



table talk

6/7/26

“My Weakness...and Yours”

One of the most difficult things I’ve had to embrace lately is weakness.

Now, my male ego wants to be sure you understand. I am not a coward, nor am I a weakling. I don’t count on others to do what is my responsibility (except maybe driving at night).

But I am daily becoming more aware that I am weaker. You might say “Oh, that’s normal, Pastor. You’re just getting older.” That’s true, but that is not the kind of weakness I’m talking about.

In the physical realm, naps have become my friend, and there are very few reasons to stay up after 8PM. For some reason, a 50-pound sack of chicken feed feels like 80 pounds now. A 7-hour trip to Florida is now a 10-hour marathon. My prayer posture is now more sitting than kneeling. Doing it that way means I don’t usually have to get help to get back up. I am paying for every hard slide into second base from the days of my youth.

I don’t like these increasing limitations, but I expected them. I can still joke about them on most days.

But the kind of weakness that has been difficult for me is a weakness that isn’t new. It has been with me all my life. When I was young, I was strong and determined enough to cheat. I thought I was overcoming it, but I was just cheating. Men are especially prone to machismo. Outwardly, we don’t think there is anything we can’t move, lift or control. And it carries over into the spiritual realm.

Paul explained it to the Corinthian congregation, but few today grasp the depth nor the reality of it. He said, “I have learned that when I am weak, then I am strong.”

He went deeper. “Jesus’ strength is presented perfectly through my weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9, 10)

The secret to being really strong is the same whether you are 19 or

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89. Realize there is no strength apart from Christ's enablement. Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)

I was watching the midweek service from Times Square Church in New York. A guest speaker named Will Bassett was introduced. A pastor in Oxford, England, Will had a significant stuttering problem. That, my friend, is a huge problem for a preacher! He felt called to preach but was largely unsuccessful early on for obvious reasons. I waited for a testimony of how God healed his stutter. Or at least how he didn't stutter while he preached. Maybe he was like the country singer Mel Tillis, who suffered with an extreme stutter but found relief by being able to control his breathing through the rhythm of music.

Instead, the stutter tried to inject itself several times throughout the message as he talked about failing over and over again. No healing, no masterful technique. I hurt for him. I cried off and on through the entire message as Pastor Will told of a broken heart and broken dreams. But he also told of his moment of breakthrough. From Paul's account in 2 Corinthians 12, God spoke to him. He was ready to give up saying "My weakness is in the way. I'll never be able to be any good at this!"

It was then he realized that Paul also did not receive miraculous deliverance in regard to whatever problem he faced. God's strength was not lessened by Paul's problem or by Pastor Will's.

Stuttering is sometimes still a problem for Will, but this is what he learned: **"MY WEAKNESS IS NOT IN THE WAY - MY WEAKNESS IS THE WAY!"**

By this point my weeping turned to wailing as I was smitten for my carnality and dependency on my own strength.

By the grace of God and the abiding Holy Spirit, I am slowly and fitfully learning that everything I hope to accomplish is not hindered by my increasing weakness. But my weakness is a perfect setting for Christ's strength!

I am embarrassed to say this, but my wife's engagement ring was a wee little thing. It was small and inexpensive, but it was all I could afford at the time. I asked the jeweler to give me some choices in my price range. When he took me to a less obvious display case, I was embarrassed and disappointed until he spread a piece of black velvet under the display light as a backdrop. The little ring took on new life and beauty as it was displayed against the backdrop. It sure didn't sparkle in the case and especially compared to some other rings. But this little ring, the "weak ring," was made perfect by being placed upon the velvet.

No matter what your weakness is, you can be made strong, beautiful and significant when you serve with Christ!

I love you,
Pastor Stephen