



GREETING/OPEN IN PRAYER

MISSION STATEMENT: In a loving and grace-filled environment we will share the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and explore its daily application in the lives of those struggling with addiction.

REVIEW:

Begin with a review of the previous week's topic. Discuss homework questions.

NEW TOPIC: Weakness

Weakness is something none of us like. We are conditioned by our culture to "do the right thing," "be strong," "just do it." How about "pain is weakness leaving the body" or even, "God helps those who help themselves?" Weakness is presented as failure. We don't want others to know who we really are or we want people to believe that we are something we aren't. We want people to believe that "we've got this!"

What do you think of when you consider weakness either in yourself or others?

Are you afraid to admit that you are weak?

Are you comfortable letting others know that you are weak?

How about weakness as it relates to using or drinking? (I just want to have one drink?)

Do you realize that scripture tells us that weakness is actually a godly trait?

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 *(have someone read)*

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 11:28-30 *(have someone read)*

And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Not only does Paul admit that he is weak, he boasts of his weakness. Why does he do this? The why is found in 2 Corinthians 12, when he says, "so the power of Christ may rest upon me." Our weakness puts the power of Christ on display.

"God uses the hardest and most shameful experiences of our lives to soften us and bring us to fuller understanding of his surpassing benefits. In our isolation from the world's provision, we learn that we are fully satisfied when he is our portion. He uses our sufferings to demonstrate his sufficiency. And he uses our afflictions as the occasion for dispersing comfort and the deepest realities of his abiding care." (Gospel Transformation Bible commentary on 2 Corinthians 11)

Once again, the gospel turns our thinking on its head. Jesus died for sinners and took our guilt. Then He conquered sin and death by rising from the dead. This changes everything! Because of Christ and His all-sufficient grace, we are able to boast in our weakness. We are only able to boast in our weakness if we have placed our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This idea of boasting in weakness will not be possible outside of the strength of Christ.

How do you feel about weakness now?

Still not sure? Let's look at strength.

Psalm 27:14 *(have someone read)*

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Proverbs 18:10 *(have someone read)*

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

According to these verses how do we gain strength?

Ephesians 6:10 *(have someone read)*

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

Psalm 18:1, 31-32 *(have someone read)*

I love you, O Lord, my strength. For who is God, but the Lord? And who is a rock, except our God?—the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless.

Psalm 28:7 *(have someone read)*

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped;

John 15:5 *(have someone read)*

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

According to these verses where is our strength found?

So how do we do this? How do we find strength in the Lord and boast in our weakness? This is contrary to our natural inclinations. We want to be strong and we don't want to need anyone. But when we look at the mess we make when we rely on ourselves, we have to be honest and see that we cannot do this life alone, addiction struggle or not. Left to our own way of thinking and living we make a giant mess. So the answer is to honestly admit that we need help. Cry out to our Savior and ask Him to be our strength. If Jesus is not your Savior or you aren't sure what it means to put faith in Jesus, please talk with us after the meeting.

This is also the perfect example of why having Christian brothers and sisters in our lives makes a difference. Talking about our weakness and our need, admitting to another person and asking for help. Whether the help is for prayer, reminder of where our hope is found, where God is growing us, where we need to repent, how to do the next thing or just to cry with us. We need people.

Do you have people in your life that you go to? If not, are you trying to be strong on your own?

Is there an area of weakness that you are unwilling or unable to share? If we can't even share this weakness how will be able to boast in it and rely on Christ's power in that area?

CLOSE BY BREAKING INTO GROUPS TO PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER IN OUR AREAS OF WEAKNESS.

Homework:

- In what ways are you trying to live in your own strength instead of boasting in your weakness?
- Pick one of the scriptures shared tonight to meditate upon this week.

Scriptures Used:

- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10
- 2 Corinthians 11:28-30
- Psalm 27:14
- Proverbs 18:10
- Ephesians 6:10
- Psalm 18:1, 31-32
- Psalm 28:7
- John 15:5

SAMPLE