

The Necessity of Weakness

by Carter Conlon

The sermon teaches that embracing our weakness allows God's strength to be revealed in our lives and the church.

Duration: 38:29

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:45-47, 2 Chronicles 20:15, Esther 4:14, Psalm 18:32-34, Acts 14:19-20, Acts 16:25, Acts 27:23-25, 1 Corinthians 1:27, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 6:10

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Godly Strength"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the necessity of weakness in the Christian walk, drawing from the life of the apostle Paul and the story of David and Goliath. It highlights how God's strength is made perfect in our weakness, leading to victories that surpass human understanding. The message encourages believers to find strength in dependency on God, even in the face of overwhelming challenges and opposition.

Transcript

If you would turn in your Bible, please, with me to the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 2, I want to speak to you today on the necessity of weakness, the necessity of weakness. Father, I thank you, God, for the touch of heaven. I thank you, Lord, for your Holy Spirit.

I thank you for your word, which is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. I thank you for spiritual understanding, God, that you are willing to give to us as we call out to you. God, I ask you, Lord, for a touch from heaven to be able to deliver this word and a touch from heaven on all of our hearts to be able to hear it.

Some things are hard to hear, but oh God, this is the way to life. I thank you for it with all my heart and I praise you. Let there be a shout of glory, a rise in the weakest heart here today, the person who feels they have nothing to offer any longer for the kingdom of God.

Let their hearts ignite with faith and lift us up again, oh God, and make us the people that you have destined us to be. Push back the darkness, Lord, in this generation. God, let light shine again.

Let your people be a city set upon a hill that cannot be hidden, the salt of the earth that creates healing, thirst, and taste. Oh God, Father, we ask, Lord, that you would touch our lives in a way that only you can, and we thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen.

First Corinthians chapter 2, I'm speaking on the necessity of weakness. Paul says this to the Corinthian church, and I, brethren, when I came to you did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the strength of spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now, Paul, the apostle, stood among the people, and by his own testimony, he stood there in weakness, though it is arguable that prior to meeting Christ, he had in himself, that is, in his own natural abilities, he had stood among the strongest of his peers.

In Acts chapter 22 and verse 3, Paul describes his former life as very strict, very zealous, and he was taught by the best minds of his day that were available to him. In Galatians chapter 1 and verse 14, he says, I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation. So he had a mind to grasp truth as it had been revealed to him up to that point.

He had a will, he had a strength to embrace that truth and to actually bypass others who were students with him and striving to advance themselves religiously as it is in the same way that he was. Philippians chapter 3 and verse 6, Paul says, concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. That's a phenomenal boast on his part.

When you realize all that had to be fulfilled to make that boast, you had to be incredibly strong to do that. It would be like somebody without God sitting here today and saying, to the best of my knowledge, I have thought no evil, I have spoken no evil, I've seen no evil, I've done everything the way I believe that God would have me to do it. Paul, obviously, was very determined, very strong, very strong-willed.

Before his conversion, he was studied, he was disciplined, he was focused, he was determined, he was successful. In other words, he was strong, probably the strongest among his peers. And so we ask ourselves the question, why then was adding Christ to all this, why would he now find himself weak? And why would he find it preferential to his former state? In 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 7, now in the beginning of that chapter, Paul talks about being brought into a place and being given knowledge he never had before, seeing things he never saw.

And verse 7, he says, unless I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, the messenger of Satan to buffet me lest I be exalted above measure. In other words, lest I come to the fore again, lest it become all about me, lest I become proud in my own strength. Don't forget, that's the human condition.

The fallen nature of humankind wants to be as God is, wants to boast in itself, wants to boast in its own strength. And Paul now, in addition to all these things that he had been given naturally, now adding Christ to all of this and adding his redemption to all of this, he now had revelation and knowledge that exceeded his peers. We know that to be true from his epistles.

He was given, he was taught by Christ himself. It was truly amazing what was in the mind and the spirit of this man. But lest he should come to the fore, lest he should become strong in himself, lest he should preach some kind of strength that is achievable by human effort.

God allowed a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he be exalted above measure. It was grievous, obviously, whatever it was that God allowed to come into his life. There's a lot of debate about that.

I'm not going to get into that this morning. He says, concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. It was something so grievous to Paul.

He said, God, please take this from my life. Why do you have to put this in my life? Why do you consider it reasonable that this should be left with me? And the Lord said to him, my grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, most gladly, I would rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore, Paul says, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. It's an incredible thing.

Paul says, I boast in everything that's been allowed to come into my life that has kept me entirely dependent upon God. When you read his testimony, he says, when we were in Asia, we were pressed above strength to the point that we despaired of life. In other words, we thought we weren't going to make it.

We were so pushed down. It was so difficult. It was so hard.

Some people here this morning know what I'm talking about. Life is just like that for you. It's so hard.

It's so hard going to the same job. It's so hard listening to the same gossiping voices all around you in the workplace. It's so hard coming home to the same apartment.

It's so hard fighting for your children, fighting for the semblance of family that you have left. It's just so hard. And Paul said, we were pressed down.

And because I've learned that the power of God rests upon me when I am weak, therefore, I thank God when I'm reproached. I thank God when I have needs that I can't meet in my own strength. I thank God for when I am persecuted.

I thank God for when I find myself in distress that I can't get out of. For when I'm weak, then I am strong. Paul knew that in Christ, there was a strength available to humankind with which nothing of human intellect or effort could even begin to touch.

There's a strength available to you and I, but it only comes when we are out of the way. It's the ultimate irony, in a sense. When we become weak, we become strong.

You know, it's so contrary to so much of what has been taught, even in the body of Christ, for the last two decades. It's been all about us. It's been about increasing ourselves, about increasing our strength.

But Paul knew that this strength was not available to the proud. God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. It wasn't available to the self-satisfied and those who tried to take over what God alone was able to do.

So he knew that God's mercy had made him dependent on a strength other than his own. I tell you, if you're ever going to be used of God, you're going to find this truth. You're going to find the reality of it in your life.

That's why I believe that in this church age and at this particular time, when we are facing an onslaught of hell against the church of Jesus Christ and against the nation we live in, when we are facing a flood of godlessness, now trying to purport itself as good, when we are at a moment in history when we are being marginalized, when we are being vilified, when we are being pushed to the sidelines of society, I think at this particular time, Jesus Christ, because of his mercy, will make his church aware of our need of him again. By mercy and by grace, just like he did with Paul, he will allow this buffeting of his body to finally bring us to the place of saying, God, we can't do this without you. It will finally bring us to the place where we, in humility, go back to prayer again.

If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, we'll finally go back into the prayer meeting. Jesus, help me, will become the prayer order of the day. We will not be bringing our litany of works and achievements.

We'll not be boasting of ourselves. We'll no longer look to man. We'll not be elevating flesh, but we will know that we are all on the same ground.

We are powerless to stop this onslaught of hell without the spirit of God again coming and working in our midst and making us into what we could never be by any amount of learning, by any amount of human effort, by any amount of past achievement. Humankind typically despises weakness. We have a tendency throughout history to shun the simplicity of faith and gravitate to something more visual, something more hands-on, something more self-satisfying.

In the book of 1 Samuel, in the book of Judges, they had God really leading them as a people. He had spokesmen, and he would speak through these judges, but God himself was leading the people. But the people got tired of walking in the simplicity of faith, and they wanted to follow something more visible.

They wanted something more tangible, something more human that they could take pride in, just like the nations around them. And so they went to Samuel and said, well, thus far, we just thank God for what he's done thus far in the nation, but we would like a king like the other nations around us. We want human leadership now.

We've had the divine, but we're tired of the simplicity of this. We want something more calculable. We want something more tangible.

We want something we can see. We want something to worship that is visible. And so God, of course, gave them a king.

His name was Saul. He was handsome, and he stood a head and shoulders above all the people, and everybody was rejoicing at that moment. God saved the king would be what they would cry.

But you see, what they got was a strategist and not a seeker. Saul pushed away. Remember when David became king, he said, we didn't seek at the ark of God.

We didn't seek God during the reign of Saul. Saul started out. He had a marginal kind of acceptance of spiritual things, but he was a strategist.

He was a thinker. He was a self-made man, and he led mostly by his own reasoning, and he won victories. He defeated the Amalekites.

I could give you a list of victories that he won. He fashioned armor. He put on homemade man-made armor.

He had a breastplate. He had a helmet. He had a sword.

He had an army that was trained. He probably had conferences where he trained his army, and they talked about warfare and spiritual warfare and all the rest of it, and won victories. There's no doubt that he won some victories, and everything seemed to be going fine until Goliath, until suddenly they were confronted with a power and with a voice that everyone, Saul included in that army, knew they could not defeat it in their own strength.

And if you have any kind of wisdom today, you will realize that what we're up against now in society cannot be defeated by any wisdom, intellect, or power of man. We need a sovereign intervention of the Spirit of God again. You can see them with all their armor and all their armies, and Saul being about a foot or so taller than the rest of the people.

The king that they had looked to, which represents they had looked to humanity, humanness, human strength, ingenuity to lead them. They're looking at their king. He's trembling like everybody else.

The people are looking for holes in the rocks to hide in, the scripture tells us. They're looking for a safe place to ride out the storm. Everyone is trembling.

Nobody can fight. And this mammoth giant, this mammoth, big-mouthed giant is coming up every morning and challenging the armies of Israel, and challenging them and basically saying, you're going to serve us. There is no chance you're going to win this fight.

You can't put up anybody against us that can match us in the physical realm. And that was true. In the physical realm, nobody could match the power that was standing on the other side of that valley.

And if we try to fight this moment that we're in as a society with human reasoning, human passion, human intellect, we can't match it. It's too powerful now for us as the church of Jesus Christ. And Saul and his army are a type of the church in our generation who, if we're honest, find ourselves unable to go forward.

And many are thinking about a safe place to ride out the coming storm. And if you're honest, you've been thinking it too, many here. How can I get through this? How can I get through without being persecuted in the marketplace, vilified, laughed, fired? Because I believe in traditional marriage and the sanctity of life, for example.

How can I do this? How can I get through this? The amazing thing is that when it finally comes to this point again in history, the strength of God is again revealed through weakness. Here's the army standing on the mountainside with all their training, all their past victory, as they saw it, their king that stands so tall, the sun glistening off of the armor that they have invented for themselves and the weaponry that they have created. And now they're up against an enemy they can't defeat.

And they know it in their heart. They know they can't defeat this. There's nobody coming out of the ranks.

There's not a single soldier with enough bravery to step out and begin to fight. And so one more time, the strength of God is revealed in weakness. Here comes a little teenage boy, just skinny kid.

He's sent by his dad, the donkey and some raisins and some cakes and cheese to give to his brothers who are part of this army. And he comes walking into the camp. I love it.

I love it with all my heart because it's not by power. It's not by might. It's by my spirit, says the Lord.

And in his weakness, he comes into the camp and he has walked with God and he has a passion for the honor of God. That's what you and I need more than anything else. It's not what can I do for God.

It's what can God do for himself through me to glorify his own name? How can I yield my life? And where can he take me and cause me to begin to walk in the supernatural? And David comes into the camp and he's going around to all these soldiers. There was nobody fighting this guy. What are you all doing standing there? And his brothers got offended and they accused him of pride.

But it was pride that got them in the position that they were in. It was the pride of human achievement. It was the pride of wanting to worship humanity and human strength and human mind and our human ability to accomplish all these spiritual victories that got them into this mess.

And now suddenly this young boy is there and he's just saying, why won't anybody go and fight this uncircumcised Philistine? How dare he defy the armies of the living God? Folks, sometimes something like that's got to get into your heart. Who are these principalities and weaknesses that they dare defy? The armies of the living God. Who do they think they are? Who do they think Christ is? Who do they think they're fighting against? What makes them think they can triumph over Christ and over his church? Didn't Jesus say, on this rock I build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

It's written in the scriptures. I give you power over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you. And so finally the report comes to Saul and Saul hears of this young boy that's willing to go down.

They got so desperate they were willing to look to weakness again. Isn't that amazing? I think history is going to repeat itself. We're so desperate.

We're no longer looking for this seven foot king anymore. We're now looking for the person with faith who may not be the tallest or more successful or have the biggest arms or whatever the case is or the sharpest mind, but a person of faith. And Saul somehow, I don't know how, but Saul somehow, because there had to be a, because he was anointed and once had the spirit of God, there had to be something in him that recognized this has to be the hand of God because in the natural it didn't make sense.

It was, it was potentially the first time he'd ever made a good decision. Allowing David to go down and fight this giant in the natural is suicide. It's beyond suicide.

It's stupidity. But in the spirit, it's the way that God works. And, but Saul took his armor and put his arm.

Can you imagine? He put his armor on David. David is a little kid. Saul is seven feet tall.

The armor would have, would have gone down to his ankles. Just, just the top part. He puts this thing on David, puts his helmet on him, gives him his sword.

And David's standing there. And he says, I'm sorry, but I can't, I can't fight with this. I haven't proven this.

You see, I've, I've lived by faith since I was young and I've, I've experienced the strength of God. And I know what God can do. And God has given me victories.

And there are people here today. You can say that to God. God has given you victories and you know, you know, you couldn't get out of that prison.

You know, that marriage was dead until you began to pray. You know, your son or daughter never would have come home apart from the spirit of God coming upon them. You know, you couldn't have endured that trial that came into your life, but you trusted God.

And when the enemy came in to devour you, just like David did, you raised up in the power of the spirit and you took authority over this power of hell that wanted to devour you. And you won a victory and you came into the house of God and you sang your heart out and you know, you know what God is able to do. David said to Saul, I can't fight with these things because they may have worked for you, but they've never worked for me.

You see, that's when the people of God were leaving the flesh and going back to the spirit, leaving that which can be achieved by the efforts of man, which we have done for two decades or longer in America and going back to being a church age that walks in the spirit of God. And David went down, he says, he took his staff in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook and put them in a shepherd's bag in a pouch which he had and with his sling in his hand and he drew near to the Philistine. You see, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

The preaching of the cross is to those who perish foolishness, but to we who are saved, it is the power of God. The very concept that when I'm weak, then I am strong is foolishness to the natural man. He can't understand it.

It makes absolutely no sense to him. He would rather go out and put his hand to the plow and with his own ingenuity and effort, try to define or redefine the situation or win the victory in his own strength. But if you looked at this picture in the natural, this boy picking up five little stones and he's just a skinny kid and he's going to fight a giant, a giant that's probably nine feet tall.

He probably weighs about four or 500 pounds. He's a warrior from his birth. Nobody will dare step out of the armies of Israel to fight him.

But the scripture says with five little stones in a bag, you know, I often wonder why did he need five? He only shot one. Why did he pick up five? Well, it's only my opinion for what it's worth, but the five stones that God gave to the body of Jesus Christ for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministers, the apostle, the prophet, the pastor, the evangelist, and the teacher. Those are the five stones of God sent to build you in the faith because you are the army of God.

We as in the ministry are the servants to you, helping you to understand your position, your power, who you are in Christ and to send you out to face the giants that you have to fight. And he took that first stone. The scripture tells us that Philistine came towards him and cursed him and said, what do you think I am? A dog that you've come to chase me with a stick.

And we're, we're, we're hearing that voice of cursing coming against the church of Jesus Christ in this generation we're now living in. And David, suddenly the spirit of God came on him, just like the spirit of

God had come on him all through his youth and said, you come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin. You come to me.

In other words, with all the weaponry that humanity can produce, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. And when he made that statement of faith, that profession of faith, suddenly the word of prophecy came into his heart. Now he's speaking prophetically is speaking in the spirit.

He said this day, the Lord will deliver you into my hand. I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I'll give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Then all the assembly will know the Lord does not say with sword and spear for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hands. He's now speaking in the spirit because he's fighting in the spirit. The Holy spirit had come upon him in his weakness, and it was going to be proven that he was stronger than the armies of the Philistines, stronger than this champion Goliath that was being placed against him.

That's why the apostle Paul could say, when I'm weak, then I am strong. I will rejoice in those things that God has allowed into my life to keep me dependent on him. I wonder, are we there yet? Do we live our whole life trying to get out of the very things that God has sat to make us strong? Actually through weakness, it's the ultimate of ironies.

It doesn't make sense to those who are still thinking and living with a carnal mind. God says, no, I have to make you weak first so you can be strong because your strength is not in yourself. Your strength is in me.

It's in the power of my spirit within your life. In Acts chapter 27, it was in weakness that Paul in the midst of that storm, where he was relegated to the belly of the ship, he was a voice nobody wanted to hear. He was a captive among the slaves in that ship and prisoners in that ship.

So he's not in a place of strength. He's not in a place of influence, but it was in that place of weakness that Paul, the apostle found a wisdom and a power that was stronger than the power of the storm that was all around him. Stronger than a storm that had the power to break up a ship and to swallow that entire crew and drown them in the midst of the sea.

Paul, in the midst of his own weakness, found power over the storm, found an ability to lead men and women out of trial and difficulty and trouble and hopelessness and impossible situations. It was not in strength and influence. It was in weakness that Paul found this power.

That's why Paul could say, I will glory in everything that God allows into my life to keep me weak. In next chapter 16, verse 25, it was in weakness that Paul found the power of worship. You remember he and Silas were taken.

They were beaten. They were put in the inner prison. They were made fast in the stocks.

They can't even move their bodies, which are aching and hurting under the power as it is of the beating they had taken. But at midnight, they chose to sing praises to God. They chose to give him glory.

It was the kind of a worship that says, God, I may not understand everything, but I know this one thing. Heaven is your throne and the earth is your footstool. I know you're in charge of all things.

I know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to his purpose. I know that even though I appear to be weak, the strength of God is with me. The strength of God is upon me.

And because of Christ in me, things can be accomplished, which I could never hope to do in any amount of human effort. And as they began to praise him, the prison began to shake. The doors opened.

All the prisoners were set free. And even the jailer, even those that are the least likely to be one to Christ, even the jailer found himself bending his knee to God with his whole family and being baptized and putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, because he found a strength stronger than anything this world has to offer. In Acts chapter 14 and verse 19, I'm going to close with this scripture.

The scripture says, then the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

You see, it was in weakness that Paul found a divine enablement, the ability to endure all that evil and hell could throw against him and to get up and to finish his journey in victory. It's in weakness. I believe he was dead.

I don't think a crowd that size made a mistake in this. You either know when a person is dead or they're not dead. When a person is dead, their eyes look a certain way, their mouth's open.

They're not breathing. It's evident. They suppose they dragged, they had a time to stone him and then drag him all the way through the city and out the gate and throw him in a heap outside the city.

But the brethren gathered around and in his weakness, he got up and finished his journey. And you see, the point is the devil would try to convince you that you're finished. The devil would try to tell you that you're so weak.

Why bother even going on? Why bother opening your mouth again? Why bother trying to serve God? But I'm telling you, I'm going to give an altar call this morning. You're going to stand here. We're going to gather around you.

We're going to pray and you're going to get up and you're going to go back into the city and you're going to make a huge difference for the kingdom of God. I love it. It said he, he went with Barnabas to Derby and strengthened the souls of the disciples.

Here's a man who's just crawled out from under a pile of rocks and was most likely, in my opinion, dead. And here he is strengthening everybody else. What do you think he was telling them? Don't despise your weakness.

Don't worry about what this world can throw at you. God is able to keep you. God is able to give you the victory.

God is able to use your life for his glory. Don't worry about the size of Rome and its armies. I believe that God's one day going to make its knee bend to Jesus Christ.

Don't worry about the things that come against you in this world. You have a power source within you, even in your weakest days, that is greater than all of the strength of this world put together. He got up and went back into the city.

And some people have come here this morning. You've come to the sanctuary because you're just so beaten up. You're left for dead.

Your family have no hope. You've lost heart. The devil would convince you he's won, but we're going to pray for you this morning.

We are going to pray and you're going to get up and you're going to go back into the city. You're going to go back into wherever you came from, but not just to survive. You're going to go back in the power of the spirit.

There's a huge difference. You're going to say like the apostle Paul, I rejoice. I rejoice in necessities.

I rejoice in the difficulties that I've had to experience. I rejoice in all of the things that have come against me. And even though I stand in weakness and trembling, even though there is a measure of fear at times in my heart, I will not be defeated.

And the testimony of Christ will not be taken from my life. And the purpose that God has for me will be fulfilled. I will run my full race.

I will cross that finish line with my arms in the air and giving glory to God for what he has done. And every devil of hell, every Goliath that sent against me, I'm going to throw the stone of that truth right in the middle of his forehead. There's nothing of evil has any authority.

There's no power. There's no principality. There's no wall.

There's no angels in heaven that can come down. There's nothing can deter me from this journey and separate me from the love of God, which is mine in Christ Jesus, my Lord. I am victorious in the strength of God.

And I thank God that he's going to make us weak again, that we might become strong. I encourage you to meditate on these words. I encourage you to study the life of the apostle Paul.

Let that truth become a reality to your heart. It's not in our strength. It's in God's strength.

When we've become nothing, I've often say it this way. The end of ourselves is the beginning of God. I thank God for that with all my heart.

Take courage. Take courage. By speaking to the weakest among us today, myself included, take courage.

You will not be defeated. You're on the brink of the greatest victory that you've ever known, because now the glory goes to God. Paul said, I will know nothing among you but Christ and him crucified.

Paul was saying, I know that everything I have has come from the hand of God. All my strength is from God. Everything I achieve is from God.

The knowledge I've been given is from God. Everything belongs to him. So I don't want to know.

I don't want to know your diplomas and degrees. I don't want to know anything about man. I just want to know that which comes from the victory that's been given me because of the cross of Jesus Christ.

That is the cry of my heart. I'm going to ask you to stand, and everybody who really needs the strength that you've heard about today, just come. Meet me here at this altar, and we're going to pray for you in just a moment.

Just slide out of your seat in the balcony. Go to either exit in the annex and in North Jersey. Just stand between the screens.

Those at home, just step up in your living room or wherever it happens to be where you are. Just stand to your feet and just come. Everybody who just says, Pastor, you just nailed my situation.

That's where I'm at. I need the strength of God now to get through. I want you to consider something now before we pray.

When the Lord wanted to deliver his people out of Egypt, he went to a man who had, his youthful days had passed by, and he had lived with a sense of failure in his life for probably 40 years. Felt like he'd been passed over by God, and every day there would be this sense of regret. I was called to do this, to this ministry, and somehow I let it slip through my fingers.

Actually, he didn't. God just waited until he was ready to be used. When he wanted to bring a great prophet into the world, you look at it all through.

Every time he wanted to bring a great prophet, a preacher, somebody into the world, he looked to a barren womb. He looked to a person who had no possibility of bringing that life into being. He waited until weakness took over that his strength might be made known.

You see it all the way through the scriptures. Takes a young girl called Esther, who's really got no significant role in the beginning in the palace of the king, and takes her and her weakness, and with her hand rewrites the law of death into a law of life. This is who God is.

This is how God works, and so when we finally get to the place of victory, we're not writing books about it. We're just lifting our hands and saying, God, thank you for being who you are. Thank you for the victory.

Thank you, Lord. Now, when Paul was dragged out, it says, the brethren gathered around. So everybody that's in the balcony, still in your seats, would you stretch your hands out towards these men and women who are here at this altar today, and in the annex in North Jersey as well, would you do the same? God Almighty, in Jesus' name, we thank you for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We thank you that they have a divine purpose and can't be defeated. Even when it looks hopeless, they can't be defeated, for the Spirit of God has raised them. The Spirit of God has called them.

The blood of Christ has marked them for a divine purpose, so they cannot be defeated. And so we say to you, as the brethren once said to Paul, rise up and go back into the city and finish that in the Spirit of God, which you've been given to do. Glorify Christ in the way that he has called you in his own strength to glorify his own name.

Father, I thank you, God. I thank you that there's no weapon of hell formed against these men and women that can prosper. There is no lie of the devil that can supersede the Word of God, that can stand above the

Word of God.

There's no voice of Goliath that can override the voice of David. There's nothing anywhere that can stop these men and women from becoming everything, Lord Jesus Christ, that you have destined them to be. You said in the Word of God through Paul that you take the weak to confound those that are strong in their own strength.

You take the foolish to confound those that are standing in their own wisdom, their own reasoning, that no flesh can glory in your presence. God, I thank you, Lord. These are men and women who will praise you one day.

They will dance in the house of God. They will bring back a report of what you have done through them in their weakness. Father, we thank you for this, God.

We thank you, Lord. We thank you, God. We thank you, Lord, that when you want to do miracles, you always look for people that have no strength.

God, you wanted to start your church. You went to an upper room of people who had betrayed you. They'd run in fear.

They were all losers and all failures, but God, that's where your church started. That's where the power of the Holy Spirit came down. God Almighty, give us wisdom again to understand these things.

Give us hearts to embrace it, Lord. Give us humility, God, to consider ourselves no better than any other person in your body. Jesus, deliver us, God, from human effort, human reasoning, human leaders, Lord.

Give us, God, men and women of the Spirit again who will lead us into the truth of the victory that's ours because of the cross of Christ. Father, we thank you for this, God, and we praise you. Lord Jesus Christ, there was a shout in Israel that day when that giant fell on his face.

There was a shout among the people of God.

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