

God's Power in Our Weakness

Scripture: 2 Cor. 12: 7-10

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Propositional Statement: God is honored and His power is shown most evidently in believers' lives through our human weaknesses.



Open your Bible to **2 Cor.12: 7-10**. This evening we are looking at a message entitled: "**God's Power in Our Weakness**"

Introduction

How many have seen the movie *The Ten Commandments*? Do you all remember the scene where Moses, played by Charlton Heston, is standing before the Red Sea along with all of the children of Israel and they are trapped between the Egyptian chariots and the sea? Charlton Heston stands strong and tall with the wind blowing fiercely through his hair and beard and robe. And he raises his staff to heaven and toward the sea and cries out with a loud, powerful command—(act this out) “Fear not! Stand still and see the salvation of the LORD!” (**Ex. 14:13**). Instantly the sea waters part and stand like towers or fluid walls on either side. And, you know, the historical scenario may have even looked a bit like that as seen from the outside. But when I was young in the Lord, my picture of what it was like to be a powerful man of God, a man filled with faith and the power of God, was formed by an image like that—Charlton Heston as Moses!

Yes, I desired to please the Lord, but my idea of what that looked like was forged by such a picture. I wanted to be an anointed prophetic preacher with much of the spiritual focus on how powerful and great I seemed to be in my own and other's eyes. However, since then I have come to understand God's Word provides a much truer portrait of who Moses was, what that whole scenario was about, and what it is to be a man (or woman) of faith who walks in the grace and power of God.

And that brings up an excellent question. What does it look like practically in our lives in order for that to happen? How do we become “strong in the Lord and the power of His might” as God exhorts us to be in **Ephesians 6: 10**? If you feel that at times your strength is anemic and your faith is tiny and your spiritual life is atrophying and you're just hanging on by your fingernails – sometimes because of trials and struggles and opposition and sicknesses and persecutions and hardships and general human weaknesses—then this message is for you.

Listen carefully, because I think you may be surprised at God's answer to this question. Furthermore, if you actually put this answer **into practice** in your life, it will totally transform the way you view and handle life's trials and difficulties and it will revolutionize your entire walk with Christ. I will summarize it for you in one sentence and then we'll see how the Bible demonstrates it.

Proposition

Here it is: **God is honored and His power is shown most evidently in believer's lives through our human weaknesses.** Don't worry if this concept seems too complicated to fully grasp right away. God's Word will make it easy to understand. This theme is clearly shown in our text for today: 2 Cor. 12: 7-10. Let's open to that now and read it. (**Stand to honor God's Word**)

Scripture Reading

Holy Scripture, 2 Cor. 12:7-10

“So to keep me from becoming conceited [proud] because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 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. 10 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.” (**You may be seated**)

I discover God's power in my weakness because...

1. Weakness keeps me **humble**, vs. 7.
2. Weakness keeps me **dependent** (on God's power and grace), vs. 8-9.
3. Weakness keeps me **happy** in God, in my various weaknesses), vs. 10.

The Corinthian “Super Apostles”

In order to properly understand this passage we must briefly discuss some of the relevant context. The Corinthians have been deeply impacted and affected by those Paul describes as “false apostles” and “deceitful workers” (11:13) who have preached to them “another Jesus” and a “different gospel” which Paul did not preach. These false brethren were operating in a “different spirit” (11:4) and seemed to have emphasized the superiority of their own speaking abilities (1 Cor. 2:1-5; 10:10; 11:6; rhetorical skills were highly prized in Greek culture at that time, just as they are today. The **ability to persuade** was treasured much more than God's Word of truth). The false teachers also apparently emphasized their own powerful “bodily presence” when they ministered in person as well as “visions and revelations” that God supposedly had given them which displayed how mighty and spiritual they were (12:1-6; 10:10). The Corinthians were so enamored of these teachers' speaking skills, giftedness and spiritual experiences that Paul was forced to defend himself by “boasting” about his own apostolic ministry and what Christ had done through him in order to guard the sheep from being led astray.

Transition

But what a shock it is to see what Paul boasted about! And how mightily did the Holy Spirit use him to paint a picture revealing what serving Christ powerfully ought to look like!

1st Point: The first thing Paul showed them in the passage we are studying was that *God is honored and His power is shown most evidently in believers' lives through our human weaknesses. How is that? Because...*

I. Weakness keeps me **humble**, 1 Cor. 12:7.

Holy Scripture, 2 Cor. 12:7

“So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.”

A “Thorn in the Flesh” – What is it?

There have been many theories as to what the “thorn in the flesh” refers to in this verse.

- Some say it may have been a **physical malady** of some sort.
- Others say that it alludes to **whomever was the ringleader of the false apostles** opposing Paul.

I'm glad Scripture does not definitively tell us what it is, because that allows us to make a broader application of Paul's experience here to our lives. This passage clearly tells us, whatever the thorn was, it was a **painful trial to Paul's flesh** he considered to be a hindrance or opposition which weakened his ability to fulfill his ministry from the Lord.

He might have said, “Lord, it sure would make it easier to do what you have called me to do if I weren't partly blind.” Or, “Lord, how can I edify, equip and unite your people here in Corinth with such Satanic opposition from false apostles? Could you please just take them out of the way?” But God would not deliver Paul from what seemed to be thwarting his ability to do what the Lord had called him to do. Why? We start to understand one possible reason in verse seven.

Who Gave Paul the “Thorn in the Flesh”?

Who gave Paul the “thorn in the flesh?” Although it was a “messenger from Satan,” God Himself was the one who gave it to Paul! And its purpose was stated very clearly: To keep him from being “exalted above measure” or lifted up with spiritual pride because of the abundance of revelations he was given. And why was it so important to make sure Paul stayed **humble**, even if that meant a weaker, feebler Paul with more hindrances and opposition? Christ Himself spoke directly to the apostle and gave him the answer. “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect (“works best” NLT) in weakness” (v.9)

The Same Message of the Cross Paul Preached

Saints, is this some new revelation Jesus is speaking here? Do you think Paul was shocked, or is this simply the message of the cross he already preached? : If we simply move down a few verses to **2 Cor. 13: 3-4** we see that Paul preached that Christ was crucified for our sins in the weakness of human flesh, but He was raised by the power of God as Lord and King of

everything! He continued preaching that, just as Christ was, we too are weak, but we live by the power of God! That is why **humility** is so important to a Christian!

Paul Was a Humble Man – Knocked Off His Horse!

Do you think of spiritual pride when the apostle Paul comes to mind? I don't. In fact, I think the exact opposite. But was Paul always humble? No! Paul was a zealous religious Pharisee who was absolutely certain He was pleasing the God of Israel as he persecuted and killed Christians. But **God knocked him off his high horse, didn't He?** Literally! And then Christ spoke to the disciple Ananias who came and laid hands on Paul so he could recover his eyesight after being blinded by the brilliance of the Presence of Jesus—and God said regarding Paul, “He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my Name” (Acts 9:15-16). So our great apostle's task was to carry and lift up the Name—the character- who He is—of Christ **and to suffer for that Name so all could see clearly Jesus is Christ the King the Anointed One and Lord of all! He preached and lifted up Christ and not himself. He emphasized Christ rather than miracles or gifts or spiritual experiences he may have had.**

Paul's Response to the False Apostles – Pointed to Christ

So when the false apostles prided themselves in their commanding presence and trained ability to speak and persuade and also disrespected Paul's weakness and lack of rhetorical ability, how did he respond? Look at what Paul proclaimed in **[read]1 Cor. 2: 1-5**

1 Cor. 2:1-5, “And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4 and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Paul's weakness made him humble. He did not trust in his own abilities. Paul knew several languages, was trained theologically under Gamaliel. He knew philosophy and was very knowledgeable concerning the wisdom of his day. But he was determined to know nothing among the Corinthians but Christ and Him crucified—so their faith would stand not on Paul's eloquence or his revelations, even if truly from God, but on Christ and His gospel alone. For the gospel IS the power of God unto salvation for all who believe (Rom. 1:16). And as it says in 2 Cor. 1:24, Christ IS the power of God and the wisdom of God. The power of God is not a thing, not a force to be manipulated, but the Person of Christ, mediated by the Holy Spirit.

Only Christ has the power to transform lives. Only Christ can take a man who lives for his own glory and honor and transform him into someone who genuinely desires the glory of God and to exalt Christ. If that's you, you are a living, breathing Divine miracle!

We Proclaim Not Ourselves, But Christ

The bottom line of all this is Paul preached, “We proclaim not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and us your slaves for Jesus' sake.” (2 Cor. 4:5) Paul saw how weak he was, so in humility he constantly acknowledged and proclaimed the unsurpassable greatness of Christ. He

was an ambassador servant – proclaiming Jesus! Isn't that good news, saints! This is the best news! In deep humility, we proclaim Jesus and not ourselves. If I was proclaiming myself and my own holiness and speaking ability, I would be in big trouble. And so would you. But, praise God, He is the one who was buried in weakness, but raised in the power of an endless life! He is the resurrection and the Life!

The Lord will accomplish His purposes in this fallen world through redeemed sinners despite human weaknesses and in spite of all human and Satanic opposition! Christ said, "I will build my Church and the gates of Hades (death) will not prevail against it!" (Mt. 16:18). Our weaknesses are no problem for Him—in fact, as we have seen in all these scriptures, *God is honored and His power is shown most evidently in believers' lives through our human weaknesses*: And God makes this easier for us as He allows us to be **humbled** through trials.

Illustration

Paul's Vision of the Third Heaven

So let's see how this humility was demonstrated in Paul's life. When the false apostles boasted of their gifts and visions and spiritual experiences, how did Paul respond? In **2 Cor. 12: 1-7 (no need to turn there)**, which leads right into the passage we're looking at today, Paul relates a "vision" and "revelation of the Lord" which today's self-proclaimed false apostles, prophets and teachers would literally give their right arm to have. He was caught up to the third heaven, Paradise, the dwelling place of God, and it was such an awe inspiring, mouth-dropping, transforming, intense, overwhelming experience that he did not even know if he had been "caught up" in his body or not! And he heard things there that were "unspeakable" and "not lawful for men to utter." He either was forbidden to relate them, or he could not convey them or both—they were too awesome!

Preaching Christ, not Visions!

If the false apostles had received an experience like that, you probably could not stop them from talking about it! That's one reason the Lord would never give them a genuine experience like that. Today they would have books written about it—"Beyond the stars and back: My trip to the third heaven;" there would be PG-13 movies that sold out because of entire churches buying up blocks of tickets, and plastic toy figures of the angels and beings encountered in the third heaven sold at Toys R Us for Christmas. Their entire ministry would revolve around that extraordinary spiritual experience.

But what does Paul say about this most dramatic experience? He has not said one word about it in 14 years (v.2)! Why? As he says in verse six, it is because he does not want anyone to look at him and think of him more highly than he ought! He is just a servant of the Lord. He is a weak clay vessel who is preaching Christ raised from the dead. He is not preaching himself or experiences the Lord may have given him. **He is preaching Christ!** Christ Jesus deserves the preeminence and all the attention and glory! Though he feels forced and compelled to say something regarding visions because of the false apostles' emphasis on such things and because of their denigration of him, Paul can barely drag himself to convey this true experience given by the Lord, so he puts it in the third person form. He will not boast in anything, except his weaknesses. Why? Because it keeps Him **humble** so He can exalt Christ!

We have seen how we discover God's power in our weakness because...

1. Weakness keeps us **humble**, vs. 7!

But it not only keeps us humble, but also dependent!

II. Weakness keeps me **dependent** (on God's power and grace), 1 Cor. 12:8-9.

Holy Scripture, 2 Cor. 12:8-9

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

Paul's Thorn – Seriously Disabling and Significant

Please notice that the text says Paul pleaded with the Lord three times for Him to remove the thorn in his flesh, whatever it was. Paul was made to go through such disabling and crushing suffering that he was unable to continue without the grace of the Lord. This significant suffering and debilitating weakness was good! It made Paul totally dependent on Christ's power.

But let us understand that this thorn was beyond Paul's normal suffering. The thorn was a “messenger of Satan” which was sent to “harass” him and Paul most likely believed it was keeping or hindering him from either preaching the gospel effectively or preventing him from serving and ministering to God's people in the way he knew God wanted him to. That must be why he pleaded with the Lord three times that it should be removed. Paul just could not understand why God would want to allow such opposition to His will and work. It seemed to Paul God would be glorified much by answering his prayer.

Jesus' Cup of Suffering

Does that remind you of someone else who asked God three times if a certain “cup” of suffering could possibly pass Him by? Yes, that's right! Jesus pleaded with His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane and His agony was so great that He sweat great drops of blood. If there was any other way we could have been delivered from the just wrath of God against our sinfulness, Jesus would have taken it.

God explained to Paul why He would not remove the thorn in his flesh. “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, (said Paul) “I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” God refused to remove the thorn which seemed to hinder His own will and work because He knew it would make Paul totally dependent on His grace and power. This is the way of the cross, the way of resurrection life, the Way that leads to our greatest good and God's greatest glory!

Forsaking Human Dependence

God's grace empowers us to **forsake** our human strengths and **depend** solely on the power of the Spirit of God who works most powerfully through our weaknesses. **Therefore, we are not speaking of temporary trials, but a lifestyle of walking in the way of the cross by the grace**

of God depending on the power of His Spirit to live the resurrection life of Christ through us. That is what Paul was called to and that is also the calling of every one of us, God's children.

Personal Testimony of My Dependence on God's Grace

Let me give you a personal illustration of how that grace of God has been exhibited in my own life. Many of you know my testimony— how physical infirmities mixed with sinful choices brought me to the brink of insanity and how the Lord was merciful to rescue me when those mental and physical disabilities brought me desperately to consider the possibility of the existence of the Biblical God. The Lord eventually redeemed me out of the dung heap as one who was truly one of the “foolish” and “weak” things of this world chosen to “confound the wise.” However, as soon as He started to heal and transform me into a vessel that was usable in His hands I began to become proud and puffed up. Spiritual pride is the absolute worst kind of sinfulness; it is what turned Lucifer into the Devil. I was also not as aware of this spiritual pride in myself as I should have been, and was prone to “glory robbing.” “Glory robbing” is the desire to gain some kind of personal attention or honor from serving Christ or from the Holy Spirit using us in some way. A Christian can genuinely desire to glorify God in what he or she says or does and at the same time desire some honor for him or herself. God knows that is not only unjust, untrue and unrighteous, it is also not even good—for anyone, including the person who desires that glory. Because of that wicked tendency in me to desire “even a small fraction” of the honor and glory that Christ deserves alone, God has allowed physical and cognitive difficulties to continue in my life. Whenever an event or situation arises which could possibly result in my being exalted in my own thoughts and imagination, my physical and mental infirmities instantly make me aware of my own limitations, weaknesses and fallenness apart from Christ. But what is astounding and right in line with the theme of this message is that, quite often when I feel the weight of my own inabilities and incapacities is exactly the time God chooses to use this clay vessel to demonstrate His salvation power. This was most evident in a recent trip we took to visit my sick mother who was dying of cancer in Florida.

I had been praying for my mother for many months, since I knew she was having her ninetieth birthday June 4 and was battling ovarian cancer. Over the years I had previously prayed with her twice the “sinner's prayer” but without any fruit to show for it. I had a real burden to see her converted before she would “die in her sins.” Little did I know, in the Providence of God, the night our flight arrived to visit her in Florida was the night mom decided to put herself into hospice. I could not have timed our visit any more perfectly if I had known beforehand when and where she would be dying. Equally Providential, however, was our flight which was delayed in the air three times and rerouted to three states before we finally made it to our hotel bed at 3:30AM. All that time I was getting sicker and sicker, having not slept for two days and battling bronchitis. And all that time I knew God was allowing my sickness and sleeplessness for a purpose. I had been down this road too many times to miss the obvious set up from the Lord. Whenever such things happen to me I know God wants His Spirit to minister through me without interference from me and my “great spiritual knowledge and abilities.” I had tremendous peace from God that He was having His way and would minister to my mother despite my weaknesses and incapacities.

The first day we were there I presented the gospel once again at length, but received what I took to be less than a convincing response. The final day we were there my mom was so weak she would doze and wake on and off during the day and we were able to have little interaction. At the end of that last day, as we were getting ready to leave, perhaps never to see my mother again, I was feeling somewhat desperate. I had nothing to share with her. Not even one word. I was spiritually empty—a spiritual beggar. I saw my last opportunity to be alone with her, as others were at the opposite side of the room. By faith totally trusting God, who, I believed, wanted to bless her, I rushed to her side to say goodbye and asked if I could pray for her. No sooner did I start than God the Holy Spirit took over completely. The love, power and words just came. I was crying, telling her how much I loved her and how much more God loved her—much more than as a mother loves her own children. I went back and forth between preaching and praying. At one point I even realized she HAD confessed her faith in Christ to me in a more convincing way than I had understood to that point, and I told her so. I prayed that Jesus would hold her and comfort her and take her across the great divide (of death). At the end I shared with her concerning the absolute trustworthiness of God's promises, especially our hope in the resurrection—with no more cancer, no more nausea, no more pain, no more tears and sorrow, no more separation from God-- all because of what Christ has done for us. And I said this great hope was why I believed we would see one another again. And every word seemed to reach her heart with Divine Power. At the end of the prayer, she exclaimed with every last bit of energy she had, "O Steve, how did you know precisely the exact words to use? How did you know to use those exact words? How could you..." "Mom, I said, "it wasn't me—it was the power of God's Spirit who loves you and wants you to be part of His Forever Family. I believe we will be resurrected and see each other again." And that's how we said goodbye—believing the hope of the resurrection in Christ, and that we would see each other again. I know God touched her and seemed to give her every opportunity to place her trust in Christ. Praise His Name! And He did it in such a way that I could not take the slightest credit for anything that transpired. It was all miraculously and obviously His work. That night, I was told, my mom slept well for the first time in a week or more. Before she died, we had at least two additional confirmations that she received the gospel of Christ.

So, if you think you have certain physical, mental or emotional infirmities or weaknesses that can stop God from using you to do His will in the world, think again! God can use you; in fact, He prefers to use weak vessels so that His glory and goodness are most evident! Praise His Name! God uses even the evil things that come against us – those things that seem to hinder His will and plan in our lives—to actually bring that plan to pass! Nothing can stop God's purposes from coming to pass in our lives!

Application: Expect Difficulties / Thorns

So, how do we apply this valuable lesson to our lives? We live in a fallen and sin-cursed world. I often encourage my lovely wife Robin by reminding her that it is solely by the grace of God that **anything** goes right or happens according to the way we think it should. We should expect everything to go wrong and be totally blessed when and if anything seems to go well. The rain and storms **will** come. If you haven't had a heartbreaking tragedy occur in your life, you are probably very young.

We will all face situations and circumstances in life from which we probably would like to run. And those who desire to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus **shall** suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3: 12). If you belong to the Lord, the devil hates you and has an awful plan for your life. But God's Plan is greater and will use the devil's plan to further His own purposes in your life. **When (not if)** a heartbreaking tragedy happens in your life (some of us might be going through something like that right now), remember what God promises us here in His Word. Nothing can stop God's purposes from coming to pass in your life! Nothing! He is a conspiracy of One! God will use everything this fallen world and the devil throws at you to conform you to the image of Christ and to further His glory and His purposes in you—and that is ultimately for your eternal good! What is for His eternal glory is also for your eternal good. “We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8: 28, 29)

Let's review: I discover God's power in my weakness because...

1. Weakness keeps me **humble**, vs. 7.
2. Weakness keeps me **dependent** (on God's power and grace), vs. 8-9.

And finally,

III. Weakness keeps me **happy** (in God & in weakness), 1 Cor. 12:10.

Holy Scripture, 2 Cor. 12:10

Please look carefully at the last verse, **2 Cor. 12:10.** (read)

“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.”

Happy in Suffering? That's Crazy!

Paul did not just “put up with” these things. He actually was content or happy in them. That word can mean he took “pleasure” in these things. Does that seem a little crazy to you? What was the reason Paul gave for why he was happy and content with infirmities, reproaches, hardships, persecutions and calamities? Watch out now! If you said, ‘Because when he was weak then he was strong (in the Lord)’ you are only partly right. There is a much deeper answer here. Yes—it is **‘For the sake of Christ!’** Paul wanted “to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil 3: 10)

Don't misunderstand what I am saying here. God does not take joy in our weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions or calamities. Christ knows what it is like to suffer all of those things and He is **compassionate and comforting** to us in all those distressing circumstances. He is the God of all comfort. However, FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST Paul was happy, joyful and even boastful in all those situations because suffering endured for His sake allowed Christ's power to be effective in His life. When he was weak in himself, he became strong in Christ. As the strength of his own humanity was diminished, the power of Christ's own resurrection life poured through him and Christ and His gospel were lifted up.

Happy in Suffering? How?

So how can we be happy like this in suffering? First of all, we need to recognize and deeply understand the love God has for us. God is not cruel. If God be for us, who can be against us?

Read Romans 8: 31-39

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This passage lets us know two critical truths. 1) If we belong to Christ—if we are His—nothing can separate us from His love. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, being destitute without clothing, danger or the death of a sword—nothing can separate us from His love.

Why is that important to know? Because many times the devil will confuse us and torment us with thoughts of being forsaken by God, when our lives are ripped apart by such things. Sometimes we wonder why these things are happening if we are God's children and He has promised to love and care for us. But God does not allow these things in our lives to punish us (yes, discipline at times, but not punish).

2) The second critical truth tells us why these things have happened. In the weakness, torment, suffering and death of the cross, Christ Jesus was conqueror over all the power of sin, death and Satan. His victory was proclaimed to all by His resurrection from the dead. In some way Christ allows us to share in that victory of His, as verse 37 proclaims, “In all these things (distress, persecution, famine, danger and death) we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” **It is His power and strength brilliantly displayed and showcased against the startling dark background of our inabilities and weaknesses which gives our Christian life meaning and purpose as His Name is glorified.**

In light of all this, whenever we are faced with weaknesses, sickness, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities we can recognize them as **wonderful opportunities God has given us to honor His Son**. We do not have to act like we are the Savior and Lord. **Simply being happy and content for Christ's sake while we are faithful to lift up the Lord in the midst of our struggles and difficulties is enough to manifest and show forth His glory, victory and strength.**

Conclusion

I'll conclude by bringing us back to our original consideration of Moses depicted by Charlton Heston. Are you starting to see that picture of a powerful man of God in a new light? When Moses was a youngster of 40 in Egypt he became outraged at seeing his own people oppressed and humiliated and sought to deliver them by his own strength.

God had him spend the next 40 years (from age 40 to 80) tending a few sheep in the heat and baroness of the desert wilderness in order to crush his self reliance and self confidence. When Moses was finally fully convinced that he was hopeless and helpless in himself—and that he could NOT deliver the oppressed people of God who were slaves in Egypt-- that was exactly when God appeared to him in a burning bush and “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” (Ex. 3:10) But what then was Moses' response? “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (v.11) God was patient with him and explained, “I will be with you.” But Moses said, “Oh my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” [As if God didn't know that when He called him]

Then Yahweh, who is most longsuffering, said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.” (4:12) But Moses responded, “Oh, my Lord, please send someone else (like Charlton Heston?).”

Then God's anger began to burn against Moses. Why? Because of his unbelief and lack of trust in God's ability to do what He said He would. Now after 40 years of being crushed by this wilderness experience God had ordained, Moses was now convinced he did not have the resources in himself to make that happen. However, it's obvious he also did not believe God could use someone as weak and impotent as himself to deliver God's people. **But Yahweh had brought him to this very point in his life in order to demonstrate to him, the children of Israel and the whole world that His mighty salvation could not be produced or enhanced by any strength or ability in man. Neither was His power hindered at all by any weakness or inability of man. Yahweh alone had the wisdom, power and ability to deliver them and Yahweh alone deserved all the praise, glory and worship for that deliverance!**

And that is the point of this message. By the time Moses raised his staff over the Red Sea he had seen Yahweh humiliate and utterly annihilate the mightiest nation on earth along with its gods. So when he told the children of Israel to “Stand still and see the salvation of God!” Moses' staff was not magical. His words were not a mighty manifestation of some mystical “force of faith” compelling God to action. His authority did not come from dramatic emotionalism or the intimidating power of personality. He was simply a man Yahweh had humbled to the point that he finally realized what we have been talking about: **God's power is made perfect in human weaknesses.** Despite his personal weaknesses and incapacities, Moses simply trusted God and expected Him to do exactly as He promised He would. **We can do the very same thing. God alone has the wisdom, power and ability to manifest the power of His Spirit and gospel Truth through us. And He will accomplish His purposes through us despite our human weaknesses and in spite of all human and satanic opposition. Our weaknesses are no problem for Him—in fact, He will use our weaknesses as a springboard to His greater glory and praise!**

So let us all discover God's power in our weakness because...

1. Weakness keeps me **humble**, vs. 7.
2. Weakness keeps me **dependent** (on God's power and grace), vs. 8-9.
3. Weakness keeps me **happy** in God, in my various weaknesses), vs. 10.

Let's pray and ask Him to seal this truth in our hearts.