

Continuing in the Word, "Grace Given," Ephesians 3:7-9

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Do you ever feel weak? Last week Christy and I went to Olympia to get a used desk. It was a good sized oak desk that will work well in my office and the price was right, so we paid the people, and all that was left was for us to load it into the van and head home. The guy who sold it to us got on one end and I got on the other. We had to lift it fairly high to clear the other furniture that was around so I gripped it low and went to stand up. For a few moments I had the bizarre experience of willing my legs to straighten but finding that they weren't obeying. The desk was heavy and my weakness was apparent.

We've all experienced weakness, and in broader contexts than our muscular capability. Paul certainly had. He tells the Corinthian church that God chooses the weak (1 Corinthians 1:27). He then tells them that he was with them in weakness (1 Corinthians 2:3), and it is clear from other passages that he considers himself one of the weak. Take 2 Corinthians 12:9,10 for example. Paul had pleaded with God to remove a "thorn in the flesh" that had been given to him. God's response was, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* If that was the case then Paul was pleased to be weak. *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

What we see in Paul is God's strength shining through human weakness. That's why Paul takes pleasure in being weak – because in his weakness, Christ's strength is clearly seen, and He is honored and glorified, not Paul. So Paul sincerely says in Ephesians 3:8 that he is *"less than the least of all the saints"*. Before Christ he believed he was strong and the best of the best (Philippians 3:5,6). Once saved, he knew he was weak and the least of the least. Not only did he know it but he was he content to be so and took pleasure in it.

Can you imagine what the Lord's church would look like if each of His children lived with this conviction in regards to themselves? Can you imagine what relationships in the church would be like if we all viewed ourselves in this manner? Can you imagine how stymied the world would be if they consistently saw this in us? Can you imagine what God would do through us if this humility was ours? I don't think we can. The reality would far surpass anything we could imagine.

We each must ask ourselves some hard questions. Do I acknowledge my weakness? Am I thankful for it? Do I confess I am the least and am I

content to be considered so? What a struggle against the flesh it is to live life with this view! Paul's weakness in this regard is most clearly seen in the fact that he needed a thorn in the flesh to remind him of his weakness. This thorn kept him from being conceited (1 Corinthians 12:7). O that God would bless us with that which reminds us of our weakness and His strength. What a blessing to be humbled so as to be used to glorify God!

Pastor Jim