

Sermon Notes – July 3, 2015, Pastor Alan Smith

“The Weakest link”

Remember the game show the weakest link? It was a show where contestants would answer questions and money would be put into the pot for every correct answer. Then the team would vote who was the weakest link on their team. That person would then be off the team.

Isn't it interesting how society favors the strongest, fastest, smartest, and richest? Those that don't meet or exceed the world's standards are not looked upon favorably. This standard of the strongest, smartest, etc. is not a Christian standard that we need to pursue. At least we shouldn't brag about those things that we are better than others.

In our society we hide our flaws and weaknesses. Ladies, don't you put on make-up to hide the imperfections? Men, don't we hide our emotions because they may make us look weak? We try to look like we are better than we really are. Isn't it hard to confess our struggles and shortcomings with anyone because it makes us vulnerable? Isn't there an unwritten rule that we don't share our struggles?

During our sharing joys and concerns time I rarely hear “pray for me because I'm struggling. Please pray for me, I'm hurting.” Yes, we are quick to ask for prayers for others, but what about our own weaknesses? Why it is that Christians feel they have to put on this mask of having it all together?

The world looks at Christians as people that think they are perfect. We hide the struggles in our lives. How should we look at the weaknesses in our lives? Is there a benefit to admitting to others our shortcomings and struggles?

Last week I talked about counting on God when we face a problem that is bigger than ourselves. What about the day to day problems and struggles?

In our scripture, Paul tells of a wonderful privilege he had. He was called up to paradise. He saw and heard things that cannot be expressed in words.

5 That experience is worth boasting about, but I'm not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses.

I don't know about you, but at first this sounded kind of odd to me. If I saw something so wonderful that words couldn't describe it. I think I would still try. So why would Paul boast about his weakness?

6 If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life

or hear in my message, 7 even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud.

8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. 10 That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Part of acknowledging that we have issues is because it helps us to rely on other people and even God. Hear the message that God told Paul, **“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”**

In our weakness we don’t need to rely on ourselves. It is the power of God that gets us through our issue. God helps us in our weakness.

Isaiah 40:29 (NLT) — 29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

Romans 8:26 (NLT) — 26 And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don’t know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groaning’s that cannot be expressed in words.

We are not only in our weakness. We see that God is there to help us. God uses our weakness to demonstrate His power.

1 Corinthians 1:27 (NLT) — 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful.

As we embrace our weakness and not try to act like all is well we will see God working in our lives. Not only will we see God working, but as we boast about our weakness, others will see the awesome power of God working in us. When we see someone who is struggling we should not look down on that person in his weakness.

Romans 15:1 (NLT) — 1 We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.

Romans 14:1 (NLT) — 1 Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don’t argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.

To overcome our weakness, we must trust God! It is through faith in Him that we can be overcomers.

Romans 4:20 (NLT) — 20 Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.

2 Timothy 1:6–8 (NLT) — 6 This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline. 8 So never be ashamed to tell others about our Lord. And don’t be ashamed of me, either, even though I’m in prison for him. With the strength God gives you, be ready to suffer with me for the sake of the Good News.

God has not given us a spirit of fear when we are facing our weaknesses.

Song: “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”

I am weak, but Thou art strong;
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;
I’ll be satisfied as long
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.

Refrain:
Just a closer walk with Thee,
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,
Daily walking close to Thee,
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

Through this world of toil and snares,
If I falter, Lord, who cares?
Who with me my burden shares?
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.

When my feeble life is o’er,
Time for me will be no more;
Guide me gently, safely o’er
To Thy kingdom shore, to Thy shore.

Let’s walk closer with our God. Let’s rely on God when we struggle, allowing His strength to overcome our weakness. Let’s brag about the weakness because it’s God’s strength that gets us through that weakness.