

Exchange Your Weakness for His Strength

by Miles Valley

The sermon encourages believers to exchange their weaknesses for God's strength through faith and transparency in their struggles.

Duration: 57:25

Scripture: Judges 6:12, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 11:32-40

Topics: "Weakness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on Hebrews chapter 11 verses 32 to 40, which highlights the power of faith. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and accepting our weaknesses, as God can use them to turn them into strengths. The passage also mentions various biblical figures who demonstrated great faith and experienced miraculous victories and deliverance. The speaker encourages the audience to trust in God and follow these three steps to turn their weaknesses into strengths: becoming aware of their weaknesses, accepting them, and allowing God to work through them.

Transcript

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble, therefore we will not fear. Though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging, there is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her.

She will not fall. God will help her at break of day. Nations are in an uproar.

Kingdoms fall. He lifts his voice. The earth melts.

The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes war cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire.

Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord Almighty is with us. The God of Jacob is our fortress. May his word bless your heart.

This is my last message. Eleven messages. Eleven messages in one chapter.

Wow. And I'm putting this up again because I feel this wraps it up, what I'm trying to say. You can look at that.

This will be the last time I'm putting this up because I'm finishing the Hebrew 11 passage. And in Hebrews chapter 11 verses 32, if you want to turn to it, I'm going to make it my introduction. Hebrews chapter 11 verses 32 to 40, this is where we are finishing it off on faith.

And in verse 32 he says, and what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell. That's exactly how I feel. And what more shall I say? Eleven messages later, I do not have time to tell about.

And then he goes on to these guys that he names. And I want to talk to you about through faith, weakness can be turned into God's strength for victory to prepare us for persecution. So we may endure patiently and faithfully.

There's two themes here. I just got two points. The first is that we have victory through faith.

And the second is we have that endurance that God gives us through persecution. He'll give it to us. Now let's read Hebrews chapter 11 verses 32 to 40.

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Japheth, David, Samuel, and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised, who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword, whose weakness was turned to strength, and who became powerful in battle, and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.

Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned. They were sawed in two.

They were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted, and mistreated. The world was not worthy of them.

They wandered in deserts, and mountains, and in caves, and in holes, and in the ground. These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us, so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Would they be made perfect. Now, let me just give you the background now. This guy, when he's writing in the book of Hebrews, the Lord led the author of the book of Hebrews, chapter 11, so he starts off at the beginning of a creation, and he goes on, and he goes from Genesis, as you can see in 11, he's just starting it off, then he goes to the first Abel, Cain, and then he's going on, into Genesis.

Then he hits Abraham, and then he goes to Moses, and then he hits Joshua. And then he talks about Jericho, going around with the wall, and then he talks about Rahab. So now Joshua, the book of Joshua, they're going into the promised land, and he stops, and he says, what more shall I say? I don't have time.

Then he says, okay, I'll try. Let me try. So then he goes into these four guys, and you know who these four guys are? Everybody knows, right? Judges.

These guys are four judges. These, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Japheth. There's no fluke, he just didn't throw names in.

He put them in because they're judges. And these guys were judges in that time. So he has a reason, God has a reason to do this.

Why did he put King David? He's talking about the kings. He's moving along. Judges, then kings, and then what does he do? Samuel and the prophets.

So he's talking about the prophets. So he's trying to bring us all into the thing. He said, I can't do it, but I'm going to try.

I'm going to try and bring you in. That there's more people that walk like this. Okay, so first, this is my first point.

Only through faith in God can weakness be turned into God's strength for victory. Okay? Remember that. And the whole thesis, I believe, in this passage, I was trying to figure it out, but I think it's in these six words.

Whose weakness was turned to strength. You see it? It's down by verse 34. Whose weakness was turned to strength.

I think the whole thing is there. So I tried to work my sermon around that. So that's why I said, only through faith in God can weakness be turned into God's strength for victory.

And Gideon's weakness, what was it? What was Gideon's weakness? Yeah, it was fear. Anybody else? No wrong answer? Okay, let me throw it out to you. Here it is.

Doubt. He doubted. Now, let's turn.

Let's show you from the scriptures. Judges chapter 6. I need to show it to you. Judges 6. Judges chapter 6, verse 36 to 40.

Now, here's another... I don't understand. Well, anyways, have a lot of encouragement today, because I'm showing you... Isn't it funny that the Bible does not hide any man's imperfections? He just... There, you want to see how rotten they are? There, I want to show you. God does not want anybody flowered in here.

Only Jesus Christ of Nazareth is perfect in this book. Everyone else has got problems up to their ears. Okay? And so be encouraged.

When I start going through all this stuff, you jump up and go, HALLELUJAH! After we're finished. Okay? You're going to have to. Well, maybe not.

I don't know. You don't have to. But here we go.

Gideon's weakness was doubt. Verses 36 to 40. Let me read it.

Gideon said to God... Okay, but before I read this, you got to see what God said to him in Judges 6, verse 12. Okay? Judges 6, verse 12. He says, When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.

So he's with you, Gideon. Okay, in verse... Go down to verse 16. Judges 6, 16.

The Lord answered, I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together. Okay, so he gets a word from God. Correct? Then, he's got the word from God.

Hey, tell me how many people do this in this place? I do this! Okay, watch this. This is what Gideon does now. Look at this.

In verse 36. Gideon said to God, If! If! To God. Imagine saying it to God.

If! He's making a deal with God. Do we make deals with God? If you do this, I'll do that. He's God! But God allows him to do it.

This is what makes God so amazing. Listen to what he does. If you will save Israel by my hand, as you have promised, look, I'll place a wall of fleece on the threshing floor.

If there is dew only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry, then I'll know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said. And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day.

He squeezed the fleece and ran out to do a bowl full of water. If! If this is not enough, God does it. And then Gideon goes.

Then Gideon said to God, Don't be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece.

This time, make the fleece dry and the ground covered with dew. That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry.

All the ground was covered with dew. Do you see what's going on? Do you see it? That God has put this in the Bible to tell you that he is giving you permission now, more so, through the blood of Christ, to do whatever to express yourself to him. Just express yourself and he will not destroy you.

He just wants you to express yourself, so that you can work out your stuff with him. That's what he's doing here. He doesn't want you to keep it in.

He doesn't want you to, you know, just, Oh, I'm just so perfect and everything. You're not perfect. You are screwed up royally.

Everybody in this place is literally screwed up. I'm screwed up. I'm screwed up.

You should see some of these things. Last week I was thinking rage and getting sticks and wanting to beat people up and everything. Anybody with me? Are you with me? If you're not with me, man, come on.

This is crazy, man. Our church is real. Okay? And I'm walking around in rage, man.

Just rage. I can't even talk to God. That hurt my child.

It was like, you know, a fire breathing dragon. I can just picture God. When I was doing this sermon, I could hear God say, You're doing it exactly as he's doing it.

You're just letting it go. See? Keep doing it. And that's why we have so much sickness.

It's because we don't do this. I truly believe that. That I keep it inside.

And I don't let God have it. Or I'll give it to people. I'll lay it out on people.

I'll lay it out on you. And you'll lay it out on me. Let her fly, man.

I'm the child. It's not fun. Is it fun? It's not fun.

When human beings take it out on other human beings, it's not fun. Because human beings can't handle it. We get really whacked.

And the only way that you can get right is do what Gideon said. And it sounds stupid, but God has given you permission to do that. He's a holy God.

Don't treat him like any other way. Oh, he's holy and I'm not. Don't act like that.

That's foolishness. That's legalism. Act the way the Bible says, the way these men acted.

And that man was put in the hall of faith. He acted, if you will, two times, if you will. And God said, I'll do it.

I'll give you the midnight. He said, but if you will, could you give me a sign? Maybe give me another sign. Did he doubt? Did he doubt? Does God allow us to doubt? Yes.

God allows all your emotions. He made you. Don't let the devil say you're crazy.

Well, maybe you are, but it's okay. God can handle that too. God can handle anything.

Amen? Anything. Any prayer that you throw at him, he can't get surprised. If you say if, he'll say if.

And then you'll laugh. And he'll do it. Amazing.

Isn't it amazing, this passage of Scripture? Wouldn't you say it's amazing? You've got to stand back and say, what a gracious God. Because God could have, boom, who do you think I am? I gave you a promise and you didn't obey me? You're dead. He could have done that, couldn't he? And he says, no, let's talk.

It's beautiful. I love seeing Jesus like this. Don't you? And most of us in this room, I'm serious, because of legalism, we think we've got to play it part with the Lord.

We've got to say certain words with God. No, we don't. Be yourself.

He wants to express, express. And you know what? That's worship. That's worship.

When you could fall on your knees and you could say, Lord, I'm in pain. I'm in pain. And I'm angry.

But I still love you. And God's going to say, good. It's not phony.

It's honest. That's what he wants. That's why transparency is so powerful.

Because when it flows into the church, it flows into your relationship with God. When it flows from me and you, all of a sudden, you start to talk to God like that. Amen? You don't fake it.

And when people don't open up, they can't talk the way they're supposed to to God. Make no mistake of that. Transparency is a key.

Oh man, all of us learn. And it deals with doubt. It deals with everything when we open.

And do not, you know, I would apologize in front of the whole church. I would really apologize. Some of the stuff that we go through.

That I should have the guts to just back down. And I don't. Because I'm the head of the hall.

And I don't back down. And I should back down. So this is one area.

I confess in front of the whole church. It's not right. And may God help me.

Who's going to pray for me? It's not right. And it's not right to be aggressive. It's not from God.

Remember we talked in the prayer room? You know how I know it's not righteous anger? When I'm freaked out. And it can happen. Tash is different than I am.

Tash is very, you know, bad. I'm cool. And Steve's like me.

But you know what? We both can have the same problem. Her hiding it inside and me blowing it up on the outside. It's all the same to God.

All God wants from us is to take it to Him. Take it to Him. Don't take it to anybody else but to Him.

May God help us to do this. Serious. And you know what? I preached this morning.

I'm serious. And there was this new guy. I don't know where.

He was sitting here. And I'm sitting here. And I just finished my thing.

And I preached just like I'm preaching now. And I looked over at him. And I said, you've got to turn to the Lord.

And he looks at me and he says, yeah. Honesty, eh? Do you ever have that? I got on my knees just now. And I said, Lord.

There was one song you sang. I don't know what it was. But it was something about coming to Him.

And I sat down in front of God. And this week I didn't come to Him. I raged inside.

I was really mixed up. Nobody knew. And I just sat on my knees and said, Lord, please.

And you know what happened? Listen to this. At the end of my week on Friday. I finally said to the Lord.

I got on my knees. And I just bowed down and I stayed in His presence. All of a sudden things calmed down.

Because God started to speak to me. And He gave me clarity. And in His presence.

It's the only place I can get it. And He says, don't do that again. Come to me.

It's a war to get to Him. How many people say amen with me? It's a war. The devil does not want you with God.

Because he'll clear your mind up. In His presence. He'll make you think right.

And that's why this is in the Bible with Gideon. He's able to express. It's no problem with God to handle this kind of stuff.

But He can't handle people who close up and act holy. Can't handle it. Because you're not.

He knows you're not. You're a mess. Everybody following me? Man, we get it right.

Okay, listen to this now. Here Gideon. He goes through his doubt.

And then he hits faith. And he still. He defeats the Midianites for 300 men.

Correct? Who's the other guy in the New Testament that has this problem? Thomas. Donnie Thomas. Donnie Thomas.

Hey, listen. I'm going to tell you. Chris, me, we've been together for a while.

When you see the heart of Christ. When you see the heart of Christ. I mean really.

You said it today. When He reveals. I'm telling you the truth.

You will change. There's something special about Christ. Really special.

Not just with words. Something's very special. And it comes out in the Doubting Thomas thing.

You know how? Here he is. There's 12 apostles. Hey, think of this now.

And the 11 apostles come to Doubting Thomas. We saw them all. What does Thomas do? Check this out.

And look at how Jesus handles it. In John chapter 20. John chapter 20.

You've got to see it. You've got to see the heart of Christ. That's all I hope He shows you.

His heart. So you can understand. He lets you do this stuff.

John 20. John 20 chapter 24. John 20, 24.

Now Thomas called Didymus. One of the 12 was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, We've seen the Lord.

Look at what He says. But he said to them, Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it. A week later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them through though the doors were locked.

Jesus came in, stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, And listen, why would God even practice a guy like that? I told my 11 apostles to go tell you, Thomas, that I have risen. Those 11 guys won't lie.

They told you I have risen. You didn't believe it, Thomas. Why? He doesn't say that.

He doesn't rebuke Him like most of us would rebuke our children or anybody else for that matter. You didn't believe me. Why didn't you believe me? I told you I was.

Are you like me? If somebody doesn't follow your instructions? What? You didn't do it. Are you crazy? Are you with me? My parents are with me. I know that.

They're mine. I'm just a freak. This Jesus, this Christ, look at how He handles Thomas.

God in the flesh. Look what He does. Put your finger here.

See my hand. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.

That's all He says. Stop doubting and believe. Thomas said to my Lord and my God, then Jesus told him, because you have seen me, you have believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Beautiful! Do you see His heart? Do you see Christ's heart? Do you? He allows you to doubt. He allows you to go through all of your stuff.

It's you and me that beat ourselves up. Not Jesus. Get that right.

Christ does not do that. And if a preacher or anybody in our church does it, it's not from the Lord. I'm positive I live up now in my Christian life.

We beat ourselves up. But Jesus is always saying, I'm going to give you a break. I'm going to give you a break.

I'm going to give you a break. He keeps doing it. If anyone on planet Earth could have crossed any human being, it could have been Jesus Christ of Nazareth and would have been righteous for it.

All of us in this room cannot do anything to anybody because all of us are sinful. From the very core of our being. The minute you walk out of this room, you're sinful.

It's only the grace of God by Jesus Christ that keeps us alive. I'm so happy right now that I have a Jesus like this in heaven, man. When I see Jesus like this, it freaks me out.

I just love preaching Jesus like this. I love preaching about Jesus like this. You know why? Because the people who do try and fix people are convicted.

And the people who don't do that or don't yell at people are comforted. And I'm trying to be like Jesus. I really am.

I'm so far away from Jesus it's not funny. I'm going to have binoculars when I get to heaven. I know it.

There's going to be a bunch of people. I'm going to be saying, Ah, there's Jesus. There's going to be so many people in front of me, man.

Because I am not like Jesus in my home. I just love Jesus. But I'm not faking it.

I want to be like Christ. But I can't love my enemies sometimes. Are you with me? But Jesus, look what he does.

Wonderful. Gives him a break. How many breaks did he give Thomas? Oh, man.

It's wonderful, man, to know God like this. You know? So wonderful. Now, listen to this.

He works through his doubt. He starts to bleed. He goes into the war like he's going after the midnight, say.

You go to Judges chapter 7. You got to see this. Because I'm going to tell you, weakness remember what I said? Through faith through faith in God weakness can be turned into God's strength for victory. But, listen, if we stop with just going through doubt, and we stop there, we got a problem.

We have to do one more thing. Listen to this now. And I'm glad you prayed.

Hey, Josh, pray to the Lord. When he was doing it, I was going, yes, yes, yes, yes! Because I knew it was from God to come to the end of ourselves. Okay? This is the only requirement from everybody in this place that God wants us.

If you want your strength, you need to come to the end of your strength. Okay? This is the requirement of switching it around. If there's any power, you're playing the piano, or you're preaching, or I'm preaching, any power is when you've come to the end of yourself, and you get up here and you say, it's his strength.

Woo! It's his strength. Are you hearing me? It's that simple. It's like turning on, it's like this.

You exchange it. Power. Power.

But you have to come to the end of yourself. I don't know who is at the end of themselves. I know there are a few people that I know in this church that are coming into a place that God is doing it.

It's amazing to watch. They're getting freaked out. They're real good for one week, and then the next week they're paramedics.

Because it's the flesh, still the flesh doing good, and then the flesh, and then God just removes himself from grace. He's just showing us. It doesn't work.

It doesn't work. It doesn't work. Okay? So let me go.

Judges 7. I'm going to show you the principle here. You have to see it. It's a good principle.

Verse 1. 1 and 2, please. That's what I'm going to do. Early in the morning, Jerobal, that is Gideon, and all his men camped at the spring of Herod.

The camp of Midian was north of them, in the valley near the hill of Moriah. The Lord said to Gideon, you have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. Here's the key.

In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her. That's why God deals with us this way. That's the answer.

Because if you have any iota of getting up and reading your Bible, praying, or anything whatsoever, you boast in your own strength and God does not get the glory. This is the whole reason behind all this. Why you're going through the frustration and everything.

So the flesh and the sinful nature just starts to drop off. You start to, as Jesus said, if anyone does not hate his life, he'll lose it. God is doing the gift for you to hate the sinful nature.

To begin to hate it. And when you hate something, what do you want to do with it? It's repulsive. So you want life.

You have to hate this. And God, it's not up to you. I know that now.

He puts you in these little things. These little, I don't even know, little charades. And you're in there and you're like, and some of them are really heavy charades that you get put into and you wonder, all the awfulness is coming out of me.

What is this? Where did this come from? Because it was always there. We have the propensity of boasting in ourselves. We will stand up.

God has convicted me on this one. You want to be seen by men? Then on the day you stand in front of me, that will be your reward. He convicted me on this.

He said, you make sure in this church that I get the glory. You make sure it's drawn to Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Anybody else, if you boast in yourself, you have no strength.

That's your strength. When you're boasting in yourself, or this church, or anybody for that matter. Is anybody following you? And so that's why you see in Gideon that the last step of him being, you know, weakness turned to strength.

What was it? What? 10,000 men. Too many. No, I think it was 100,000 and too many.

10,000 and too many. And then he goes down. 300 men.

Just enough. Just enough. Now you can't boast.

Now let's do it together, because they're going to know I did it. And that's what God does to all of us in this room. Any of our talents, any of our strengths, anything that we have that's in there, I don't care how good it is, needs to leave.

God has to get rid of it. Because then we boast. And I'm telling you, I know my wife good enough.

And if you are honest, and if there are more out here honest, but I don't want you to say anything. But I know that if she was honest with me right now, and I don't want her to be, trust me, because I just want her to be quiet, because she can tell me later. I asked her, remember? I asked the elders too.

I asked them these questions. Well, ask your wives. Where are you not considerate with me? I told the elders that.

So, what I did, Steve, I went up to her and I said, this is heavy, man, because I'm scared when it comes to this stuff. You don't know her. I said, where am I not considerate with you? And she goes, this is what you said.

Let me think about it. So we knew that we'd think about it. Now that girl went too late.

She has a lot. So she's got to take them out. You know what I mean? And I'm wondering, oh man, that's not good.

Are you getting me? Are you hearing me? Consideration, yeah. Okay, 1 Peter chapter 3, verse, I believe it's verse, let me see, 1 Peter chapter 3, verse 7. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate with your wives. As you live with, no, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.

Thanks for letting me share this. Look at this. So that nothing will hinder your prayers.

And listen, when you're on your own strength and when you're dealing with your mate or you're dealing with elders board or you're dealing with me, who's crazy, if you're doing it in your own strength, you know what's going to happen? You're going to get upset. You won't be considerate. But if you're dealing with it in God's strength, you'll be very considerate of the other person.

Is everybody following me? This is so important that we live like this because if I don't start, that's why I confessed it right away. I'm being honest. I felt the Holy Spirit telling me this.

This is not right. And no, I'm not saying I'm going to be perfect. Please don't think that.

But I'm going to try. You know, I heard God talk to me. Are you following me? This is a weakness.

This is a weakness of aggression. Has anybody had that weakness? Of aggression. Aggression.

I want to have, I want to be right. I'm right. Okay? I have that weakness.

And so when we're in it, but it's better now because I'm 27 years married. Now, me and her, it's better. You know why? Because we're so married so long, she takes it.

Oh, thank you! Oh, thank you! I'm telling you, I'm going to be in trouble today. My God, maybe he's sleeping in the shed, man. You can't get in the shed.

It's fine. I know. I lost my train of thought.

Where was I? No, but I know in my heart. I know in my heart. I know, like I told him and I tell many people, I know what you're saying is not considerate.

I'm considerate. I know. I know.

But there is such a deep thing within me that's weakness, that if I don't give it to the Lord, that it'll go crazy and it turns into the fruit of being not considerate, just getting my own way. Are you following what I'm saying? And this, I'm sharing my weakness. This is a deep, deep thing.

I don't think it'll ever leave Sundar's head. He doesn't think this will ever leave because of the streets. Because of the gangs.

This is the way I protected myself. And it's deep inside. I think you guys have some of that stuff too.

I don't know where it is, but I think you do. And I think it's a thorn. And I don't think it'll ever leave, but it can be used for to turn your weakness into God's strength.

And this is why my message is with this Gideon guy, he did this. He allowed God to use him like that. To have nothing so that only God can do it through him.

Right now I really believe I can't love my wife unless God does it through me. Can you imagine me talking like this? Now I go home and my wife says, well, you just preach. What are you considering? You know, that's scary to talk like that.

But I've got to step out. I've got to trust the Holy Spirit. Are you following what I'm trying to say? I've got to.

I've got to die to suffer. Anybody with me? I have to stop talking. I have to really believe that this is the truth.

That I've been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives inside of me. And I have to exchange my weaknesses, all the garbage, and just exchange it daily, day by day, and receive his strength.

And it's a daily time. And if my prayers are hindered, if I'm not treating my wife right, how can I do that if my prayers are hindered? It's impossible. So you see how important it was when I confessed it.

I'm not joking with you. I'm not joking with this church. This is a real thing for me and her.

And I hope it's for you too. That we can't live this life if we live it in our own strength. It's God's strength, turning our weakness into his strength.

There's another guy. Gideon's not the only guy. Samson's another guy.

That's another guy I wanted to talk about. You know why Samson? You know, what was his weakness? Come on. Bible study.

Well, if anybody doesn't get this right, I'm going to get the dunce hat. I got a dunce hat. This way.

I'm going to get the dunce hat. And you're not answering it, Steve. It's women.

There it is! That's it. That's it. Sexual immorality.

You come out to the men's meeting, man. It's right. I'm just saying it for myself.

Me. This is why it's in the Bible, man. That God is telling us.

As men and, my wife would say, women too, because they got the mind too. And the devil's always going. Am I right? This is a heavy problem in the church.

Heavy problem. Big weakness. Huge.

Lots of pastors and elders and everybody's falling. All I'm trying to say is this. That even in this stuff, God is so gracious.

You know why? Samuel. Samson. Think of this guy.

Prostitutes. Remember? He went for one prostitute. He went for another prostitute.

Then he went to Delilah. Lost his strength. Got betrayed.

What a guy. What a guy. I wouldn't want to be in the Bible like that, man.

Would you want to be in the Bible like that? But God plays no games. One day we're going to have our whole life like that in front of all. He's just preparing you.

He's telling you this life is in front of everybody because your life will be in front of everybody one day. Pretty heavy. But not scary.

You know why? Because we have the blood of Jesus. And I think they do too. You know why? You know why? Samson.

This is God now. We've got a merciful God. I'm not even scared no more.

I just know that when you meet God in His mercy, He's going to have mercy on you because of the cross. But here's Samson. He's got no eyes.

His enemies plucked his eyes out. Huh? No. They plucked them out.

The enemies plucked it out. And they got him chained. And he's a big strong guy.

He can't get rid of it. He's going around. And all of a sudden, let's read it.

Please. You'll see this story. This is wild.

See the mercy of God. Check out the mercy of God. I don't want to show the man's sin.

I don't want to make him look bad. I just want to show you the mercy of God. This is heavy.

His mercy. Amazing mercy. So much sexual morality in this man.

Look what he does. Look what God does to him. Let me start from 28.

Judges 16, verse 28. Let me just read the mercy. Then Samson prayed to the Lord.

Listen to that. He's a mess. Then Samson prayed to the Lord.

Oh, Sovereign Lord, in his weakness now. Is this weakness? This is weakness, man. Oh, Sovereign Lord, remember me.

Oh, God, please strengthen me just once more and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes. Then Samson reached towards the two central pillars on which the temple stood, bracing himself against them. His right hand on the one and his left on the other.

Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. Then he pushed with all his might and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than when he lived.

And let me ask you, did God remember? Why? Why would he remember after all the foolishness in his life? What kind of God are we dealing with? Really? Really? And I want to tell you something. Listen to me very carefully. This is heavy now.

He didn't, you know what? When you pray to a God and you're in Jesus or you're trusting Christ, I don't know how that works but I know that they're in Christ somehow. But when you're in Christ and you're trusting Jesus, do you know that when you pray and your prayer is out of a desperation, not out of making it up or phony, but you're praying out of a crying heart and you're just crying out to God. You know what

God's going to do? He's not only going to answer your prayer, He's going to triple it and double it.

He's going to make it so that it goes far beyond what you wanted. Okay, and you know why I know that in this passage of scripture? Because when Samson said, remember me, God put him in Hebrews 11, the hall of faith. He remembered him.

He just didn't remember him with little things. He remembered him in the hall of faith. So does God have mercy? Does He? Does He let us in all of our foolishness, in all of our weakness, does He let us go through? Yeah, but He brings us to the end of ourselves like Samson.

And that might have to happen to some of us. But when it does, what do we do when we have the spirit? We cry out, Sovereign Lord, remember me! Remember me! And where's the other person who did that in the New Testament? Who was it? This guy did nothing good. Yeah! Remember me! Remember me! He did nothing good.

He just looked at Jesus and said, would you remember me, please? And He said, today, you'll be with me in paradise. The heart! Is your heart like that? Mine is... I'm really depressed, people. I'm nice to you.

You're my friend. I love you. But people get on my nerves.

I don't love you. That's why I'm so far away from this Christ, the way He is with people. Is it just me that's seeing this, or are you seeing what I'm seeing about Jesus? The mercy, the compassion of Jesus.

And you're ahead of us, too. You might have that compassion. And I think there's a few people in here that have that compassion.

Now, you have to be patient with all of us, because, you know, there's some of us that don't have that. And I'm just working on this stuff. You know? But you need people like me, too.

Because we got it, you know. Understand? I have to get that in. I have to get that in.

Oh, man. You know. You understand what I mean.

You understand. I know everybody understands. Let me read this.

I do. I want to read this. Watch me.

A brother who is trying to struggle into victory remarked to me one day, I do not know why I'm so weak. The trouble with you, I said, is that you are weak enough not to do the will of God. But you are not weak enough to keep out of the things altogether.

You are still not weak enough. When you are reduced to utter weakness, and are persuaded that you can do nothing, whatever, then God will do everything. We all need to come to the point where we say, Lord, I am unable to do anything for Thee, but I trust Thee to do everything in me.

And this is the place He wants us like Samson, just completely devastated. And he couldn't do nothing. Help me.

And God came through. And He wants everyone in this place. Now, you can't make it happen to you.

Don't ask for that. But God, please, bring me to the end of myself so that I can find you. So you can do it through me.

God wants to do this for all of us in this place. I know it. There is nothing like the Spirit-filled life living through the Spirit.

Nothing like that. And I don't think that any of us in this room, even including myself, have ever walked like some of the men of old. I don't think so.

I don't think we've walked... I don't think we know what it is to walk in the fullness of the Spirit in a continual way. Wouldn't you want that? I know there are people who want that. To walk in the power of the Spirit continually.

That's available to us. You know how? By turning our weakness, when we see it, into His strength. And that's a continual thing.

Moment by moment. And once you get into that swing, you're walking fully in the Spirit. Because He doesn't want to take any... No boasting in ourselves.

There's nothing that you can do. Nothing I can do. Even now, I feel, God, please, speak.

Speak. Because it's only the Spirit that does things. The flesh can't do anything.

Are you hearing me? I don't even think I can get it through. The flesh counts for nothing. The Spirit gives life.

And, you know, when I'm reading and I'm talking to everybody here, and I'm talking... There are people here that are grounded and saying, you know, in your heart, you really do not know really that you can't do nothing. You think you can do something. I'm going to tell you, sickness is good.

I've been sick for about four days. You know why it's good for me? Look at this sweat. And now I got something, man.

And you know, and I don't sweat like this. You know what? You know why it's good for me? I'm trusting the Lord. It makes you frail.

It shows you can blow it over just like that. Boom. And God wants us to see this.

Not to be proud. To be very humble and good people. No boasting, but only in Him.

I'm not there. I don't know. I don't know if I'm going to get there, but I know the principles.

Are you following me? And I'll tell you another thing, too, is you want to... It's not good for me to just... You know, I'm going to give you a principle that I've learned, and I'm going to do it now, starting today, after we get together and we pray. I'm going to do this, and I pray that you'll do it. There are three steps that you do to turn your weakness into strength.

You do this, I'm positive it works. Well, it works for me, but I always forget as I get all freaked out. This is what you do.

God makes you aware of your weakness. If you don't know it, you have to ask Him, what is my weakness? Not what you think your weakness is. What is my weakness? After He shows you your weakness, then you need to accept it.

You need to accept the weakness, embrace it. Not to hide from it, not to ignore it, not to do anything else, but accept it. The third is this.

This is the one. If you don't go into this, you don't get His strength. You acknowledge your weakness to Him, and you receive His strength.

Those three steps. You do that, and you walk in the Spirit continually. This is where He gets all the glory, and you get nothing.

Just the Spirit. What is it again? Three steps. You are aware, you ask God to make you aware of your weakness, and most people in this place, honestly, because our church is being filled with the Spirit, like we're moving in this direction.

Anybody understand what I'm saying? Do you agree with me that we're moving in the Spirit? Yes, we are, and there are some that will get on board, but you've got to move in this direction. You have to ask the Holy Spirit, be aware, show me where my weakness is. You have to.

My real weakness, like my aggression, I don't like seeing it, but that's my weakness. Second, accept it. I've accepted it.

I know it's me. Third, when it pops up, this is why you accept it, because when it pops up, you're able to acknowledge it right away to God, and He gives you His strength, and you don't go through any foolishness. Now, I've done that, and it works.

There's about a week I've been doing it, and then all of a sudden, somebody gets me upset, and I forget about the principle, and I just go strong, like, remember I said, rage, and I had like a crazy time in my house. And then I forget all about this stuff. I even forget about the Bible.

Are you with me? When you get into your weakness, and you don't acknowledge, you forget about everything! You forget about God! The teacher Bonhoeffer said when you're caught in lust, God becomes not real. Well, that goes for everything. God is not real anymore.

When you're in your weakness, just in your weakness, you just forget about God, and just your rage is there. Are you with me? That's the way I am. May God help me, man.

I'm just, okay, okay, there. Only through faith can our weakness be turned into God's strength for persecution. I want to show you something.

I need to show this. This is very important, because I don't want the church tricked on this thing. You know what? Have you ever heard of the prosperity gospel? Okay, the prosperity gospel cannot survive this passage of scripture I'm going to read to you.

This is why it's evil, the prosperity gospel. It's evil. When you say you pray, and God gives you riches, and he's going to bless you, and you'll always be healed, and all that stuff, you know all that garbage? This cannot fit in with it.

Let me read it to you. If you read it to somebody in the third world, they would say, ah, this makes sense. You read it here in the West with prosperity gospel, they try and just bypass this passage.

I'm not going to bypass it. I'm going to show you how it fits into our real Christianity. It really fits in.

Let me read it to you. It goes like this. This is how it goes.

Verse 35. Five. Women received back their dead, raised to life again.

Others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned, they were sodden too.

They were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins. Destituted, persecuted, mistreated.

The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes, and in the ground. Imagine if you're trying to tell somebody about prosperity gospel with that.

Huh? Hebrews chapter 11. It was 35 to 40. 35 to 39.

Hebrews 11. 35 to 39. Okay? Imagine coming to somebody and telling them about the prosperity gospel that God will always bless you.

And you get that. How stupid. How foolish, eh? You know how this fits in? This is the persecuted church.

They have a good handle on this. They have a wonderful handle on this, man. I'm having on December 11.

You don't want to miss December 11. I'm having a guy come in. He's the head guy.

The CEO of Open Doors of Canada. Of the persecuted church. He's coming in to speak to us.

He's going to speak. How does Christmas, how does the persecuted church celebrate Christmas? He's going to come and speak to us. I want to hear a story.

This guy's been in the persecuted realm. I want to hear what he has to say. I haven't been there.

I want my heart enlarged. Do you want that? I want to be able to see what does this mean? Because I think only the persecuted church can understand this passage. Really understand it.

Because they're there. They're being beat up. They're being killed.

Their babies are being beat. Imagine seeing your kid being killed in front of you. This is where it's at.

Real faith. Right here. It's powerful.

This is why the prophets are in here. This is why the prophets, he says. The prophets.

Samuel and the prophets. Why? Why the prophets? Because the prophets are a good example that through faith they turn their weakness into God's strength to endure. Here it is.

Listen to this now. To endure patiently and faithfully. God gives you strength not to be victorious, but to endure patiently and faithfully.

You might get killed, but you still will be enduring. You follow that? That's the reason for this passage. He gives you the strength to endure patiently and faithfully, even when your kids are being smashed over the head with a rock.

Can you imagine? No, I'm not joking, man. This is what's happening in the third world. In the Muslims.

Because we're Christians. We follow Jesus Christ. And I think that I'm being very up front here now.

I'm a chicken. I'm a big chicken, but I think that they have a better intimacy with Christ when they're going through this. I think his presence is so powerful when they're going through this stuff that we don't even have even a grasp of what they have.

Because in our comfort the presence of God is blocked in our comfort. In their persecution, the presence of God is manifesting. And I know we're all scared of it, but there's something where God comes into his presence in a persecuted state, and he's there.

And the prophets are a wonderful example of this. You see it, don't you? They wouldn't stop. They kept on going.

You would cut them in half and they wouldn't stop. It even says it here. This was real faith.

May God help us all to really understand. There's so many instances in the Bible of this. So many.

Peter's weakness. Look at it. Before it happens, he gets brushed off with a girl.

A little girl. Oh no, I'm not with him. After Pentecost.

After he sees his weakness. After he gets the strength of the Holy Spirit. What does he do? He stands in front of Sanhedrin.

He doesn't care. He's beaten. He's beaten.

And he says, Praise the Lord. I'm worthy. What does he say? To be what? To suffer for his name.

What a heavy statement. Isn't it a heavy statement? I can't say that. I can't say that.

I love Jesus. I don't know if I'll ever get that. I don't want to boast.

But imagine being able to say that. Somebody beats you. Oh man, oh man.

Bam. Bam. Beating you.

And then you leave and you go, Praise the Lord. I'm worthy to suffer for his name. That's gotta be the Holy Spirit.

That's gotta be his presence. Human flesh cannot do that. Now do you see why persecution is so needed? Because it can't go through human flesh.

Flesh can't go through that. Only the Spirit. That's why persecution is so heavy.

Because only the Spirit can go through that stuff. Your flesh can't do it. You will deny Jesus Christ like Peter did.

But when the Spirit, when he comes on you in power and you're totally sold out, you'll go through anything. You'll even give up everything. Because you know Jesus Christ in the Spirit.

Oh, I don't know what's gonna happen in here, but I don't even know if I want to, oh. I don't even know if God will come. But if he comes like this, I have a feeling it's through persecution.

It's not through your dances and entertainment. It's with people giving up their life for Christ. I'm convinced.

I respect those men that do that. I'm weak. I'm really weak.

I'm not playing any games with this Christianity anymore. Because I don't know about Christianity. This Christianity is really watered down.

This Christianity. But this Christianity in the scriptures and what you see is really radical. And it can change nations and communities and everything.

When God really does come. And the only way he does is when we're persecuted, like you said. They got persecuted and they were scattered.

And you hit it right on that. We need to pray fearless prayers, courageous prayers. Bring it on, God.

Bring it on. I think our church is starting to really become battle-oriented. May God help us do it.

This is not a game. One day, we will give it a count. One day.

It's not to be fearful. It's just very sobering. All of us in this room.

One day. And I want to make my life count. I'm not joking.

I'm not here to impress you. I'm not here to entertain you. I'm not here to do that.

I'm here to tell you that there is something very powerful in the Holy Spirit. And it's not entertainment. When you're able to give up your kid and still not deny Jesus, there's something powerful.

None of us can say that right now. Only the persecuted church can say that. They got something to say to this church.

I got a book to give you on annual meeting. You want it. It's what the persecuted church can teach our West.

I got this book from Open Doors. I'm saving it for you guys. I am.

I love this church. I hope I wasn't too hard on you. It's just a passion, man.

This has got to be. We got to get real radical about this. Our weakness? Turn it into God's strength.

Start to go to turn to the Lord. Where's your weakness? I'm afraid to go through persecution. But God help me.

Amen? Everybody, can we pray? And just pray for your weakness. Because maybe you don't even know it. Maybe you know it.

I don't know. But exchange it. Exchange it.

For God's strength.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24379.mp3>

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