



The Amazing Things God Can Do In Our Hardships

2 Corinthians 11:16-33
June 19, 2022

The Big Idea: We should beware the weakness of “strength” and embrace the strength of weakness. Trouble in life, in all its forms, reminds us of our weakness and **calls** us to God and His **sufficiency**.

How to Understand Paul’s Strange Words:

- The false teachers in Corinth had won allegiance to themselves and undermined Paul’s legitimacy and **authority**.
- The false teaching of the “super-apostles”:
 - Some may have tried to convince the Corinthians that they had sacrificed far more for God than had Paul. This was a part of their “**résumé**” they were presenting.
 - At the same time, they seem to be teaching a form of “**triumphalism**” – a set of teachings that seeks to convince Christians they **deserve** all the good things of life and none of the bad or inconvenient things. This is the precursor to the “prosperity gospel” of today.

2 Corinthians 11:22-33 (ESV)

11 ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I.

Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. ²³Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death.

²⁴Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one.

²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; ²⁶on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; ²⁷in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

²⁸And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?

³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, ³³but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

5 Things the Lord Does Through Our Hardships

1. Gives us His presence and reason for **courage**. [Psalm 46:1-2]
2. Gives us His **strength**. [Isaiah 40:29]
3. Allows us to demonstrate our **love** for our Christian brothers and sisters. [2 Corinthians 11:11]
4. Ministers to us through the **Holy Spirit** who goes to our Father on our behalf. [Romans 8:26]
5. Jesus reminds us that weakness and suffering are not the **final** words on our lives. In Christ, all the Father has promised – all His blessings will one day finally be realized. Just, not yet.

So, What Are We Left With?

- We can’t live in a constant state of victory and triumph. For now, we often **groan** along with all of creation, awaiting Christ’s return. [Romans 8:20-23]
- On the other hand, we do not live now in resignation and **defeat**. Listen to what the Bible declares about the Christian’s life right now ...
[Luke 10:17-20; Ephesians 1:3; Ephesians 2:6; 1 John 5:5; Revelation 2:7, 11]

Real true faith is man's weakness leaning on God's strength. When man has no strength, if he leans on God he becomes powerful. The trouble is that we have too much strength and confidence in ourselves.

— D.L. Moody
