

Gods Power Can Be Manifested Only When We Are Weak

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's hand in every situation, including using modern inventions for spreading the gospel. It highlights the journey of faith, starting small and despised, yet holding onto God's vision for the body of Christ. The speaker shares personal experiences of weakness and how God's strength is made perfect in our weaknesses, leading to a deeper dependence on Him for glory and spiritual progress.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 12:9, John 3:30, Galatians 4:13, Mark 9:35, 1 Corinthians 12:12, Matthew 5:5, James 4:10, Philippians 4:13

Topics: "Recognizing God's Hand", "Strength in Weakness"

Description

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Transcript

The only advantage I found in Zoom over the last one and a half years was that I could speak to 10, 20 churches in India at the same time. I never did before. Something good comes out of everything.

God is not taken by surprise by anything. And I have had a personal conviction that all the great inventions were made for the spread of the gospel. I mean, flying, airplanes.

I believe it's primarily for the spread of the gospel in every part of the world. The computers, the internet. You know, when we were a small church, when we started out, I mean, from the day we started 46 years ago in Bangalore, there were only three of us men who are there today.

So many people came and went and came and went and came and went. And we wondered in the early days whether anything would come out of what we were seeking to do. Because we had our families, but we didn't know what God had in mind.

We were really weak, despised by everybody. And people wondered about me, why I had given up the opportunity to preach to many hundreds and thousands of people and just meet with a few people in my home. But God had given me a vision of the body of Christ.

It was like a burden in my heart for 10 years before I actually saw it. And I pray, I don't know whether all of you have seen it. To see, I mean, to understand the theory of the body of Christ, yeah, we can understand.

But I'll tell you something that'll happen when you're really S-E-E-N, seen in your heart, the body that Jesus Christ is building, of which he is the head, and we are all members. One thing that'll happen in your life will be, you will have zero jealousy of anybody. If you've got jealousy of any person, you know, a wife can be jealous of her husband, being more popular and accepted, or vice versa, that people appreciate my wife more than me, or something like that, or more than that.

But if they're not family members, you don't, we don't get jealous of our children being appreciated. But you can be jealous if somebody else's child is appreciated, or some other person, is being valued more than you or your husband or your wife. And that's because we haven't seen the body.

See, the left hand, for example, is never, never jealous. The right hand does all the important work, except for left-handed people, the other way around. But, for example, I sign papers with my right hand, and and if one day the right hand is hurt, the left hand doesn't say, ah, now is my chance to show it's one body.

You be honest with yourself. Do you ever feel that now I can show that I can do something? You know what you need to pray? Lord, help me to see the body of Christ. It can even be in a family, where one child wants to show I'm better than the other.

You also need to see the body of Jesus Christ. There's only one head, and some parts of the body, the Bible says, are like the feet. In our days, all covered up with socks and shoes, they don't even see the feet, and parts of the face are more visible.

And the Bible says that God has made the body in such a way that some brothers and sisters are more visible to others. Some are more well-known, and other parts are not. But God has made it in such a way that some of those invisible parts, like, you know, do you know that your liver, and your kidney, and your heart, you've never seen them, but they are much more important than your hands or ears, or much more important.

You'll die without them. You won't die if you lose your hand or ear. Those invisible parts, there are many, I've seen there are many invisible members in the body of Christ who never come and sit here anytime.

But they are fulfilling a ministry by prayer, or just by little things they do, even if it's a whispered prayer. I often tell people, if you pray for 15 seconds for me, it'll help me in my preaching. 15 seconds is not a long time.

I don't know how many people have done that, but I'm sure in the day of judgment, I will see the Lord lining up all those people who prayed for me. I'm going to get a reward. I am gripped by the truth of the body of Christ.

And I believe that makes a tremendous difference when you can see it. And in order to appreciate it, sometimes God has to make us weak. It's another great truth I've discovered that in the church, for God to

be glorified, you know, we all say we want God to be glorified.

We heard just now about Gideon. Why did God reduce an army of 32,000 down to 300? If you read Judges chapter 7, the Lord says it's because if you go with 32,000 and win the battle, you'll think we won the battle. But when you 300 people go against a crowd of 50,000 or whatever the other number was, you can say, we didn't do it.

We, right through the Bible, you find this tremendous tendency for man to seek for glory. I remember in the early days when I used to preach, I was 21 years old when I started preaching and I wanted people to appreciate me. And if I said something very clever, I really patted myself on the back.

That was good. People laughed or people appreciated it. And I found in those days that I didn't realize that God was merciful to me.

I was taking glory to myself, but I was ignorant. God had mercy on me. Spiritual progress, if you want to mark your spiritual progress, it's where you want less and less honor for yourself.

You want less and less people to appreciate you. You want Jesus Christ to be glorified. That's what John the Baptist said.

He must increase and I must decrease. That's a mark of a man of God. Dear brothers, if that's your goal in life, you may say, Brother Zach, it's easy for you to say that.

You're so well known and all that, you can say it. But it's not that. I think I said that many, many years ago when I was completely unknown.

I said, Lord, I don't want to be known. I just want God to be glorified. I said that when I was 23 years old.

I said, Lord, I want you to be glorified. That's all in my life. I don't want any honor in my life at all.

But one of the things the Lord showed me from the early days was for God to be glorified, we have to become small. When I'm weak, then I'm strong. See this verse in second Corinthians in chapter 12.

This is the greatest apostle that lived at that time. I believe Paul was the greatest apostle in the first century. He says in second Corinthians 12, 10 about himself, I am well content with what? Weakness, insult, distress, persecutions, difficulties.

Now, that's not normal for a human being to say I'm content with being weak and insulted. Because he says, I've learned a secret. It's only when I am weak that I'm really strong.

When I am weak, then I am strong. Please remember this little phrase at the end of verse 10. It'll be a great help to you throughout your life.

This little expression at the end of verse 10. When I am weak, then I am strong. I'll tell you from my own testimony.

Many, many times when I've got up to speak and I don't know what to say, I'm really weak. I found some amazing words that come to me. I say, Lord, I want to be weak because that'll make me lean upon you.

And from my early days, the Lord showed that to me in different ways. When I was about 23 years old and I began to serve the Lord and I was preaching in big crowds, even at that age, I started losing my hair. You

know how young people are.

We all like to have good hair, especially to impress the girls and comb our hair and have plenty of hair. And here I had lost most of my hair. And one advantage was that people thought I was, when I was 23, people thought I was 35 or 40 or something.

And they'd listen to me. So I was happy. They don't think there's some young kid getting up to speak.

But I thought also, well, nobody will ever marry me for my hair now. Only if somebody married me, only if they love Jesus and they see this man loves Jesus, I want to be married to someone who loves Jesus. And that's what my wife really did.

She didn't marry for my hair, that's obvious. When I'm weak, this is a small example. But when I studied about the Apostle Paul, I discovered that he, as a man, he was four feet, 11 inches tall.

That was his height. I've never seen a man of that height. There's nobody here of that height.

He was shorter than every single man here. Four feet, 11 inches. It's pretty shameful for a man to be four feet 11.

On top of that, he was bald, more than me, completely bald. I mean, there's history has recorded, there are other people who lived in Paul's time who recorded in history what Paul looked like. He was bald, he was four feet 11 inches and he had a hooked nose.

And on top of that, he had eyes that were infected. I think some type of infection that would make pus come out. And I'll tell you one place where you get an idea of that is turn to Galatians in chapter four.

In Galatians chapter four, I don't have time to show you this, but if you read and ask the apostles, Paul had no intention. Galatia was not a town, it was an area with a number of towns. And Paul did not want to go there.

He was passing through there to go somewhere else. And you read in Acts 16, that God made Paul sick. So he had to stop there, he couldn't travel.

It was such a bad sickness that he could not travel. And he says here in Galatians chapter four, you know, verse 13, 413, that it was because of my bodily illness that I got stuck with you and I preached the gospel. And all those churches in Galatia came up because Paul was sick.

If he was not sick, there'd be no churches in Galatia, he'd have gone on. And then what was the sickness? He says, my bodily condition was a trial to you. If I've got fever, that's not a trial to you.

Or if I have some physical weakness, a stomachache or a headache, that's not a trial to you. But he says, there was something in me that you despised or loathed, verse 14, something about my bodily condition that could have made you loathe me. Loathe is a very strong word.

Oh, looking disgust. I thought about it. What is it that Paul get up to preach and you don't feel like looking at him? I'll tell you, I think his eyes were infected.

Maybe some pus was coming out frequently. They didn't have antibiotics those days. And he says, yet, verse 14, you received me as an angel of God.

And not only that, verse 15, last part, you were ready to pluck out your eyes and give them to me. That's how I know he had problem with his eyes. So imagine a man, already he's four feet 11, bald with a hooked nose.

And on top of that, he has this infection that make people loathe him. Loathe is a very strong word. Why did God make his greatest apostle like that? Instead of handsome, tall, smart with nice hair comb like some film star, no, he wouldn't have been weak then.

He wouldn't have depended on God, he would have depended on his personality. I'm like a film star, people will listen to me. One of the greatest men of God whom I respected in India was a man who could not speak.

He stuttered throughout his life. He was the greatest apostle I knew in India. He couldn't depend on his words.

He had to depend on the Holy Spirit. All had to depend on the Holy Spirit. So it's when we are weak, that God makes us depend on him.

And we are such creatures that like to draw attention to ourselves and get honor. I'll tell you something, if God really loves you and has his best for you, he'll make you weak in one way or the other. It could be financially.

I remember in the early years, first three, four years of our married life, one way God humbled me and my wife was by extreme financial difficulty. We never begged, we never borrowed, but we lived with great simplicity. And when somebody gave me a gift of a couple of shirts, we could never afford to buy shirts for ourselves.

I had to wear my old naval shirts for years and years. And somebody gave me a couple of shirts. I would preserve them for whenever I had to go somewhere to preach because of the only two good shirts I had.

And somebody said, Brzezak, we only see you wearing two shirts. They didn't know they were the only two good shirts I had. I wouldn't let anybody know about my limitation.

Not a single soul knew how we struggled, but God tested me in those years to see what will he do? Will he go and tell people his need or will he tell me everything? Is he willing to accept that humiliation? And my wife was willing to, to accept it. I've seen through my life and I want to say that God does his work through weak people. So if God has made you weak in some way, not appreciated or respected by others, say, when I'm weak, I'll be strong.

God bless you.

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