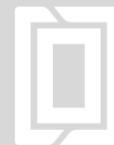


POWERFUL PRAYERS FROM WEAKNESS

Philippians 1



January 13, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

It probably started the first time someone laughed at you because of a weakness in your life. They saw a struggle and they let you know they saw it.

- It may have been that Dad was never around and you were being raised by a single mom.
- It may have been that you can't speak that fast or read that well or write well.
- It may have been that you have a limp or a scar, a birthmark or a disability.
- It may have been that your family shopped at the bargain stores and didn't wear name-brand clothing.
- It may have been that you didn't make the team or get that role in the play or choir.

Whatever it was, they laughed or took advantage of it and you felt humiliated and you thought to yourself, "That's the last time I ever want to feel that feeling." Two things are true of us all: 1) we are weak and 2) we work hard to hide our weakness. We create elaborate coping mechanisms that keep people away from our private world of struggle.

The Apostle Paul cries out and says what every one of our hearts say, "I DON'T WANT TO BE WEAK! I DON'T WANT TO FEEL STUPID! I DON'T WANT TO FEEL INCOMPLETE! I DON'T WANT TO BE LACKING!" The last thing we want to do is come to God empty-handed, weary and heavy laden, helpless to "do life".

We can spend our whole life hiding and disguising and pretending and Jesus enters in and says, "You don't have to do that anymore! I have died on the cross and arose victoriously from the grave so that we can bring an end to that!"

What was Jesus' response to Paul? "My grace is sufficient for you. For My strength is made perfect in weakness." Paul's greatest theological revelation was that his weakness unlocked the power of Christ within him: "WHEN I AM WEAK, I AM STRONG" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

God is attracted to weakness. This is what the Gospel is predicated on. This is what prayer is predicated on. The natural trajectory of weakness and helplessness is prayer. Prayer mirrors the gospel. God has established prayer as the fundamental way that Jesus enters into our weakness and demonstrates His power and strength.

In chapter 1 of Philippians, Paul describes how prayer is the fundamental way that God enters into weakness and demonstrates His power and strength.

Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. (Phil. 1:1-5)

What's Paul's prayer life like? Paul prays for the believers in Philippi and He prays often. He is thrilled at the glorious riches the saints in Philippi received. God did in them what no man could do. God would continue to do in them what no man could. As He says to them in 4:19—"My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, ¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (Phi 1:9-11)

²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸ and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. (Phi 1:27-28)

The end goal of all of Paul's prayers is love. He prays for abounding love. He prays for the capacity to navigate through life with the tough choices that love must make. How is our conduct worthy of the Gospel? It happens through lives of fearlessness and unity in love for the sake of the gospel.

¹⁹ For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phi 1:19-21)

Paul is convinced that their prayers for him will affect the outcome of His imprisonment. Letter after letter, Paul makes the prayers of ordinary, relatively new believers the means in which his ministry as the greatest missionary ever would succeed.

2019 BREAKTHROUGH PRAYERS

- Father, please give us faith to release Your love in us to others.
- Father, please retire the Worship Center mortgage by 2025.
- Father, please give us all the joy of regular giving
- Father, please keep us one.

Here's what we have found in this community at Church of the Open Door. Not only is prayer the fundamental way that God enters into our weakness and demonstrates His power and strength, but He also wants to do a specific work that can only be accomplished as we pray together (2 Cor. 1, John 17). As we come to God in these prayers, He wants us to wait on Him. This process expands our hearts and enlarges our capacity to trust Him.

Father, please give us faith to release Your love in us to others.

You might feel like your life is random coincidences and chance. I don't. Where you work, the neighborhood you live in, the school that your children or grandchildren attend aren't random placements. God has placed you in the middle of all these lives and through prayer, God wants to enter into all of your weakness and demonstrate His power and strength.

Let's begin 2019 by writing down three people in your world of influence:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

Commit to praying for these three people for six months and see how God releases His love to them.