

## ***The Revelation of Weakness: The Way to Greatness, Power and Liberty***

### **I. THE REVELATION OF GODLY VOLUNTARY WEAKNESS**

- A. Paul received the revelation that “godly weakness” was the way to experience more of God’s power. Jesus promised Paul that he would experience “strength made perfect” if he embraced weakness. Paul was not referring to moral weakness, but weakness coming from godly choices.

*<sup>7</sup> **Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in (voluntary) weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my (voluntary) infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me. (2 Cor. 12:7-9)***

- B. Paul describes two types of godly weaknesses. First, those which are voluntary, including prayer, fasting, living simply, serving and blessing those who offend us (Mt. 6:1-20). Second, those which are involuntary, including his thorn in the flesh, persecution and reproach. When Paul boasts of his weakness (2 Cor. 12:9), he is referring to both the involuntary weakness of persecution and the voluntary weakness of the fasted lifestyle (2 Cor. 11:23-28).
- C. We seek to grow in our revelation and resolve to embrace godly weakness as the way to position ourselves to experience more of God’s power internally (heart) and externally (ministry). This is God’s way for us to confront the unperceived pride in our spirit.

### **II. FIVE EXPRESSIONS OF GODLY VOLUNTARY WEAKNESS (THE FASTED LIFESTYLE)**

- A. God chose godly voluntary weakness as the way to run His Kingdom. Jesus embraced it, thus providing us with our entry into the Kingdom. We embrace it as the lifestyle of the Kingdom.
- <sup>27</sup> **God has chosen the (so-called) foolish things of the world to put to shame the (so-called) wise, and God has chosen the (so-called) weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are (so-called) mighty...29 that no flesh should glory in His presence... 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." (1 Cor. 1:27-31)***
- B. The fasted lifestyle is a call to embrace voluntary weakness to experience more of God’s power. What is the fasted lifestyle? There are 5 types of “fasting” described in Mt. 6:1-20. We fast food, time, energy, money and words by giving, serving, praying (with the Word), blessing those who offend us and fasting food as we develop the 8 beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12). Each is a form of fasting, in that we are voluntarily embracing weakness by submitting our strengths into God’s hands and trusting Him to answer us His way and in His time.
- C. In giving, we fast our money (financial strength). In serving and prayer, we are fasting our time and energy, investing it in others and in prayer. In blessing those who offend us, we fast words and reputation. Fasting from food is not primarily a call to hunger but to physical weakness. We must embrace “the fasted lifestyle” long term. No one graduates from this lifestyle.

### III. WE NATURALLY DESIRE TO “FEEL STRONG” IN OUR DEVOTION AND SERVICE

- A. Pride injures our relationship with God. Therefore, God has ordained voluntary godly weakness in this age as the way to protect the closeness of our relationship Jesus.
- B. We naturally desire to feel strong in two areas. However, we often feel weak in these areas.
- C. *We want to “feel strong” about our devotion and service* – we want to “feel strong” when we give our devotion to God and in the preparation and offering of our service to others. There is a vast difference in “feeling strong” in the process and the operation of our skills and in “feeling confident” that God values them.
- D. *We want to “look strong” in our service to others* – we want to “look strong” when we offer our service to others. There is a vast difference in “looking strong” to the people that we minister to and in “feeling confident” that God was pleased with us.
- E. Many agree to pursue the fasted lifestyle falsely assuming that they would usually feel strong while walking out the five types of fasting. It is common to not feel God’s power while in the act of our devotion, obedience or service.
- F. We often do not feel powerful when we seek or serve the Lord. Our prayers are often “offered in weakness” but they ascend before God in power because of Jesus’ work on the cross. God has strategic time delays and locations in answering our prayers.
- G. We can feel strong in the sense of having faith or confidence (often without feeling) that the fasted lifestyle is God’s way forward. The fasted lifestyle is so weak that anyone can do it, but it is so weak that few choose to.

### IV. PRIDE: BOASTING IN OUR OWN STRENGTH AND ABILITIES

- A. In ages past, Lucifer possessed great beauty and it awakened pride in him instead of gratitude.  
*<sup>12</sup> You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty...<sup>14</sup> You were the anointed cherub...you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. <sup>15</sup> You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. <sup>16</sup> And you sinned; therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. <sup>17</sup> Your heart was lifted up (pride) because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground...” (Ezek. 28:12-17)*
- B. One-third of all the angels of heaven (billions of angels) followed Lucifer in pride and thus, fell.  
*<sup>3</sup> A fiery red dragon (Satan)...<sup>4</sup> his tail drew a third of the stars of heaven (angels) and threw them to the earth...<sup>9</sup> So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan...he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Rev. 12:3-4, 9)*

## V. VOLUNTARY LOVE: THE FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

- A. Love is only love if it is freely offered to God. If there is not the option to say “no” then love does not exist. Love requires real choices that include the freedom to choose against love. God does not want robotic automated worshipers devoid of intimacy.
- B. Adam and the angels who fell were initially innocent but were not “mature in love.” Maturity in love only exists when the option to love is exercised and the option not to love is real. When the option to sin was presented, both Adam and a third of the angels lost their innocence.

## VI. WE WILL NOT SIN IN ETERNITY: THREE FACTORS IN GOD’S PLAN

- A. God is leading history in a way that will prepare us to be exalted far beyond the angels while forever being established in love and humility without violating our free will. He will establish us in voluntary love based on gratitude or boasting in God’s goodness and righteousness.  
*<sup>23</sup> “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; 24 but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness (rewarding our obedience) in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the LORD. (Jer. 9:23-24)*
- B. God has planned a way that the saints will glory (boast, trust) in God instead of themselves forever. We will not sin in heaven because God has established certain conditions that we would forever be voluntary lovers filled with gratitude and meekness. Our love and meekness in eternity is not automated by the resurrection but rather it is voluntary (real responses flowing from gratitude). Awestruck affectionate gratitude is the eternal foundation from which the saints will offer loving obedience to God. This is boasting in God.
- C. **Condition #1:** our resurrected body will be without a sin nature. The absence of a sin nature did not keep Adam or one-third of the angels from sinning. The remaining two-thirds of the angels who did not sin are not now on automatic pilot, but they worship with an understanding of truth.
- D. **Condition #2:** we will live in a new environment in the New Jerusalem. The fruit we eat, the water we drink and the songs we sing will release God’s presence to continually renew us. We will see Jesus face to face. Adam and the angels who sinned also saw God face to face. However, they did not behold Him as a Redeemer but only as a powerful King.
- E. **Condition #3:** We will remember our history of sin and of God’s gracious redemption. We will see the scars in Jesus hands forever. The result of knowing history is that we will be full of gratitude or will boast only in the Lord. Thus, we will live with love based on gratitude.
- F. The one who recognizes they have been forgiven is the one who loves God much.  
*<sup>47</sup> I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. (Lk. 7:47)*

**VII. GOD’S WISDOM: ESTABLISH HIS GOVERNMENT ON VOLUNTARY WEAKNESS (MEEKNESS)**

- A. The message of the cross is a 2-fold message. First, is the message that Jesus died on the cross. Second, that a true believer must embrace the cross as the normal Kingdom lifestyle.  
*<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us...it is (it is the way to experience) the power of God... 21 It pleased God through the (so-called) foolishness of the message preached to save (empower) those who believe... (1 Cor. 1:18-21)*
- B. Jesus on the cross gave us an entry into the Kingdom. We embrace it as the way of the Kingdom.  
*<sup>24</sup> Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mt. 16:24)*
- C. The cross as a lifestyle is a stumbling block and seems foolish to many in the Church today.  
*<sup>23</sup> We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness... 25 Because the (so-called) foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the (so-called) weakness of God is stronger than men... (1 Cor. 1:23-25)*
- D. The humility of God is an amazing truth. Humility is the way of the Kingdom forever. The wisdom of meekness is the way we initially receive our salvation (justification) and the way we walk it out (sanctification).  
*<sup>27</sup> God has chosen the (so-called) foolish things of the world to put to shame the (so-called) wise, and God has chosen the (so-called) weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are (so-called) mighty...29 that no flesh should glory in His presence... 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." (1 Cor. 1:27-31)*
- E. Jesus embraced a life of weakness while on the earth.  
*<sup>3</sup> "He (the Father) said to me (Jesus), 'You are My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' 4 Then I said, 'I have labored in vain (from men's point of view), I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the LORD.'" (Isa. 49:3-4)*
- F. God triumphed over darkness by a human carpenter dying on a cross for others. Jesus triumphed over Satan as a man in this fallen natural world (not as God who stayed in heaven, Phil. 2:6-11).
- G. Jesus triumphed as a human carpenter not as a human king. Jesus triumphed by obeying in embracing weakness not by asserting His power over others. Jesus triumphed by dying on earth not reigning over others (first coming). Jesus triumphed by dying for others.