathway of considerable value for the believer.

It is here that grace shines in the brightest light. Death does, make no mistake about it.

[7 : 20] It is this, that God is honoured. His name is highly exalted.

His holy person, work, covenant. And all that he is and all that the eternal trinity are in a work of salvation for the church of God is set upon its highest point.

The church of God denies in the great truth that it has pleased God to take these weak things, use them to one end, clearly defined again in this official to the Corinthians in the first one.

The church of God, where he takes the things that are not, to bring to law the things that are not.

So this is for individual comfort, individual instruction. And by faith, receive and believe, it is so.

[8 : 43] And anyone in this position, thirsting after a great supply of grace and health, as distinct from someone who is merely judgmentally sound, the very blessed thing, painful, painful, yes.

Fraud is acute anxiety, yes. But how God honouring to poor weakling who come to Jehovah Jireh for the rest of the world.

For strength and health. For strength and health. We noticed this morning the Apostle's pressure, or the pressure upon the Apostle, which he speaks of in this letter part of his contact with the Corinthians.

How they questioned the validity of his minister. And since we seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, was I in a very difficult position.

He had to endure the questioning relative to his ministry.

[10 : 24] And although they were godly, they were also ungodly in the church and the city of Corinth. And the Lord told him that he had much people in that city.

He stayed here on his first visit. As you know, for eighteen months, these people were brought out under the preaching of the gospel.

But Satan also became with him. So the tares among the good seed and the Apostle's uplifting vision needed a counterbalance.

And he knew it. And as I said this morning, it is such a great favour to know why you've got your cross.

Oh, it will help you to do what the words we've just read.

[11 : 55] And have been to school, verse five in the thirteenth chapter. Examined yourself whether you be in the flesh.

This is facing the facts. Facing the truth. Self-examination.

Why have you this hole in the flesh? And what is it doing? And combined with the gracious teaching in this chapter and the thirteenth, you will see that it cannot but bring about God's gracious intention.

Though you may not understand it, nor have the power to put things together. So that weakness is a common experience of the household of faith.

And unlike human nature and human flesh, there is a growing in weakness.

[13 : 20] I know naturally as we get older we grow weaker. But in the normal run of life, there is what is called the prime of life.

Every faculty and muscle and movement is at its best. And so, if not so with grace, the Lord weakens his people's strength in the way.

To look at it, first of all, in its physical aspect therefore, we'll look to the Lord Jesus. And see that he was crucified through weakness.

This is Paul's teaching. He was crucified through weakness.

Yet he liveth by the power of God. And he experienced the weakness of the flesh. The weakness of the flesh. It was not a weakness that was sinful like arrows.

[14 : 36] But in the extreme weakness which he suffered, that is, he loved it. He bowed his head and he gave up a girl. which he suffered at his crucifixion.

He bowed his head and he gave up a girl. But before he did this, he said it is fitting.

So that had he not been human and possessing human life, he could not write it down. But being human, he laid it down.

No man takes it from me, I lay it down, he said, of myself. Being human, therefore, after so many hours of excruciating suffering, this human frame of the Lord Jesus and his holy, sinless body as regards himself, became weak.

And he was crucified, died through weakness. Now those who have known what weakness of the flesh is in illness and affliction, know very well that a strange change takes place over the human brain when you are that way.

[16 : 16] The strange change. What in health and strength you would pass with ease. You cannot let your little finger, so to speak, to pass in weakness.

Acute weakness is an exceedingly solemn experience and can only be known when we come into it.

But how great is the weakness that the Lord Jesus endured when he was made a sacrifice for sin.

We are a hidden and enabled preacher and also to read the word of God to reassure that this was indeed so.

But as regards the understanding of it, there is such a beauty in the weakness of the Lord Jesus Christ as is seen in the words I've just quoted that he bowed his head purposely and that it was not through weakness of the physical frame that he bowed his head as a normal person would have done.

[17 : 58] It would have fallen forward. But he bowed it deliberately. And there the strength of a God-given nature was made perfect.

And as regards consciousness and the effect of human weakness upon the mind, which is all part of the same thing, who can fathom the strange workings of the mind in times of mental as well as physical weakness?

No, but not so the Lord Jesus. He said, the note of heavenly triumph in his voice it is finished.

And this embraced all the vast issues of the eternal covenant which he undertook to fulfill all the types and shadows which God had gone to greater length to establish.

The holy record of the ancient sacrifices all typical of Christ. The prophets that were raised up and divinely inspired.

[19 : 44] who spoke of these things in a mystery. Things which the angels desired to look into being conscious that there was something very deep in them.

And all bound up in the words of the Lord Jesus as regards his life and now his final exit as he gave up the goats and said it is finished.

And this was Paul's determination to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified. and you cannot separate Jesus Christ from his crucifix nor as Paul goes on to say can you separate him from his life yet he live by the power God so that as regards the body this beautifully and wonderfully made body of ours it is capable of resurrection and the Lord Jesus rose again and that weakness was perfected in the ensuring strength when he conquered death and gained the victory over that last great enemy and met dear Mary in the garden and spoke to her and revealed himself to her and for another day met his disciples also and there was a note all the way through of perfection in what our Lord said after his resurrection though he wasn't long among his disciples there is that note of utmost certainty in all that he said for example ought not

Christ to have suffered beginning at Moses all the prophets and so on you well know the twenty third of blue he opened to them the scriptures he opened their understanding that understanding of theirs that had been limited hitherto and yet they had walked with him for some three years who were fully acquainted with his ways and habits yet the time had not yet come for their understandings to be opened until victory was gained so that with regard to the Lord Jesus in his physical brain and his human body this text shows my grace is sufficient and the church of

God is able to rejoice in the all sufficiency of that mighty conquest which the Lord Jesus accomplished and which now he is risen into glory as the psalm tells us to leave gates have opened to receive him and he is at the right hand of his father which leads us to the second point of the perfection of his strength and that is as the mediator there he is the right hand of the father mediates the case of such characters as Saul of Tarsus and we must go back just for a moment to see and glance over this godly apostle just once more with regard to his beseeching three times for the thorn to be taken out of the flesh what firmness in this mediator you don't always get your prayers answered do you what a trial it is isn't it perhaps perhaps in some part here this evening there dwells very very deeply this solemn realisation that there is some particular prayer or prayers or desire that has not been answered now what's firmness in the mediator of sinners it's hard to say no very often and often prayer is not answered for better reasons yet unknown now at the right hand of glory the lord jesus heard the petition of his dear servant apostle for the removal of the thought and

[26 : 16] Christ says he I pray that this might be so that it was the messenger from Satan an ugly messenger not one that one would want to entertain but what a view the apostle had of this messenger we quoted from Job this morning I thought to read the second and the first chapter of Job unfold the beginning of this history what an ugly messenger Satan was to Job and in this the Lord has left us a lesson whereby he removes the barriers permits

God to be dealt with by this mighty powerful enemy Satan with one reservation behold it in thy hand but touch not his life and this is exactly what happened he and his great power is to be feared he is no mean champion of evil but the Lord Jesus was on the throne of glory when this his dear servant Paul was begging that the thorn might be removed but as I said this morning like we all do you look in the wrong way now it's nice to be put right isn't it a message of comfort can be contained in a word of counsel that tells you you're looking the wrong way you're expecting the

Lord will come in a particular way when he will do nothing that can you cannot conceive that there's another way and so does the text open before and he said unto me my grace is sufficient for thee as is the Lord Jesus speaking to his servant and this is the one who was made perfect through suffering crucified through weakness this is the one who himself took human flesh was made like unto his brethren who entered into all their feelings and experiences and this is the one that now exalted at the right hand of God interceded hearing their uprepeated prayers

Lord Lord take it away I cannot bear another stroke I cannot go another foot I cannot understand my life no where are you going to turn then deliver if it isn't to the unfailing grace of God for what you're going to pray if it isn't for the unfailing faithfulness of Jehovah only recently we spoke of David with Ziggler where he encouraged himself in the Lord his job when you're in these places and only way that these things operate not on the mountain top of sunshine and light not when you've got no troubles and anxieties and burdens and crosses but when you have them and you're in a way the

Lord will meet with it does how the general testimony of the church of God is that he will be faithful to his own word therefore the all sufficient grace of the Lord Jesus is the key to the whole matter now this book surely a very different complexion on your weakness doesn't it can you take your weakness to the Lord the apostle could what weakness you say what how do you define weakness I don't I don't attempt to so wide in its code so vast in its issue to look at one or two things that are classified here under the heading of infirmities infirmities he in the latter part of this verse this solemn part of it says most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me now here is grace being poured in sufficient grace not taking the infirmities away not taking the weakness away but giving all sufficient grace which is a very different thing

[33 : 21] Onion had a very lively figure in the pilgrim's progress he's in the house beautiful and being abducted round he shows a man pouring water over the fire yet the fire went not out he said and it was a mystery to Christian until the interpreter took him round the back of the wall and showed him someone there pouring in oil same time don't take it a crude way will you because it's very happy there was the bishopcy of grace being poured in in that unseen way at least from the front and

Christian then understood how the fire never went out so with the work of grace and the temptation and the thorn in the flesh and those mysterious feelings of God in his people's lives as an unseen pouring in of grace sufficient grace and you mark your life you who come this way as delicate as the question may be and as reticent as you may be to say well yes you're quite right you as we sang this morning you look back to see how you come thus far because it's your first head tonight look at the marvels of this upholding hand this continuing grace this favour lengthened out through the depth of trial the deep waters the deepest you've ever been in possible and yet an all sufficient supply of daily grace from the mediator to himself all their afflictions he was afflicted the angel of his presence saved you this was spoken of by the prophet

Isaiah now he said you mention one or two of these weak points the first is a weak thing what a holy word this is what a desirable grace faith is and where are the people that desire and seek after the possession of faith the usage of it something that's got to operate in a crisis something that's got to support you in your weakness who are they all other earthly means like the good woman in the gospel they try and find that no better rather worse and yet there is this charming attractive word in the gospel which has such promise to it that is the God given faith and you covet faith and tell me this if you've been in these times of weakness what has been your chiefest desire from all the sadness darkness temptation that may have surrounded you and almost the spirit of despair what have you looked upon as being a choice gift from

God is it not faith did not the disciples ask that their faith might be increased is it not this that is one of those God given greatest the greater faith that is felt to be utterly weak now this is a real compounded condition of weakness weak all the way around weak physically weak spiritually no faith a nagging spirit of unbelief the questioning as to the rightness of your standing the enemy coming in like a flood and you saying within yourself like the hymn writer said sometimes

I think I cannot stand no not another day what weakness here and yet the eye is upon one thing and heart is set upon it too and that is that you examine yourself like the man did who came about his suffering son if thou canst do anything he said to Jesus have mercy upon us and heal my son and Jesus very kindly he returned thee to the poor man and a good thing when he does I will stir you up and he replied to him and said if thou canst believe all things are possible to him that believe and then the man's heart broke blood gates were opened the position became crystal clear and he cried with tears

[40 : 44] Lord I believe but the amazing part of his confession was this that he concluded it with this word help thou mine undo it now the apostle was granted an increase of faith to see that this tool in the flesh was a necessity and that if he didn't have it as I said this morning he would be lifted up or exalted and ride above his feather which was not the intention of the vision which he had kept secret for fourteen years that that the purpose of the thorn was this that he might be kept humble now to see this will bring you to another blessed place and that is to seek humility you you you can never be safer than you can read the hundred thirty first psalm with some degree of feeling you the word my heart is not haughty and so on only a short psalm but this grace of humility all the terrible temptations one has to pride secret pride this is the cardinal sin this is where satan fell in heaven before he was sent from it excluded from divine glory his pride and so this pride becomes the most dreadful fowl but

God's grace of humility comes out of weakness have a taste of your own weakness and insufficiency and your sinfulness or call it by what name you will it constitutes weakness this will enhance the grace of humility in your eyes so that you will pray for it because you will feel your weakness in having so much pride about you and really no one can show us our pride except the Lord I'm no least from experience that you couldn't point to pride in me and be right you may see it

I'm not saying it out but I know from sweet and painful experience only the Lord can convince us of pride and this will make us shake the grace of humility now where will you go to whom else could you turn unto the Lord Jesus who was the very example of humility this is what it is to be like him humble made himself of no reputation oh what a spirit brought grace this is another is weakness in praying for these things get pressure exercise upon you he brought into a low place or as the apostle was to have a thorn of some nature and that will squeeze prayer out of your heart and it will be a peculiar prayer because it's quite true that if any come to

Jesus to reduce to self despair these three things and there are others but the time is nearly gone the latter part of the text I will not venture upon most glad most glad what glorious submission what earthly time enter into the sacred spirit poured in the all sufficient grace you can almost see it flowing into his heart and he is brought to look at this tomb entirely different light be the whole purpose of

God in it and then for it to be sanctified this choice grace of sanctification which it is most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmity and not taken away you you don't expect to go home the night do and find the troubles all gone you wake up get scared in the morning still the same pathway this is natural but you may have a very different view of the Lord show you what his purposes are and don't start comparing thorns with your neighbour will you and say that this is much different from yours don't look upon these things as if

[47 : 50] God should give everyone the same thought but it won't doesn't on the other hand a thought is a thought and it pricks deeply and you may well naturally want to be rid of it but spiritually the Lord is able and does turn the eye the other way say of it my grace is sufficient to live that will make your need Paul no need for you to have a thorn removed I will say to all that you need most gladly now the infirmity is helped by the Holy Spirit we told in the eighth of room

I often like to think of infirmity say in the feet of that person with an ordinary stick walking stick is helped their infirmity isn't taken away but they couldn't go without their stick because you couldn't go without their crutch or crutches go into the hospital and the home what do you see there dear souls crawling along with a zimmer infirmity isn't taken away but they've got very strong aids that help them along and so with your and my infirmity what it may the

Spirit himself help it quite plain help it and permitting and that's God's all sufficient grace for his dear people as they travel through the various pathways of need and adversity Amen to service by singing hymn number 204, tune 867.

Selling hymn number 204, tune 867.

Selling hymn number 204, tune 967.

[51 : 55] Selling hymn number 204, tune 967. Selling hymn number 204, tune 967.

Selling hymn number 204, tune 967. The everlasting dream, the ages of his unconditional spell is also believed in his own Red word.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[54 : 34] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. Thank you.

[56 : 42] Thank you.