

When Living Means Christ, We Have Strength - Philippians 4:13

We all know how easy it is to get tired: physically... soulishly... spiritually. We run out of "stuff" (energy, patience, desire). We feel weak (and become vulnerable to things that we wouldn't normally consider). The Bible never suggests that won't happen here on earth. With finite, corruptible bodies and fallen, uncooperative people - not to mention spiritual forces of opposition - we, like Jesus, can find ourselves "wearied from the journey" (Jo 4:16) or, like Paul, "burdened beyond our strength." (II Cor 1:8) Yet... we may also learn in these very moments that we are able to lay hold of strength - Christ's strength - to see us through (Phil 4:13). Or, as Peter put it in II Peter 1:3, we may find that "His strength (same word) has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" for those same moments.

God's strength, His power, is the means by which we receive the energizing, overcoming, enabling strength for the "all things" of life. The witness of His strength is upon the life that owns its own strengthlessness and abandons to His strength. In other words, we are strong in His strength when we live by His Life. Jesus is the strength of His own kingdom - "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might." (Eph 6:10) All strength for kingdom living is derived from Him - Who He is and Where He is! He invites us into the "yoke" with Him (Matt 11:28-30) because all the power needed to plow the fields of life is found in Himself. As we abide in Him and abandon to Him, our obedience of faith activates His strength for the toughest of terrains. Whether it is hard circumstances or hard hearts, we learn that God can plow concrete!

All of this power and strength in the Christian's life is from the word and work of the cross - "it is the power of God" (I Cor 1:18). At the cross, "just me" and my strength died. "Christ in me" and His strength came alive. The battle, the charge, the darkness, the temptation, the illness that may come against me is real and I ("just me") am no match for it. Yet, all these are not against "just me" but against "Christ in me" - and they are no match for Him! I am not physically strong, soulishly strong, or even spiritually strong... I AM JESUS STRONG!

This revelation is received and believed in our weakness and meekness. From those places we find ourselves ready to exchange the natural for the spiritual, the temporal for the eternal. Only in owning our weakness are we made strong by His strength (II Cor 12:9-10). Only from the posture of meekness can we receive the ableness of which He is able. And we always keep in mind that His strength, like all His gifts, is received and displayed for His purposes, not ours!



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GREETINGS

I Cor 2:16 says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord?" My soul has resonated with that question loud and clear for the past 9 weeks! I'm rather sure this period of being in God's "waiting room" has something (again) to do with the study section of this newsletter - weakness and meekness - but the full picture is yet to unfold. Some of the symptoms continue, though less intense. All tests and scans have come back negative/normal. At this point I am no longer seeking "cause" but learning to manage the "effects" until God leads otherwise. We are also planning future events in the confidence that God will be pleased in even last minute changes!

Mostly, I want to take this space to say from every part of my being "Thank You!" Your calls, notes, emails, cards, texts, testimonies have been so encouraging and comforting. Your gifts of support during a time of cancelling events have been touching and inspiring. Your heartfelt love and compassion mean more than I am able to say.

We said last month that we don't know how people go through "life" with all its "un-lively" moments without an anchor for their souls. I also don't know how people go through such periods without the kind and caring support of others. Both sources of stability and comfort have been there for us. For that, we are extremely grateful!

Steve (Isaiah 40:31)

CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

2,9,23,30 CCF
 11 Alachua Study
 13-16 Binghamton, NY (607-625-4612)

DECEMBER

2 Ocala Study



ALACHUA, FLORIDA WINTER RETREAT

"In Christ: Our Living Oneness"

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