

Surviving the Anointing

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon emphasizes the importance of dependency on God to survive the anointing in ministry.

Duration: 40:35

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Luke 11:5-10, John 15:5, Acts 7:22-23, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Hebrews 11:32

Topics: "Spiritual Dependency", "Godly Humility"

Description

This sermon by David Ravenhill emphasizes the importance of surviving the anointing in ministry. He highlights the need for absolute dependency upon God, using examples from the Bible of individuals who started well but failed due to lack of dependency on God. The message stresses the significance of acknowledging weakness and relying on God's strength to overcome challenges and fulfill one's calling.

Transcript

Ecclesia. Author and speaker, David Ravenhill, shared a key message from his book, *Surviving the Anointing*, with the Ecclesia College Assembly. Well, good morning.

I have good news and bad news for you this morning. They say that before you tell people the good news, you've got to tell them the bad news, so I'll tell you the bad news first. The bad news is that 90% of you will not make it.

Let me say that again, 90% of you will not make it. Those are not my statistics, those are according to John Maxwell, one of the leading spiritual leadership authorities in the nation. He says only one out of every ten men or women going into the ministry today will still be in it at the age of 65.

So, if you're an average school, I trust you're not, but 90% of you will fail and will not make it. That's the bad news, now that I've got your attention. The good news is you don't have to be part of that casualty list.

The tragedy is, though, that there is a major hemorrhage in the body of Christ and something needs to be done about it. I want to talk to you this morning about surviving the anointing. Surviving the anointing.

I heard one of the foremost prophetic ministers about 15 years ago now, speaking in Kansas City, he made this statement, very few people will survive the anointing. There was something about that statement that got under my skin and I could not shake it off for months and months and months. I now have a book with that title, *Surviving the Anointing*.

But how do you survive the anointing? The Bible is full of individuals that did not make it, and yet they started off well. We have, of course, one of the creative beings. Most people put him up there along with all the other archangels like Gabriel and Michael and so on.

Lucifer. The Bible refers to him in the past tense. You were the anointed cherub.

In other words, what you were is no longer what you are. You were the anointed cherub. You had the anointing of the Spirit of God.

You no longer have that anointing. And you can go through the Bible, Old Testament, New Testament. It is full of individuals who started off well, but never made it.

You have men like Solomon who had the kings of the earth literally beating a path to his door because of his incredible wisdom, understanding, insight, and so on. The man that gave us the book of Proverbs and all the wonderful wisdom contained therein, and yet at the end of his life his heart is being turned away from God. He's building monuments or temples to idols and so on.

You have men like Saul who when he was anointed king of Israel, the first king of Israel, the people stood back in amazement and said, Is Saul also one of the prophets? The Spirit of God came upon him. He was able to prophesy along with the best of them, and yet at the end of his life he sums it up in his own words. He says, I've erred exceedingly.

I played the fool. What a tragedy. I played the fool.

I've gone off the rails. I've erred exceedingly. We have men like Balaam who gave us some of the most beautiful prophecies in the Old Testament, and yet at the end of his life we have all the warnings in the New Testament about the error of Balaam, the way of Balaam, the teaching of Balaam, all those things to be avoided, and yet here he was, the man whose eyes opened, the man who had revelation and insight into the things of the Spirit of God.

Men like Samson who terrorized the Philistines because of the incredible power of God upon his life, the anointing of the Spirit of God, and yet at the end of his life he's lost his vision, lost his testimony, and just in the nick of time, if you like, God sort of redeemed that situation. But we can go on and on and on. The Bible is full of individuals like that.

We have the two kings in the Old Testament that went to war, one against the other. One king said to the other king, don't brag about putting on your armor. Brag if you can take it off.

In other words, it's one thing to begin the race. It's another thing to finish the race. Paul says, I finished the race.

I finished the course. Henceforth has laid up for me a crown of righteousness. How do we finish the race? What are some of the keys to surviving the anointing? Again, there are all these illustrations.

In the New Testament we have men like Demas who was part of Paul's apostolic team, and yet Paul has to write about him, Demas has forsaken me. He's gone back into the world. In other words, the love of the world has got a hold of him.

He's forsaken God, forsaken the ministry, and so on. I have a letter here by James Dobson. This is a very old statistic.

It goes back to August 1998. Let me just read you one paragraph. It says, of great concern, of course, is the state of the clergy itself.

Thousands of spiritual leaders are barely hanging on from day to day. A survey indicated that 80% of pastors, 84% of their spouses are discouraged or dealing with depression. More than 40% of pastors and 47% of their spouses report they are suffering from burnout, frantic schedules, and unrealistic expectations.

We estimate that approximately 1,500 pastors leave their assignment every month due to moral failure, spiritual burnout, or contention within the local congregation. 1,500 translates, if you're good at math, to 18,000 leaders a year, pastors. These are men, women in some cases have had a call of God, been to some sort of a Bible college seminary.

Ended up with a congregation, and yet 18,000 a year leaving the ministry. Number one reason, sexual immorality, burnout, and then contention, not being able to cope with the demands of the ministry. And so once again, the bad news is 90% of you will not make it.

The good news is by the grace of God you can make it and you can defy those statistics. So I want to share with you how do you survive the anointing. The anointing in many ways is like in the natural coming into vast riches.

Let's say you're, well you are college kids, and so you know you're barely making ends meet maybe to earn a little bit of money of flipping burgers down at McDonald's and driving around in an old jalopy, buying your clothes at the Goodwill and wondering where the next penny is coming from. And suddenly you have a windfall. Some rich aunt or uncle that you never know existed, died, and you now have millions of dollars at your disposal.

Now you can do whatever you dreamed of doing. You can buy that Corvette, buy that fancy house on the lake, you know, jet set around the nation, and so on and so forth. But can you survive that? I have a list, I didn't bring it with me, of men and women that have won the lottery.

And it's amazing how many people came into vast sums of money, I mean multiple millions of dollars, that two or three years later were either in prison, committing suicide, or did not have enough money to pay off their taxes. In other words, they've squandered that vast amount of money, all those resources. The anointing is rather like that.

You're an average individual. Again, maybe all thumbs in the natural, don't have much of a personality, and so on. Suddenly the Spirit of God comes upon you, and you find that you've got some outstanding ministry.

Maybe a music ministry, maybe a healing ministry, maybe a prophetic ministry, maybe a teaching ministry, whatever. And the Spirit of God, in that sense, transforms your life. You go from rags to riches in a spiritual sense.

That is the anointing. God's riches coming upon your life. But can you steward that in such a way that, you know, 20 years from now, 40 years from now, 60 years from now, should the Lord tarry, you are still in the ministry, still thriving, still in a place where God is using you and anointing you.

So, again, that's the intro. This is actually a six-hour lecture, and we only have about 30 minutes left or whatever. But we'll get into it anyway.

Some of the principles that we need to understand, and I'm taking Jesus as our role model. If you are taking notes, 1 Peter 2, verse 21, it refers to Jesus there leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. Now the context of that chapter is dealing with suffering, and I know you don't want to hear about that this morning, but what I'm trying to get across is that Jesus is our example in everything, isn't He? He is what I call the Pattern Son, the one that we are to model our lives after, just as Paul says, be followers of me even as I am of Christ.

And Jesus Christ is our supreme example. He is the pattern for every single believer. And the first thing that I want to deal with, and the only thing that we'll get through with this morning, is this one area, and that is dependency.

The number one key to surviving the anointing is absolute dependency upon God. Jesus said in John 5, verse 19, the Son can do nothing of Himself. That's an amazing statement, isn't it? You know, if He'd have gone to Ecclesia College, He'd have been able to do everything.

No, the Son can do nothing, absolutely nothing, bankrupt. The Son of God. He goes on to say in John 5, verse 30, I do nothing of mine own initiative.

I don't initiate anything. My apologies to Yangi Cho, but if I could put it in Yangi's terminology, I don't visualize. I don't visualize.

It was popular a number of years ago, I don't hear too much about it, to visualize. In other words, when you get down to pray, if you're beginning a church, then you visualize. If you've only got a handful, you visualize yourself preaching to a hundred.

And pretty soon, if you visualize a hundred people, you'll have a hundred people. And then you visualize a thousand, you'll have a thousand. Then you visualize ten thousand, you'll have ten thousand, and so on and so forth.

That was the teaching at least. Jesus said, I don't visualize a thing. The problem with visualization is the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and so all of us are going to visualize tens of thousands just for sheer ego alone.

Isn't that right? Our motives aren't always right. I'm going to be competing with a neighbor, and so if he's only visualizing a thousand, I'm going to visualize. Now, Jesus said, I don't do anything of my own initiative.

I don't try and create anything. I don't try and cause anything to happen. He says, whatever the Father tells me to do, that's what I do.

Poor old Jesus could only visualize twelve anyway. What a miserable failure. He's not going to be asked to speak at any church growth conference with a church of only twelve, or maybe seventy, if we include a few hang-ons.

But certainly he's not going to be the guest speaker on how to do it. Because he was a miserable failure if you go strictly by numerics. Thank God that God doesn't judge by numerics.

But dependency. John 15 and verse 5, he goes on to say, apart from me, you can do nothing. In other words, if I can't do anything, then certainly you can't do anything.

The key, of course, he says, is that you are to depend on me. You are to abide in me. It is out of a relationship with me that you can do these things and only by abiding in me.

Apart from me, you can do absolutely nothing. Matthew 5, we have, if you are familiar with this chapter, and I'm sure you are, Jesus is gathering with the disciples what we call the Beatitudes. He's there on the mountainside.

He is surrounded by a multitude, but he is primarily addressing the disciples. And he's teaching them about the laws of the kingdom of God. How many of you know that God's kingdom operates on entirely different principles and laws than the natural? The best way of understanding that, you can tell by my accent that I'm not from Texas, but lived there for nine years, but I was born in England.

And when I go back to England, I've got to realize that I am now in a different kingdom than the kingdom of America, if I can put it that way. And the laws are different, especially when it comes to driving. And I've got to realize that I cannot abide by American law in England, at least not for very long.

Nor can English people abide by English laws if they're driving in America, if they hope to survive. They operate on different principles. They drive on the entirely opposite side of the road.

The kingdom of God is like that. God's kingdom is vastly different than the way you and I generally think, the way our natural mind is inclined to think. And so Jesus is teaching here the laws of the kingdom.

The very first principle that He lays down, in fact the foundation principle, is there in verse 3, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Now that may not make a lot of sense to many of you.

The Greek word for the word poor is the word beggar. Blessed are the beggars. Now, why on earth would Jesus say happy are the beggars? Incidentally, that word happy, if you trace it back to its Old Testament roots, it means to have the right orientation, to find the right direction.

It's like being lost in a forest and you begin to panic. The night's setting in. It's getting cold and you think, if I don't find my way out of here, I'm going to freeze to death.

And suddenly you come across a trail that you know will get you out of there. You are now rightly orientated. And that's really the root meaning of the word blessed to be you're happy because you're on the right track.

And so Jesus said, you know, you're on the right track if you are poor, if you're a beggar. Well, that doesn't sound very encouraging. But there is a tremendous principle here that we need to understand.

I was in India about 20 years ago now ministering at a Bible school there. A friend of mine was in charge of it. It was just outside the city of Hyderabad.

And one afternoon they took me into the city to show me around. If you've been to India, you know it's a fascinating place. All the sights and smells and bells and whistles and all the other things.

But here we were driving into the city and there were about six lanes of traffic in either direction. Technically there were three lanes on the road, at least the white stripes, but they don't know what that means. And so there were buses and trucks and people pulling carts and wheelbarrows and every conceivable sort of transport.

And we pulled up at a traffic light right in the middle of all this busy traffic and as we were waiting for the signal to change, I heard a voice. I turned. I thought it was the driver.

He was looking straight ahead. I heard the voice again. I looked around.

Couldn't figure out where it was coming from. Finally, the third time, I looked down and there beside me, sitting on a medium strip, maybe a little wider than this little podium here, was a beggar boy. In between all these busy lanes of traffic, this young man had stationed himself there.

His age, I would assume, was somewhere between the age of maybe 12 and 15, 14, thereabouts. The reason I couldn't tell was because his body was all, you know, like a human corkscrew. His arms were all twisted, his legs were all twisted up under him and he was begging.

And I realized, as I never realized before, that's exactly what Jesus meant. Blessed are the beggars. What is a beggar? A beggar is somebody who derives his life from somebody else's resources.

You see, that boy was incapable in the natural offending for himself. He didn't have the mobility. His legs did not operate normally.

He didn't have the dexterity. He couldn't punch a machine or whatever. He was totally incapacitated.

He had no natural strength, no natural ability to do anything. And therefore, if he was going to survive at all, he had to survive off somebody else's generosity, off somebody else's resources. And Jesus said, the very first principle of my kingdom is that we are beggars.

We can't make it by ourselves. We have to depend on the grace of God, the goodness of God, the resources of God. Notice it says here, blessed are the beggars, for theirs is the kingdom.

Not will be. There's a will be aspect to the kingdom of God, but theirs is. Right now, all the resources of heaven are available to the beggar.

And we've got to learn how to beg. I make no qualms about it anymore. I can tell people without being ashamed, I am a professional beggar.

There's not a day goes by, and I've been in ministry for over 45 years now, there's not a day goes by that I don't cry out to God and say, Lord, here's my cup, fill it up. Because again, apart from me, you can do absolutely nothing, Jesus said. In Luke chapter 11, the disciples come to Jesus and they ask Him if He would teach them how to pray.

Notice in verse 1, it came about while He was praying in a certain place, after He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples. My Father used to say, this is the only time in the Bible where the disciples ever asked to be taught anything. We have no record of them saying, teach us how to preach like you do.

We have no record of them saying teach us how to teach like you do. We have no record of them saying teach us how to walk on water like you do. We have no record of them saying teach us how to feed 5,000 people with a Big Mac.

The only time they ever said teach us to do anything was teach us how to pray. My father, and I think he's right in his observation, is that they came to this realization, if we can do what you're doing right now, we can do all the other things that you do. In other words, the key to your life is you know how to touch heaven.

If there was one thing I'd love to eliminate from the church, it's the word prayer. Not praying, but just the word prayer, because you know it's lost its pizzazz, if you like, it's lost its appeal. But if I were to substitute the word prayer, it would be let's touch heaven together.

That's really what prayer is all about, touching heaven, changing earth. And what the disciples are basically doing, they've observed Jesus praying, and they said teach us to touch heaven the way you touch heaven. If we can touch heaven the way you touch heaven, we can do the things that you do.

And so we have the Lord's Prayer here, what we commonly refer to as the Lord's Prayer. But in verse 5, Jesus adds something that Matthew doesn't in his account, and it's this story. It says, suppose one of you shall have a friend, shall go to him at midnight and say, friend lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him.

From inside he'll answer and say, do not bother me, the door has already been shut, my children and I are in bed, I cannot get up and give you anything. I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything, because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs. And I say, ask and it shall begin to seek, and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened.

Now notice what Jesus is saying here. Here is a man, and he is anticipating the arrival of his friend. He may have been waiting all day, or he may have already gone to bed thinking, you know, last time I saw my friend he was driving a, you know, 20 year old donkey that had an arthritic hip, and he's not gonna arrive until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning at the rate that thing moves, and I'll be able to get some Krispy Kremes and Starbucks and be able to feed him when he arrives.

Instead, you know, he's trading in his donkey for a camel, and he arrives at midnight. I don't know why I arrived at midnight, but anyway, he arrives at midnight and he's hungry. There's no, no stores open, and he is famished, and this guy, even though he's his friend, does not have a single thing to offer him.

What a tragedy. He cannot meet the needs of his friend. Now in this culture, of course, hospitality played a very important role.

It was an embarrassment not to be able to feed your friend, but then he realizes something. I have another friend, and the one thing about my other friend is this. He is loaded.

He has got all the resources imaginable, and even though it's midnight, he begins pounding on the door, wakes his friend up. His friend is a little perturbed initially. He says, listen, kids are in bed, you know, you're gonna wake everybody up, and so on.

What on earth do you want? And, you know, but because of his persistency, he finally gives him, it says, as much as he needs. He doesn't just throw out a few bread crumbs and say, well, that will tide you over,

you know, take the edge off your appetite. He says, no, here, how much you want, this is all, you know, I'll give you everything that you need.

Now, you'll notice here that this whole, this whole teaching is about dependency. That's what prayer is. Prayer is an acknowledgment of need.

The reason we don't pray, really, is telling God we don't need your help. That's what we are doing in essence. We're saying, God, I'm a big boy, you know, I've been to college, I'm a second-year student, a third-year student, I don't need your help anymore.

What a tragedy. Prayer is an acknowledgment of help. And this man realizes, listen, my friend has a need and I can't meet the need of my friend.

You and I, in the ministry, will constantly be confronted with friends at some midnight hour. Not necessarily a midnight hour on the watch, but a midnight hour in their marriage, maybe some crisis in their marriage, maybe some emotional problem, you know, physical problem, financial problem, whatever it is that their problem is, and they will come to you at their midnight hour looking for help. And the sooner you realize that you don't have the answer, the better.

I have nothing to set before you, but I have a friend and I am prepared to take your case, if you like, to my greater friend, because my greater friend does have what you need. I don't, but he does. And prayer is going to your greater friend to get from your greater friend what you don't have so that you can meet the need of your other friend.

Again, dependency. We are bankrupt. Our cupboards are empty, so to speak.

We don't have the wisdom, we don't have the strength, we don't have the knowledge, we don't have the insight, we don't have the love that we need, and so on and so forth. But God does, and all we've got to do is tap in, again, like the beggar, blessed are the poor in spirit, there's this. All the resources of heaven are available to that beggar.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 for a moment, where Paul gives us one of the great keys to the ministry. Verse 26, consider your calling brethren. There are not many wise men according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world, and the despised God has chosen the things that are not, that he might nullify the things that are. Now, I don't know about you, but I would have thought God was a lot smarter than that. Why would God choose the hopeless, the weak, the nobodies, the nothings? You know, imagine that we are going to, well, let me take you back a few years to your days in school, and here is the PE teacher, you're out in the playground, and we're going to play football, and so the teacher selects the two biggest, and brightest, and best players.

They are now the team captains. You've got John here, and you've got Fred here, and it is now John's and Fred's turn, as they alternate, to pick the team. And so John begins, I'll take you, and he knows that this guy can really play football.

Fred looks around and says, boy, that guy can really play, I'll take you. And they begin to pick the best and the brightest, the most gifted, the skillful, and finally, if you're the little runt, you know, that doesn't run very

well, and you know, 75 pounds dripping wet, you know you're going to be the last one to be picked. And finally, sort of reluctantly, John says, I'll take you.

You know, and you sort of shuffle up there, and you know everybody's watching you, because, you know, you just don't have it. And you know the only reason you were picked is there's nobody else to pick, right? And Jesus comes along, he says, we're going to play football. How many have never played before? Hands go up, okay, I'll take you, I'll take you, I'll take you, you think, this guy's nuts.

Doesn't make sense, does it? Well, there's a reason. The reason is there in verse 29, that no man should boast before God. That no man should boast before God.

In other words, God is not going to choose those that have natural abilities, natural talents, that are going to say, well, you know, I always was gifted, you know, I could always play the trumpet pretty good, I could, you know, you know. You see, if God has one problem, and I think he does, his problem is, how do I maintain the glory? The Bible says God will share everything he is with us, his love, patience, kindness, righteousness, all of those things, he will freely share with us. But he says, my glory, I will not share with any man.

And the way God gets the glory is by picking those that don't have anything to boast about, anything to brag about, then putting his anointing upon them, transforming him by, transforming that person by his grace, so that others look back on and say, I know that individual. In the natural, he cannot do what he's doing. You know, I went to school with that guy, boy, you should have heard him preach, he couldn't preach for nuts.

Now look at him, he's got crusades with hundreds of thousands of people, he's seeing signs, wonders, and miracles, that has to be God. I was in Singapore a few years ago, and the church that I was at had just sent a number of their pastors over to the Azusa Street Centennial. That was, I think, was that three years ago? Three or four years ago, anyway.

And I said to them, I said, well, who was there? They said, well, everybody. You know, all the big names were there. Benny Hinn was there, you know, John Heggy, and they named, rattled off all these names.

And I said, well, who impressed you the most? Who were, you know, what was the sort of the highlight? And they said, well, believe it or not, Benny Hinn gave an incredible word. And then they said Rod Parsley gave a word, you know, Rod with that deep, auctioneer voice, you know, and had everybody roused, and you know, sort of cheering, and so on. But they said the man that impressed us the most was an African man, Bishop, and I can't pronounce his name.

He's the head of one of the fastest growing denominations now, the Redeemed Christian Church of God. It's based in Nigeria. They have churches all over, all over America now.

But, very humble man. They said he stood up, and he almost apologized for being there, and said, I don't know why I've been asked to speak, you know, with all these, you know, dignitaries, all these great people, and so on. But this man has a meeting every month where he has a million people in attendance.

He has a conference every year where they have between two and four million people, and he has this vast property, and he says in the evening, he will walk around the property and pray. And he's a man known for his holiness message, and signs and wonders, and so on. But he said one night as he was walking around this property praying, he came to an area where there was just a little bit of sand or loamy

soil, and he said, God said, stop.

I want you to draw the outline of a man in the sand. And so he reached down, he drew the outline of a man in the sand, and God said, now look at that for a moment. He looked at it.

He said, now I want you to take your, I want you to erase the image. And so he took his foot, and he just erased the image that he drew of the man. And he said, then the Spirit of God said to him very clearly, he said, if you ever touch my glory, that's what I'll do to you.

And they said it was just like the air was being sucked out of that building as they realized the most dangerous thing that you and I can do is begin to brag about what we have done, you know, because of our ability, our natural ability, capability, or whatever it is. And the reason why God chooses the weak, and the base, and the despised, and so on, is that no flesh will boast before God. Now, you'll notice in verse 25, or verse 26, it says, consider your calling brethren, there are not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble.

In other words, there are a few. There are some that sort of seem to slip through the cracks. Let me assure you, if you do fit into that category, that God eventually will reduce you to nothing.

Moses was one of those individuals. The Bible says in Acts chapter 7, Moses was mighty in word and deed. He was powerful.

He was an orator. He was a king's kid. He was raised in the White House of his day.

Again, his granddad was the king of Egypt, Pharaoh. His mother a princess. He had every advantage possible.

Again, the finest clothes, finest food, finest education, and so on. And he was convinced he was the one to bring deliverance to the nation of Israel. The Bible says, supposing his brethren understood that God had raised him up to be their deliverer.

In other words, he was convinced, I am the one to bring deliverance to the nation of Israel. The problem is, he tried to do it in his own strength. He saw an Egyptian and an Israelite wrestling one day, waded into the situation, killed off the Egyptian, buried him in the sand.

As somebody said, if he'd have kept on at that rate, he'd still be there trying to get rid of the Egyptian army. God had a far better idea. Just pull the plug and they all went down the drain together.

But Moses flees for his life. 40 years goes by. He's on the backside of the desert.

He's become pretty laid-back. The Bible says he was slack, sort of pretty well at ease. He's still looking after his father-in-law's sheep after 40 years.

Not very successful. You compare him to Jacob, who had already conned his uncle Laban within a few years and had bigger flocks and, you know, bigger farm and bigger everything. But here is Moses, 40 years, and he still is looking after his father-in-law's flock.

And one day he has an encounter with God at the burning bush. And God says, I want you to go and bring deliverance. I want you to go to Pharaoh and say, let my people go.

And Moses says, you've got the wrong guy. 40 years ago, he'd have said, yeah, you've got the right guy, all right, you know. I'm here, I'm ready, you know, just tell me what to do and I'll do it.

And in fact, I'll do it on my own. You don't even have to tell me. God just, you know, don't waste your wisdom.

I've got enough wisdom on my own. Now, he says, I can't do it. I've been around the sheep for so long, I sound like them, but I can't talk properly.

I stammer when I talk. And God says, now I've got you where I want you. And Moses said, who shall I say sent me? Oh, he's not going in his own strength now.

I need to go in somebody else's strength. I know to need to go in somebody else's authority. I know to need to go in with somebody else's wisdom and so on.

Now he is weak. Now he's in a place of dependency. Now he's in a place where he needs God's help.

He can no longer do it by himself. Let me read you a portion of Scripture. Some of you will know where it is, but I want to read it a particular way and then I'll come back and read it again.

What more shall I say? For time would fail me if I were to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became mighty in war, and put foreign armies to flight. I think you would agree with me that that is a pretty impressive list. Here a man that did amazing things.

Again, shut the mouths of lions, put entire foreign armies to flight. You know, conquered kingdoms, performed great acts of righteousness. In other words, these are super saints.

At least that's the way I used to view them. I was raised in church. My father was a minister and so you know I've heard this verse for years and I always put these men on a pedestal.

These were sort of, you know, saints on steroids. These were a class all of their own. These were God's sort of green berets, or navy seals, or at least the equivalent in the spiritual realm.

They'd been hand-selected, hand-picked because of their aptitude and their ability and so on, and then given, you know, special ops training and so on. But that is not the case. Let me read it again now if you want to follow along.

It's Hebrews 11 verse 32, because I left out one little phrase that changes everything. Hebrews 11 verse 32, what more shall I say? For time would fail me if I were to tell of Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword. Now listen, from weakness were made strong.

From weakness were made strong. Became mighty in war and put foreign armies to flight. In other words, sandwiched in between all of those great exploits, all these men had one thing in common.

They were weak individuals. That's why the Word of God does not contradict itself. God purposely chooses the weak, the despised, the ones that have nothing to brag about.

God is consistent. Why? So that He might get the glory. They were made strong.

The Spirit of God came upon them. The anointing of God rested upon them. You go through this list.

Gideon, remember, is there in the winepress trying to survive. He's got a little bit of wheat, maybe like the widow woman. He's got just enough wheat to make himself a meal and, you know, feed his family and then die.

And the angel comes along, says, you're a mighty man of valor. And Gideon basically, if we had the whole transcript, I'm sure he laughed, chuckled to himself and said, you're crazy. You know, proceeds to give the angel a lesson, if I can embellish it without distorting it.

You know, there are twelve tribes in Israel. I happen to belong to the smallest tribe. There are great tribes like the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe and the kingly tribe.

But the tribe that I belong to is the least of all the tribes. And then out of those, that particular tribe, there's all sorts of family groupings and my particular family is the least in the least tribe. And then out of my particular immediate family, aunts and uncles and cousins, I am the least.

In other words, angel, you have reached right down to the very bottom of the barrel and you're calling me a mighty man of valor. Ha, ha, ha. Very funny.

And he says, go in this your strength. What was his strength? When I am weak, then I am strong. His strength is made perfect in weakness.

The next one is Barak. Barak, of course, is the Schwarzenegger of his day or the Schwarzkopf of his day. He's a military man, the, you know, five-star, six-star general over the nation of Israel.

And yet he will not go to fight unless a lady goes with him. I don't have time to explain that. Nothing against you ladies, other than when it comes to fighting, you know, men and women glory in two different things.

The Bible says a woman's hair is her glory. We won't touch that. But the Bible says a young man glories in his strength.

Men can care less about the way their hair turns out, you know, but what they like to brag about is, you know, how tough they are. You know, they'll pump iron and rip the sleeves out of their shirt and puff out their chest and walk around like, you know, don't mess with me, you know. I mean, men glory in their strength.

And yet here is a man who will not go to battle unless a lady will go with him. That's the ultimate sign of weakness. Of course, the lady was a prophet by the name of Deborah.

Then you've got Samson. Here is Samson, this mighty man, at least we think of him that way, you know, sort of a linebacker for the Dallas, oh sorry, Razorbacks. And, you know, this giant of a guy that weighs 300 pounds of pure muscle, you know, six foot six high, and so on.

That's the image we have of Samson, but that was not the case. You know, Delilah, here she is, you know, cradled across this guy's chest and she's saying, I can't figure out how come you're so strong. Now listen, if she's stretched out across, you know, a 72-inch chest and she's cradled in, you know, 28-inch biceps, you know, and she's saying, how come you're so strong? She'd obviously have to be a blonde,

sorry, apologies.

But, you know, why is she, you know, why is she saying, how come you're so strong? Well, obviously it had nothing to do with his physical strength, isn't that right? In fact, he says, listen, he eventually gives away the key to his life, and he says, if you cut my hair, I will become weak like other men. I'll become weak. In other words, he did not have natural strength.

It had nothing to do with his physique, nothing to do with his muscles, it had everything to do with the Spirit of God resting upon him. The next one, and our time's gone, is Jephthah. Jephthah, of course, possibly had the worst stigma that you can possibly have.

He was a bastard. The Bible says all bastards could not have any, you know, entrance into the house of God, generation after generation and so on, rejected by his parents, rejected by all the elders of Gilead, and yet the Spirit of God comes upon this man, and he becomes one of the judges of Israel. And you can go down through the list.

Our time is gone, I need to respect that, but you survived the anointing, again, number one, by absolute dependency upon God. It is not something you ever grow out of. Uzziah the king, it says, as long as he sought God, God prospered him, but when he became strong, God forsook him.

A guarantee of you failing is that when you lose contact with God and think, you will be part of that tragic statistic of 90% of you not making it. God bless you.

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