

Andrew Murray:

"He said unto me, My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore will I rather glory in my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weakness: for when I am weak, then am I strong" 2 Corinthians 12:9,10.

There is almost no word that is so imperfectly understood in the Christian life as the word weakness. Sin and shortcoming, sluggishness and disobedience, are given as the reasons for our weakness. With this interpretation of weakness, the true feeling of guilt and the sincere endeavour after progress are impossible. How can I be guilty, when I do not do what it is not in my power to do? The Father cannot demand of His child what He can certainly do independently. That, indeed, was done by the law under the Old Covenant, but the Father, under the New Covenant, does not do that. He requires nothing more of us than what He has prepared for us to do in His Holy Spirit. The new life is a life in the power of Christ through the Spirit.

The error of this mode of thinking is that people estimate their weakness, not too highly, but too meagrely. They would still do something by the exercise of all their powers, and with the help of God. They do not know that they must be nothing before God.¹ You think that you have still a little strength, and that the Father must help you by adding something of His own power to your feeble energy. This thought is wrong. Your weakness appears in the fact that you can do nothing. It is better to speak of utter inability, for that is what the Scriptures mean by the word "weakness." "Without me ye can do nothing." "In us is no power."²

Whenever the young Christian acknowledges and admits to his weakness, then he learns to understand the secret of the power of Jesus. He then sees that he is not to wait and pray to become stronger, to feel stronger. No, in his inability, he is to have the power of Jesus. By faith he is to receive it. He is to believe that it is for him, and that Jesus Himself will work in and by him.³ It then becomes clear to him what the Lord means when He says, "My power is made perfect in your weakness." He knows to return the answer, "When I am weak, then am I--yes, then am I--strong." Yes, the weaker I am, the stronger I become. And he learns to sing with Paul, "I shall glory in my weaknesses." "I take pleasure in weaknesses." "We rejoice when we are weak."⁴

It is wonderful how glorious that life of faith becomes for him who is content to have nothing. How glorious to feel nothing in himself and to always live on the power of his Lord. He learns to understand what a joyful thing it is to know God as his strength. "The Lord is my strength and song"⁵ He lives in what the Psalms so often express, "I love Thee, O Lord, my strength." "I will sing of Thy strength: unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing praises."⁶ He understands what is meant when a psalm says, "Give strength to the Lord: the Lord will give strength to His people," and when another says, "Give strength to God: the God of Israel, He giveth strength and power to His people."⁷ When we give or attribute all the power to God, then He gives it to us again.

"I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). The Christian is strong in his Lord.⁸ Not sometimes strong and sometimes weak, but always weak, and therefore always strong. He has merely to know and use his strength trustfully. To be strong is a command, a mandate that must be obeyed. From obedience there comes more strength. "Be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart" (Psalm 31:24). In faith, the Christian must simply obey the command, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."⁹

O God of the Lord Jesus, the Father of glory give unto us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Jesus, so that we may know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. Amen.