

# We Glory in Our Weakness

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the principle that when we are weak, then we are strong, as highlighted by Paul in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. It contrasts the qualities valued in the old covenant with the humility and reliance on God required in the new covenant. The speaker challenges the notion of relying on human capabilities and achievements, stressing the need for humility, grace, and a deep desire for God's power and transformation in our lives.*

**Scripture:** 2 Corinthians 12:10, Isaiah 55:8, Matthew 11:28, John 15:16, 1 John 1:7, John 3:20, Romans 8:28, 1 John 5:3, Matthew 11:30, John 10:27, John 20:29, 2 Corinthians 4:8

**Topics:** "Strength in Weakness", "Humility and Reliance on God"

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## Description

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## Transcript

There is a great truth in a statement that Paul makes in 2 Corinthians chapter 12. And that is in the last part of verse 10, when I am weak, then I am strong. And I've discovered that many who claim to belong to a new covenant church have not understood this principle.

They inwardly are proud of their capabilities and how smart they are, how clever they are, how much they have achieved in life and 101 similar useless things for the kingdom of God. And that is why their usefulness to God is limited. Because God's ways are not man's ways.

All those qualities were okay under the old covenant. The old covenant you read about Solomon was the wisest man and he could solve problems. And David could kill a Goliath and Daniel could stand before lions and the lion's mouths were shut.

But in the new covenant, when the early Christians were thrown to the lions, not a single lion's mouth was shut. They tore the Christians to pieces. There you see the difference, a very clear difference.

Daniel could shut the mouths of the lions, but the spirit-filled new covenant Christians could not. God did not permit that because His ways were different in the new covenant. And if you understand that, you've

understood one of the greatest secrets of new covenant Christianity.

It is not a question of how educated you are, because Jesus, that's why Jesus chose fishermen. There was a great Bible school being run in those days by Gamaliel and Saul of Tarsus was one of his students. But Jesus never went to a Bible school to select His disciples, because that was not His way.

And those 12 He chose were not the greatest scholars in Israel, because some of us may think, oh, we study the Bible a lot, we know the Bible better than others, so we are more useful to God, not necessarily. I think people like Peter and James and John knew very little of the Bible compared to many other people in the synagogue. So you need to ask yourself, why did Jesus choose them? And ask yourself, and today, would Jesus choose you? I mean, if Jesus were coming around this area, choosing disciples, would He choose you? It's a good question to ask yourself.

And if so, why? Do you have the qualities those disciples had, or do we glory in certain things that the world glories in? And that is one of the great dangers of being in an educated society. And many of us are educated, you got your jobs here because you're educated. And I want to tell you, that is one of your biggest handicaps.

You're like a lame person running with other people who are not lame. If you recognize that, you'll be saved. Otherwise, I can tell you right now, you will waste your Christian life.

When I am weak, then I am strong. You see, Paul was one of those people who was very clever. I think Paul was cleverer than all of us sitting here.

If he were living today, he would have been a brilliant computer scientist or a businessman or something and built a wonderful company. He was a very capable man. And God had various means to, and he was also highly educated in the greatest Bible colleges of his time.

And that's one reason why he had to be taken three years, it says in Galatians in chapter one, that he went three years into the wilderness. And then he came back. You read that in Galatians one.

Why did God take him into the wilderness for three years? I personally think because he had studied three years in a Bible school. So he had all that chaff out of his head, what he thought was wheat. God had to get it all out of his head.

Now, there was other disciples didn't have to spend three years in the wilderness because they didn't have that chaff of human learning in their head. You need to ask yourself whether you got a lot of chaff in your head that God has to remove before you need something of the equivalent of three years in Arabia, before God can even begin to use you or fulfill his purpose through you. So I'm not saying that if you don't have a college degree or something like that, you're capable to serve the Lord, not necessarily.

The point is that a lot of people who don't have a college degree who are also pretty proud of some other capabilities they have. And therefore, God has to make them weak. There are many things that characterize that make us strong.

And we need to think about that because in the Old Testament, it is very different. And very often, we don't get the answer to prayer that we expect because God is trying to do a work in us first. He's more important in transforming us than giving us what we ask for.

You know, there are many promises in the Bible, ask and you will receive. And very often, if you're honest, you have to say that you asked and you did not receive. Because God is more interested in changing you than giving you some external gift.

Because most of the things we ask for are usually to make our life a little more comfortable or make it easier for our family. And to tell you honestly, God is not really interested in that primarily. He's not interested in giving us a comfortable home and a comfortable life.

He's interested in making us like Jesus Christ. And once, until we are gripped by that, I don't mean just believing it. Until we are gripped by that, we will always be puzzled with God's ways of dealing with us.

But once we are gripped by that and understand it, we will see that every single thing, every single thing means 100% of everything big and small that happens to us will be perfectly designed by the Lord to fulfill that purpose. There'll never be anything that is not designed to fulfill that purpose. And that is why we can give thanks and everything.

You know the well-known verse, Romans 8 28, which is known by every denomination in Christendom, that God makes all things work together for our good. But like other Christians, most Christians don't think of the conditions. Most Christians quote promises without conditions.

Let's come back to that in a minute. Let me give you one or two examples first. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

It does not. The Bible says, if you read carefully in 1 John 1 7, there is a condition. And the condition is in 1 John 1 7, if we walk in the light as God is in the light, then the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

That's the full verse. But how have you heard it quoted? The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. It does not.

Most people's blood sins are not cleansed. What is the reason? They haven't fulfilled the condition. They have not walked in the light as God is in the light.

The Bible says here, God is in the light in verse 5, there is no darkness in Him at all. So if I want my sin to be cleansed, I have to come into His light. What that means, it doesn't mean become like Him.

No, no, no, no. That we told in chapter 3 verse 2, we'll become like Him only when He comes. To walk in the light means to be 100% honest.

That's the one thing we can all do. There are many things in the Christian life we cannot do because we're not capable or not anointed, but one thing even a prostitute or a murderer can do and that is to be honest. To be honest is to acknowledge what you are.

That is to walk in the light. I'll show you that again in John chapter 3. You heard me say this and I never get tired of repeating it because I find many people forget what is said. Turn with me to John's gospel chapter 3 where Jesus says, He talks about light having come into the world in verse 19.

Light has come into the world and He talks about two types of people. Those who hate the light and those who come to the light. It's connected to what we just spoke.

We walk in the light. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. This is very important because many of us may be thinking the blood of Jesus cleansed us.

Have you fulfilled the condition? If not, you're fooling yourself with the blood of Jesus cleansed you. I don't want to bring doubt into your heart, but I want you to be sure you fulfill the condition. Okay, here it is.

John 3 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light because he's afraid that his deeds will be exposed. So who's the one who doesn't want to come to the light? Someone who doesn't want to acknowledge what he's done. Acknowledge that not only what he's done, but why he did it.

We have such a tendency to justify ourselves before people as to why we did that and why we said that. The cleverer you are, the more you're capable of justifying yourself and the further away you are from God. But if you come to the light without hiding anything and say, Lord, this is not only this what I did, but this is the bad motive with which I did it.

It was a selfish, downright selfish motive with which I said that or which I did that. You'll be cleansed. But if you try to cover it up and explain and justify, you will not be cleansed.

But that's why it says in the next verse, not he who practices the opposite of evil in verse 20 is good. He who does evil, verse 20, the opposite should be he who does good. No.

Notice the contrast. He who practices the truth, good, none of us can do. But truth, as I said, the worst sinner can do.

Practice the truth. So the opposite of doing evil is not doing good. Because none of us can get there.

But to practice the truth, then we will slowly come to the place of being good. So it is truth, practicing the truth that makes us walk in the light. And I want to say to anyone here, if you are absolutely serious about practicing the truth in your life, your sin will be cleansed in the blood of Jesus.

Otherwise, it will not be. No matter which church you sit in, no matter how much you imagine that your sin is cleansed. And that's one of the reasons I feel that some people never come to a life of victory because their sin is not cleansed.

Where will they come to a life of victory? They need to start with forgiveness of sins, cleansing from sin. And that's so simple, but their pride keeps them from walking in the light. For example, how many of you will be honest to confess to God when you gossip about somebody? Tell me.

You always have some explanation, right? Why you said it. That's why you're not cleansed. And then you're seeking for victory.

You're trying to go to college before you haven't gone through kindergarten. Cleansing from sin is kindergarten. If you don't get through that, don't try bigger things in the Christian life.

Very simple. Think of that woman who was caught in adultery. The Lord forgave her.

And think of the Pharisees who tried to condemn her. They were not forgiven. Who knew more of the Bible? Those Pharisees.

Whose life was better externally? The Pharisee's life was much better than the woman caught in adultery. Yet she was forgiven. The Pharisees on the cross and the thief on the cross.

The thief on the cross was forgiven. It's walking in the light. That's the condition.

I'll give you another example of eternal life. Many people quote this verse in John chapter 10. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish.

And no one shall pluck them out of my hand. My father is greater than I. And no one can touch them out of his hand. Very well-known verses whereby people think of their security in John chapter 10, verse 28 and 29.

And it is here. I read it correctly. I give them eternal life, verse 28.

They will never perish. No one can snatch them out of my hand. Verse 29.

My father is greater than I. No one can snatch them out of the father's hand. I'm reading it exactly. The only thing is I started in the middle of a sentence.

I read the promise without reading the condition. To whom does God give eternal life? The very word begins with and. And I give eternal life to them.

So you've got to go to the condition. My dear brothers and sisters, please consider whether your spiritual life is at a low level because you're trying to claim promises without fulfilling conditions. And that's why some other people get it and you don't get it.

Many people seek for the fullness of the spirit. I met a man who said, Brother Zach, I've been praying 40 years for the fullness of the spirit and I've not been filled. I'm not surprised.

And there are other people who seek and in one day they are filled with the Holy Spirit. What is the reason? It's always a promise is dependent on a condition. Here is the problem.

The condition to get eternal life. Now we're talking about eternal life, which also many, many Christians think they have got eternal life. Let me open your eyes.

To whom does God give eternal life? And he says, I give eternal life to them. Verse 28. Who are the them? Verse 27.

Those who hear my voice and who follow me. It's so clear. It's like ABC.

How can you miss it? My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life. Are you hearing his voice? Are you following him? You are blessed. You have eternal life.

You don't bother to listen to what he says. You don't seek to follow him. You're deluding yourself when you think you've got eternal life.

On the basis of what? Well, you can say there's a promise. It says, he who believes has eternal life. That's right.

But that word believe is explained here. It also says, he who believes in me, rivers of living water will flow from his innermost being. Same condition.

Are rivers of living water flowing from your innermost being? Blessing multitudes of people everywhere? The word believe is another thing which is very misunderstood. Believe is an expression of commitment. To me, one of the clearest pictures of that would be a woman giving herself on a wedding day in marriage to a man.

Till that day, she was her own boss. Go where she like, do what she like, live where she liked. But the day she committed herself in marriage to that man, her freedom was finished.

She was now completely his. She even has to change her name in most countries and go where he goes. That is not the way many Christians have been taught to accept Christ.

They accept Christ like eating a bit of chocolate and say, I've accepted him and I'm okay. I've seen, oh, it's a tragedy. I feel sorry because all these people sitting there thinking that they've got eternal life, they don't have it.

And I'm concerned that they should not wake up in the day of judgment and discover they were deceived thoroughly. I've said to many people in our church, some of you may and not value the strong message we preach in CFC, but I tell you in the day of judgment, you'll turn around and thank me for telling you the truth. You will.

So there's a condition attached to all these promises. And we must see if the condition is there, then we can claim it. I'm not trying to bring anybody into bondage.

I'm just asking you to read scripture carefully because Jesus said, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. And I'll tell you another thing. Don't think these are heavy commandments.

Let me give you the testimony of a man who walked with God for 65 years. The Apostle John, in 1 John 5, after 65 years of keeping God's commandments, you know what his testimony is in 1 John 5, verse 3. 1 John 5, 3. This is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. His commandments are not a burden.

That's a testimony of a man who's walked with God for 65 years. If I were to paraphrase him, he's saying, brothers and sisters, 65 years, I have obeyed his commandments. And I'll tell you, not one of them was a burden.

The old covenant law was burdensome. Can you think of the old covenant law? Don't commit adultery. Don't murder.

Don't steal. Have any of you found those commandments burdensome? Anyone here who's murdered somebody or stolen a bank or? No. See, that's easy.

But Jesus said that there are many other aspects of that law which is burdensome. But come to me, he said, take my yoke upon you and you'll find rest unto your souls because my yoke is easy and my burden is light. My burden is light, he said in Matthew 11, verse 30, compared to that Old Testament.

The new covenant is far superior to the old covenant. It's not a burden to follow Jesus. It's not a burden to keep his commandments.

It's not a burden. Listen to me carefully now. It's not a burden.

To give thanks for everything. It's not a burden to love one's enemies. It's not a burden to stop getting angry.

It's not a burden to stop lusting after women. Go and ask the people who keep lusting after women. Their lives are burdened down.

Burdened down, burdened down. If any of you are doing it, tell me honestly. Isn't that a constant burden on your heart? Isn't the ones who are free from it too are free from a burden.

Come to me, I'll give you rest. Believe it. Don't believe the lie of the devil that enjoying all those sinful pleasures will give you rest.

They don't. They never give you rest. Do you think a man or a woman who gossips has rest in their mind? No.

God is far away from people who speak evil of others. Because the Bible says there's only the main accuser of the brethren is Satan. That's a title given to him in Revelation 12, 10.

Accuser of the brothers. And whenever anyone speaks evil of another, another brother, he's actually holding hands with the devil. And the devil says, come on, hold my hand.

I'm happy you're on my side. I want to ask you, any of you sitting here who's on the devil's side? Accuser of the brethren? What have you gained by it? You gained a reputation perhaps as passing on interesting news, juicy news. And you love that reputation.

Shame on you. I hope nobody here will continue like that, even if you are like that today. Make a decision today.

You're going to be finished with it. Lord, I want to take my Christian life seriously, at least from today. And if you do, I'll tell you, God will lead you down a path which will break you, humble you, crush you, make you weak, and then you'll become strong.

Like Paul. He turned with me back to that passage in 2 Corinthians in chapter 12. Paul was a man who had tremendous revelations.

Amazing revelations of great truths that were hidden from everybody else on earth at that time, which in the Bible says in 1 Peter 1, which angels desire to look into, which the Old Testament prophets long to understand. And Paul, God revealed them to Paul. And he says, because of that, 2 Corinthians 12 7, I was in danger of becoming proud.

I love Paul's honesty. How many of you have honestly faced up to the fact that you are in danger of becoming proud? I told that to the Lord directly. I said, Lord, I'm in danger of becoming proud.

I'm in danger of exalting myself because of revelations you've given me. Not as much as Paul, but at least to a certain extent. And I want to say to you, if God has done something in your life or revealed some things to you, face up to the fact you are in danger of exalting yourself.

There are many things that put us in danger of exalting yourself. For example, if you're a little prettier than others, a little more handsome than others. Or in a world where everybody thinks white is pure and black is dirty, if you're a little fairer than others, and you're proud of that, there's no end to the way the devil tries

to make us proud of some stupid thing or the other.

And his aim is so that you don't get the grace of God. The devil's one aim is to ensure that you don't get the grace of God. And if you are alert to that, you look around and say, Lord, what are the things in my life that I'm in danger of exalting myself? God loved Paul so much that he gave him a thorn in the flesh, and it says to torment him.

Did you read that word? Do you know what the word torment means? Torment is the word used when people are harassed and troubled by your enemies. It torments you. It speaks about if you're tormented by wild animals or bees or by torture.

Torture is meant to torment a person. And he says he was tormented. I don't know what exactly it caused him.

It must have been some physical suffering that Paul was given. And no matter how much he claimed, Jesus is my healer, and by his stripes, you're healed. All of that didn't work.

He's still tormented. He's still sick. And purpose, it says in verse seven, is to keep me from exalting himself.

And why doesn't God give it to all his children? Because all his children are in danger of exalting themselves because he sees that most of them will grumble and complain. Paul was willing to accept it because he was passionate to get grace. And God gives his grace to the humble.

And so his prayer was basically, Lord, whatever the cost, give me grace. The Lord says, I got to humble you. Sure, humble me any extent.

That's why God said, okay, I'll do that. I'll give you a thorn that will torment you day and night. And you'll get humility, you'll get grace.

And most believers are not that passionate. I mean, all of us would like grace. And all of us, I would like to imagine that we are humble, but we're not that passionate as Paul was to get grace.

Because Paul knew that sin shall not have dominion over me when I'm under grace. And if one sin had dominion over him, Paul would say, well, I'm some ways, in some way, I'm not under grace here. Or if he slipped up somewhere, he'd say, Lord, I don't know, I missed out on your grace here.

And he was passionate to get grace. And so the Lord said, okay, then I'm going to give you this. And when he got this, he didn't understand at first why this torment came.

And it was also called a messenger of Satan in verse seven. Let me ask you a question. Will God allow you to be tormented by a messenger of Satan? Simple question.

Perhaps not. Because you're not so wholehearted as Paul was. You're not so desperate to get grace as Paul was.

See, read carefully. A messenger of Satan was given to me. The word given is the word from which you get the word gift.

God gave Paul a gift. It's like somebody gives you a beautiful box wrapped up in nice ribbons and fancy paper, and you open it and inside is a farm. That's what God gave to Paul to torment him.

Is that a gift? The new covenant is different from the old covenant. The old covenant gift was plenty of money, victory over your enemies, and bringing down the prophets of Baal, bringing fire from heaven, and all that type of stuff. Paul never brought fire from heaven.

He never killed any prophets of Baal. But he led a far superior life to everybody in the Old Testament, including John the Baptist. So I don't want all those gifts that Elijah had to bring fire from heaven or any of those stuff.

I want what Paul had. I'll tell you honestly, Paul is my example. So many things I love about that man.

First of all, the guy was so upright in the area of money. He just would not allow money to enslave him. And he was so passionate for the grace of God, even to the extent of being willing to be tormented by Satan with a sickness, which he prayed and prayed and prayed, didn't get an answer.

You know, we teach our children, pray in Jesus' name, God will give it to you. Ask and you will receive, Jesus said. Didn't Paul know that promise? Ask and you will receive.

But he says, he asked three times. He says, I implored the Lord, verse 8. I pleaded with him, Lord, please take this away. This thing is troubling me like anything.

It's from the devil. And he said, no. To keep me, verse 7, from exalting myself.

That is the way God deals with those whom he really loves. He'll do everything possible to keep that person from exalting himself. I thank God for many, many things that God has done in my life, just to keep me from exalting myself.

Many things, physically, spiritually, mentally, in my financial dealings, in my ministry and everything. And I see God's ultimate purpose is he wants to give me grace. That's what excites me.

Lord, that's what I want more than anything else. Can you honestly say to God today, Lord, I want your grace more than anything else on this earth. You can take away anything you like, but don't take away your grace.

I want that. If you're passionate about it, I tell you, God will take you at your word and your life will be absolutely transformed. I mean, the level of Christianity that you're experiencing now, you'll suddenly get a jump to a much higher level than you've ever experienced in your life.

If you're passionate and go to God and say, Lord, I'm willing to pay any price. I want your grace at any cost. It's an individual thing.

I'm not saying that everybody sitting here will do it because even Jesus, when he spoke, it says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. He recognized that not everybody is willing to listen. So, I recognize that too.

And there Paul learned a great truth that it is when he is weak that God's power can be manifested. It says here, the Living Bible says in verse 9, my power shows up best in weak people. My power shows up best in weak people.

So, if you're seeking for the power and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, remember, it's not the way it was in the old covenant. It's very different here. It's not like Gideon defeating all the filth of the spirit, defeating the armies of Israel, the armies of the enemies of Israel, or David killing Goliath, or Samson pulling down, defeating the Philistines.

I mean, that was okay. Being filled with the spirit in the Old Testament was like that. But in the New Covenant, it's overcoming sin in one's personal life.

The equivalent of killing the enemies of Israel in the Old Testament is overcoming every single sin that there is in my flesh. That is New Covenant Christianity. And it is from that base that Paul served him.

And so, when he understood that, he says in verse 9, last part, I'll boast about my weakness. You'd never find an Old Testament prophet saying, I boast about my weakness. Paul could.

When John the Baptist was in prison for a few days, he lost his faith. He sent his disciples to Jesus and say, hey, why am I in prison? Are you really the Messiah? Or should we look for somebody else? Imagine, John the Baptist, the greatest prophet in the Old Testament began to doubt whether Christ was the Messiah. But Paul was in prison numerous times.

And he never doubted that Jesus is the Messiah. Never. It's so different in the New Covenant.

He never had a complaint about why are you allowing this? Why are you allowing that? I want to ask you, my brothers and sisters, do you have a complaint at any time in your life? Why have you allowed this in my life? Why are you allowing that? Why haven't you taken away this thing that I prayed so many times to take away? Those are the things we see here. We need to learn a lesson from here. I'm content with weaknesses, verse 10.

I'm perfectly content when people insult me, verse 10. 2 Corinthians 12, 10. I'm perfectly content with distresses.

I'm perfectly content with persecutions. I'm perfectly content with difficulties for Christ's sake. Because all these things are crushing me so that I can become spiritually strong.

If I become small in the eyes of others, you know as human beings we hate to appear small in the eyes of others. We always want to appear smart and capable and able to do this and that and the other and acclaimed by others. Now we are going the wrong way.

He says, I'm willing to rejoice in all these things because for me the most important thing is not what other people think about me or what other people think I'm a great servant of God or other people think I'm a very spiritual man or woman. I couldn't care less for that. I want to be really spiritual.

Not just what other people think about me. I want to be strong inwardly. I want to become more like Christ.

That was his passion. And he said, I want to forget all other things if I can become like Christ. So when we look in the Christian life, you know, God allows perplexity, for example.

You're praying about something and there's no clarity. And you pray and pray and pray and perplexity. I face that all the time.

In fact, in my younger days when I was just about converted, the early days and many things were very clear in answer to prayer, etc. But I found as I've grown older and older, many things I'm perplexed. And then I read a testimony of this great man of God called Hudson Taylor, who was a missionary in China.

And he said the same thing. He said that when he was a young Christian, everything was so clear the way God spoke to him. But as he grew older, he said he appeared as he was he was in a fog.

He couldn't find his way. Then I realized, oh, I'm on the right path then. God speaks more clearly to us when we are new believers.

He spoke very clearly to people in the Old Testament. And you read, God said, Samuel, and he could hear it. And God spoke to Abraham.

And he said, here I am, Ezekiel. And all those prophets in the Old Testament are so clear. God spoke and they would hear our answer.

And sometimes we say, oh, why? I wish I could hear God like that. But he doesn't speak like that. Because he teaches us to live by faith.

We need to understand this, what living by faith means. When we are young, we say, oh, I wish I could have lived in Jesus' time and seen him physically. Yeah, I wish like that too, when I was ignorant.

I wish I could have seen Jesus ascending up to heaven in front of my eyes like those disciples saw on the Mount of Olives. Wouldn't that have been wonderful? And yet Jesus says, in John 20 and verse 29, he told Thomas, you have believed because you have seen. But more blessed than you, Thomas, are those who have believed without seeing.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that it is more blessed to believe in Jesus without seeing him than to believe in Jesus with seeing him? Like the apostles, like Paul, like Sadhu Sundar Sen, there were people who actually saw Jesus. You believe that's more blessed? I thank God for the day when I discovered that. I also wanted to see Jesus when I read about these people who saw Jesus.

And the Lord spoke to me from that verse, you're more blessed if you don't see. I said, thank you. I want to be more blessed.

See, there are many things which we don't understand. Perplexity is that when you doubt what to do, you pray and pray and pray, and you don't know what to do. Does that mean you're not in touch with God? I'll tell you an example of someone who prayed like that, Jesus.

Father, should I drink this cup or not? In the days of Elijah, Samuel was immediate. Yes or no? But Jesus, one hour. Imagine praying for one hour, a person who's without sin.

This father, is it your will that I should drink this cup or not? That is the godliest man that walked on the earth, perplexed. Paul was another extremely godly man, and he says, in 2 Corinthians 4, he talks about how God allows the dying of Jesus to work in him. You know, in verse 10, we carry about in our body the dying of Jesus, 2 Corinthians 4.10, so that the life of Jesus will be manifest in us.

And what are the ways in which he experiences the dying of Jesus? Listen to it, verse 8, affliction, perplexity. Paul was perplexed. He couldn't find the will of God.

Confused, what shall I do? No answer. Persecuted, struck down. That's how he experienced verse 10, the dying of Jesus.

Afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down. But, verse 8, not crushed. Verse 8, not despairing.

Verse 9, not forsaken, not destroyed. He came through it with the life of Jesus. But that was the price he paid.

So, God's ways in the new covenant are through perplexity, through humbling, through crushing, being humiliated. All part of God's way of bringing us to the place where His grace can continually be upon us. So, when we say we belong to a new covenant church, my brothers and sisters, this is the new covenant, where we can say, when I'm weak, then I'm strong.

I don't glory in my being smarter than you, or more capable than you, or more gifted than you, or more used of God than you. But, Paul says, I'll glory in my infirmities. May God help us.

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