
2 Corinthians 12:1-10 (NLT) - This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. ²I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. ³Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know ⁴that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell.

⁵That experience is worth boasting about, but I'm not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses. ⁶If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, ⁷even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

⁸Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. ⁹Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. ¹⁰That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

God's purposes require God's strength

Hebrews 4:13-16 (NLT) - Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

Christ Is Our High Priest

14 So then, since we have a great High Priest who has entered heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to what we believe. 15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. 16 So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

Study Guide:

This last Sunday we approached the conversation of New Strength, addressing the fact that God's purposes require God's strength. We discussed how receiving God's strength involves acknowledging our weakness. As humans, what we can produce is limited and seems to fall short of what God has asked of us. So, to fulfill all that God has called us to, we need God's power to carry us beyond our capabilities. As you reflect on your life, where have you felt weak? On the other end of the spectrum, can you think of a moment in your life where you felt you achieved something above your abilities?

Take a moment to read Isaiah 40:26-31. Who does God give His strength and power to?

Then, take a moment to read Hebrews 4:13-16. In verse 13, it mentions that nothing is hidden from God. How would you live if you believed that God was completely aware of your weaknesses, and yet also that the offer of His grace and mercy was just as available?

When we are focused on disguising our own weaknesses, we limit ourselves from participating in God's work. But, when we accept the frailty of our own existence, we make room to receive God's power so that we may be joyful participants in God's purpose and design for all creation.