

# Delighting in Weakness

by Peter Schrock

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of embracing weakness and trials as pathways to experiencing God's strength and growing in faith.*

**Duration:** 41:14

**Scripture:** Romans 5:1

**Topics:** "Spiritual Growth", "Christian Maturity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares his desire to have a powerful and purposeful life in Christ. He emphasizes the importance of fixing our eyes on Christ and the eternal things, rather than being consumed by the temporary and visible things of this world. The speaker also mentions the trials and difficulties that believers may face, but encourages them to cry out to God and keep their focus on Him in order to grow and abound in their relationship with Christ. He concludes by expressing his longing for maturity and intimacy with God, comparing it to the natural progression of a child growing older.

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## Transcript

Alright, um, let's pray real quick. Lord, I just thank you for your, your mercies, Lord, and your kindness, Lord, that you show to us. Lord, and I also thank you for the difficult things that you provide for us, Lord.

To train us, Lord, to teach us obedience, Father. I just pray that you, you help me to share the things that you put on my heart, Father. And Lord, that you just bless the saints and help them to consider some of these things as well.

And that your mercy would be honest to all, Father. We thank you. And then, um, it was probably like Tuesday or Wednesday, I was just having a, a day I got back from work, and I, I went out, uh, for a walk.

And just spent some time seeking the Lord, just walking around. It was a nice day outside. A lot of pretty clouds and sun was starting to set a little bit in the sky.

And, uh, I walked across a big field and sat down on the other side of the field and, and just spent some time in prayer there. And I was just seeking the Lord for a vision for my life. A, a purpose for, for doing what I was doing.

And, and the Lord brought to mind, uh, a passage from, uh, 2 Corinthians. I don't know if most people would consider this as a normal vision for someone's life. Um, in fact, uh, most people would probably say

that I'm quite crazy in some senses.

But I think you'll, you'll be able to relate, at least in some part, to my desire. Um, this is 2 Corinthians, or 1 Corinthians, yeah, 2 Corinthians chapter 12, uh, starting in verse 7. Before I, before I read it, uh, I mean, I really had the desire to see God work in my life powerfully. I really have a desire to, uh, to not live a, a mediocre life in Christ.

I really have a desire just to see God really work in my life. And I was, as I was walking and I'd sat down in that spot beforehand, I was sitting there meditating on, uh, some of the babies that I've, I've spent time with recently and watching them flail their arms in their cradle, you know, moving them around and not really doing anything productive. And, uh, but nevertheless, they are moving, they are alive, they, they are doing things.

Uh, and I was blessed by that, just seeing their eyes wide open. They are looking around and they are seeing things in this world. Uh, but that is about all they're doing.

Um, and I just had a desire in my life not to be the baby sitting in the cradle all my life. Uh, I mean, yes, I certainly feel like I have stepped into a toddler stage in some locations in my life. Uh, but, uh, in many ways I, I do feel that I'm still a baby sitting in a cradle flailing his arms and legs, but alive and looking around.

Um, and I started to consider different things pertaining to what brings people to maturity and, and it kind of alludes to why I'm reading this passage maybe a little bit. But, uh, this is one of the verses that popped into my mind first of all. Um, 2 Corinthians 12, verse 7. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given to me, there was given to me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 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 about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me.

That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insult, in hardship, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. When I was meditating there on my hillside, it was just, that verse hit me really hard.

Paul was seeking something in his life. He desired to see God glorified, to see God made, to be made known, and to see people walk in fullness in Christ. He wanted to know God.

And as I was meditating on that last, that last little thing, for when I am weak, then I am strong. And what does that really mean? But was Paul strong in and of himself? No. It showed that he was weak, but his life showed that God was strong.

It showed that, you know, through all these difficult things, like, yes, Paul was a weak man, but God was strong in him, because God's power was made perfect in that weakness that he had. As I considered those things, it was just, it just hit me more and more that, I mean, at work and stuff like that, every once in a while I get a chance to share my testimony with people. And I was considering at that point what kind of testimony I had and what kind of testimony I wanted to have.

And the Lord reassured me. He gave me this vision for my life, that I want to have a testimony that I am weak and that God is very strong through me. That God is so very strong because I am so weak.

And so, so stepping off into that, what does that mean? I mean, Paul says that right after talking about God's power being made perfect in weakness, therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight, I delight in weakness and insult and hardship and persecutions and difficulties. I delight in weakness and insult and hardship and persecutions and difficulties.

I mean, we grow up in this American society where difficulties, weaknesses, things like that, you know, persecutions, hardships, these are things that we try to avoid in our society. We get all sorts of convenient devices, you know, to help us avoid difficulties and problems and things that make things hard. And I am not saying that we should go out and just get rid of all the stuff that makes it easy, life easier for us.

No, I am not saying that. But we are taught to dislike weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. I mean, granted, I think that's part of our just natural thing in us to dislike those things.

But I think in the world we are taught even more to dislike weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. We have this mindset, well, it's going to hurt us. It's going to make things, you know, not enjoyable.

It's going to make things hard. I mean, hardships make things hard. And we are always seeking to make things easier for ourselves in some senses or another.

When we make our choices, what are we going to do today? Am I going to do something over here, or am I going to do something over here? One of the first thoughts that probably pops in our mind is, what's easier to do? What would be the most convenient for me to accomplish? And it's not necessarily, oh, you know, this might be a little bit more difficult, but no, that might show me to be really weak. It would be a real great opportunity for the Lord to be shown strong. Does that something that pop into mind? That was something that Paul thought about.

The next verse that really hit me, as I was sitting on that hillside there, was in Philippians in chapter 3. I'm looking at chapter 3, verse 7. But just before that, Paul starts talking about things that people put confidence in the flesh and how he could put more confidence than all of them. But the next statement, I think, can also apply in similar ways, as you can see what he gets into a little bit down the road. But whatever was to my prophet, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish. James says, dung, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but which is through faith in Christ.

The righteousness that comes from God is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I've already attained all this or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it, but one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize to which God has called me

heavenward in Christ Jesus. As I was considering this verse and thinking about it there, Paul said he wants to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings. Paul wasn't seeking a life of comfort as he went around and ministered to all sorts of people who converted and formed churches.

I was blessed this morning as I was looking at Paul when he came back to the Ephesians after he was just about to head to Jerusalem. He had told them, I know, and as all I know is that in every city I know that there's hardships, beatings, and persecutions basically just awaiting me. And that was his life, and he realized that.

And he delighted in those things, it says. He says, I delight in those weaknesses. He didn't run away from them or avoid them, even though he knew they'd be coming if he walked that way.

And that was his desire, just to know God, to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, to become like in his death. I don't think I fully understand that statement, but it doesn't sound comforting. And to somehow attain to the resurrection from the dead.

And that was something Paul strived after. It's something he pursued and desired to know. I think if at any point he strayed from that desire, when he got refocused, he forgot what was behind and strained towards what's ahead.

But it wasn't simply a desire to know Christ in a fluffy way. Ooh, it makes me feel so good to know Christ, you know, kind of thing. I mean, certainly it is a blessed thing to know Christ, but Paul wasn't seeking for it in just a fluffy way of knowing Christ.

He was willing to fellowship in the sharing of his sufferings. Just really something that I saw. And then, of course, an obvious verse is in James chapter one, which just naturally kind of follows from a strain of thought, I think.

James chapter one, verse two. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

This was kind of where my thoughts started to circle around a little bit, sitting on the hillside, because I didn't want to be that little baby sitting inside of a cradle, kicking, yet looking around and alive. And it was this here that speaks about maturity and its close connection to trials of many kinds. It wasn't something of, okay, we'll just have a good time, you know, try and spend enough time with the Lord.

You know, that'll bring us to maturity. We spend a lot of time in prayer, a lot of time reading the Bible. I mean, granted, we'll get a lot of knowledge about the Bible.

Granted, we'll spend at least a lot of time talking to God. I don't know if we'll hear from Him or have a real deep connection with Him if we don't face these difficult times, to be perfectly honest. I don't think David would have the walk with God if he didn't face all the sufferings that he did.

He wouldn't have the burden to cry out to God if he wasn't constantly chased and his life constantly in danger. But it's a principle here that's found throughout the Scriptures again, again, and again. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. I was blessed considering this. Trials equals great relationship with God.

Trials equals powerful walk with Christ. That's what I see right here. I don't see something like, oh, you know, if we just spend a ton of time in reading your Bible or a lot of times in prayer equals powerful walk with God.

No, it's trials, difficulties, sufferings equals powerful walk with God. And I think that's if we're crying out to God. I admit a lot of people live a very difficult life and don't have a powerful relationship with Christ.

But I think if we learn to fix our eyes in Christ in these difficult times and things of difficulties, we will greatly abound. I was listening to Matthew this morning. Just popped in the CD and just the first one and hit the Sermon on the Mount.

I was somewhat shocked to consider. Well, yeah, that's right. I forgot about that.

It's very true and made me think a little bit more about this. Matthew chapter five. We'll just start right in verse one.

This is the Sermon on the Mount, of course. Now, when he saw the crowd, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven.

For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. I think James makes a very good point. He says, Consider it pure joy when you face these trials, because you know you need to have something in mind, I think, when you're facing these difficult times.

He says, Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. I think if you face trials in difficult times and you don't have your mind fixed on Christ, if you don't have your mind set on the blessed things that will result after going through these difficult times, it'll be very wearisome, and you won't be able to consider them pure joy. In Romans chapter 5, another classic verse.

Great, I just start in verse 1 because I like verse 1 so much. Therefore, what's this? Romans 5 verse 1. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. That's a neat verse.

I mean, just that one spot there. We hope, we rejoice in the hope. I mean, Romans 8 tells us that we don't hope for what we've already seen and have, but we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, but then we keep going on, and not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering

produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out in his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know, we know something, that suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character hope. Let's turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 4 real quickly. This verse really struck me, I guess, when, hit me really the most, I guess, when I was on Calvin's campus, before it really just sold out for the Lord.

This was one of the verses that really ministered to my heart, maybe even the most. I'm not sure. I was reading some things that I'd written a while ago back then, and I saw this kind of, the essence of this verse kind of plastered all over a lot of it.

It's 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 16. Therefore we do not lose heart, though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

So what do we do? So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. I think Joe made a good point.

If we sit there and we start thinking about all these things, fix our eyes on those things, it won't produce very good things. But we need to fix our eyes on what is unseen, that eternal thing. But I guess as I was sitting there, I was considering a little bit, I want to have a powerful life in Christ.

I want to have a walk with God that I am not still a kicking baby inside of a cradle. I want to go on to maturity. I want to have an intimate talk with my Savior.

I was telling Tom the other night as we're sitting there, sharing as we often do later in the evening, that I see the children and I see this natural progression that happens as they get older. First you see a baby, fresh baby, just kicks, looks around and cries, goes to the bathroom, eats. I mean, they're alive.

Then after a little while, they start understanding some of the things their parents are saying. They understand the facial expressions of their parents, if they're upset or if they're happy. A lot of that stuff is pretty soon as well.

But after a while, they start actually able to grab a hold of things, even though they don't necessarily realize that they've just grabbed a hold of something or not. Eventually, they realize that, yes, you have hands and legs and I can walk around and crawl first, I suppose, usually comes first, but not for everybody. And eventually, at some point, they're starting to be able to communicate a little bit.

They can say a word here, a word there, and they can understand, and this usually happens, they can understand a few things that their parents are saying pretty well. Maybe not very complicated things or anything like that at first, but as it goes on, they get better and better and they're able to actually put together a sentence. Wow, they can say a sentence now.

I can actually communicate with this child and get a response back that I can understand. I remember one time when I walked upstairs and Caleb said something to me and I was like, wow, I could understand what he said. I know I can understand it very well, but that's a progression that happens.

And as people get older and older, you can have a very deep conversation with someone. You can hear them very good. That's just a natural thing, just a natural thing that older, mature people can have intimate relationships and communication that's wonderful, discuss deep things and understand what each other are talking about just by merely walking up and looking at them and saying a few things.

And that's a natural thing that happens, just natural as of growing up, of getting older and more mature. I mean, granted, if you took a little kicking baby, put him in a cradle and never let him see anything, just fed him an IV, the baby might live for a long time. I don't know.

I don't know if they just die because of lack of stimulation of sorts, but let's say the baby just keeps on living. But are they going to ever realize that, oh, people eventually get up and start walking around when they get older? Oh, you know, there is this thing that's on my mouth. You know, they never see a person.

Maybe they never know that they have arms and legs or that they're actually attached to them or that they actually have a face and they can say things. They probably wouldn't. But instead, I mean, the children see they're around all these different things.

They realize, oh, people can actually stand up on these things and move around. And so what do they do? They attempt to try it and they fall down, they fall down, they fall down, they fall down, they fall down. But they're up every time.

You know, they keep getting back up and eventually they're going. I guess my point is that there's difficulties in learning. There's trials that children face.

I hear stories about using the potty. Oh, there's something that's in the potty now. They start crying.

I mean, all these different things. It's difficult to learn. It's difficult to come to maturity.

It's not an easy thing always to have a ton of responsibilities, you know, that you get when you get older. Not. But what does it do? It forces you to become more mature.

That's the way it works. I mean, but they're difficult. They're hardships.

They are a trial. They don't feel pleasant. They don't.

Hebrew says that. Discipline doesn't feel pleasant at the time. But in the end, it does raise a harvest of righteousness for those who are trained by it.

So after I walked away seeing all these things, just sitting on this hillside, I desired to face difficulties, trials, persecutions, because I see what they produce. Trials equals powerful walk with Christ. And with that in mind, with seeing that, having that the picture in my mind, when I think about trials and difficulties, they sound pretty good to me.

I don't know about you guys, but I think that's what they're starting to talk. I think I'm just now starting to glimpse a little bit what he's talking about in James. Consider them pure joy.

I delight in the weaknesses and insults and persecutions, difficulties. I mean, he delighted in those things. I think because he had this mind in him.

He had this thought about him. I mean, if I face these difficulties, it's going to produce a powerful walk with Christ. I will have a powerful testimony that I can testify about what God does for those who are weak.

And it won't be something where people just look at and say, oh, he's a super guy. They go, man, he's weak. But look at God.

Look at God at work in him. And that was the testimony that I desired. It was just, yes, that people would see me as nothing, as nothing.

But they'd see the power of Christ living just in me. And so what I proceeded to do is ask the Lord for difficulties. And I could pray that in faith, knowing that God would grant me the desire of my heart.

And he did. And the next morning I woke up. I went for a walk.

I got lost. I don't know how many times I've walked around the Jeffries neighborhood, but I managed to get lost and turn around for about five, ten minutes or so, somewhere in there. And then all of a sudden I realized I was actually heading the wrong direction.

If I had continued walking that way any longer, I would have been late for work. Great. So, but thankfully the Lord showed me that there's the street that I recognized and I was able to get back.

So I got back and I had a good time in prayer that morning and proceeded to get ready in the morning and went over and hopped in my car, drove to work, took about ten steps, five steps, I don't know, out of my car and looked down and, oh, I'm wearing my tennis shoes. And if I walk on a work site with tennis shoes on, they will kick me off that work site in about two seconds. So, oh, well, praise the Lord.

He's answering my prayers. Turn around, get back in my car, drive back home, get my work boots, come back to work. I was about half an hour late or so.

No big deal. Nobody got upset at me or anything. But it was just a thankful moment to praise the Lord.

And then when I get to work and I'm working for a while and I reach into an outlet at a certain point and, oh, I got shocked for the first time at work on that day. So, I mean, all this time I'm just, I'm thankful. I mean, it was just a blessing.

I didn't, I thought it was funny that I got shocked. I mean, the circuit was labeled wrong on the blueprint and so it wasn't really my fault. I didn't mess up really.

It was just somebody else forgot to change the name of the print. And it didn't hurt me at all. It just felt the kind of feeling, you know.

And, I mean, the next day I did get shocked again up on a ladder. I didn't fall off, thankfully. It didn't shock me that bad.

I just had some difficulties with a co-worker who just seemed somewhat annoyed being around me. I was sharing with Tom a little bit of stuff that happened even yesterday when I went into work for a little bit. But at that point, the next day, I started to feel a little bit of a sore throat coming on.

And I ended up working about 10 hours that day and stuff like that. Or maybe that was the next day. I can't remember.

They all blend together. But nevertheless, my point is that, I mean, I've been sick. I've been getting shocked.

I've had a lot more difficulties with co-workers than I've had the entire time I've been working. But I praise the Lord. He's answering my prayers.

And it's just, I just want to challenge everybody here today just to really examine yourself and to consider whether or not you consider it pure joy when you face trials many times. If you delight in weakness, in insults, in persecutions, in difficulties. If you have that view of trials that, oh, or do they just discourage you? I just encourage you to consider that and examine yourself and to get refocused on Christ, that unseen, what we can't see right now.

And just remember that these trials and difficulties are bringing us to a powerful walk with Christ if we fix our eyes on Him and set our hopes on Him and not lose heart and just continue to trust the Lord, that the Lord knows what's going on. The Lord is not going to give us more than we can handle. But granted, it's in Christ that we can handle it.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength. And we can't do all things through Peter or Chris, you know, who gives it through our own strength or something like that. But the Lord does give us everything, everything we need.

So like I said, I just want to challenge you guys to consider and to look at your life and see, am I delighting in my difficulties? Do I have such a mindset and view of my trials and problems that they are achieving for me in eternal glory that far outweighs them all? And just to have our eyes fixed on Christ through all these different things, that was what was on my heart.

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