

# How the Gospel makes me Strong and Weak

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[ 0 : 01 ]     Father, we ask that you would lead us and guide us into all truth, that you would lead us and guide us into all truth about who we really are, about how we really see the world, about how we relate to you and your word and your gospel.

And at the same time, Father, more than that, we ask that you lead us into all truth about what your word says and who you are. Father, we ask all of these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and the one and only Savior.

Amen. Please be seated. When I was doing my equivalent to training to be ordained, I had to do a lot of very, very weird stuff.

And, you know, I think if I was probably to tell this to some of the people that I talked to in coffee shops, they would just sort of listen and think it's curious because I think for a lot of people who aren't Christians, they expect Christians to do really odd stuff.

They might not always be aware of the odd things that they do, but they would just expect that we do weird stuff. One of the things that we were supposed to do, I'm not making this up, was aura massaging.

[ 1 : 15 ]     Now, you've already gathered that I did not go to an evangelical training place, if you know anything about Christian sort of streams of spirituality, but I'm not making this up.

We were supposed to eight to ten inches out of far apart from a person's body to move our hands in certain ways to rearrange their aura so that they would be, I don't know what they were supposed to be, more balanced or whatever.

I also was supposed to be taught that I was to go into deep states of relaxation and seek out animal guides from my unconscious who would help me to sort out, help me to get in touch with God.

I, of course, always knew that that was wrong. And so being a male and being in a darkened room at three o'clock in the afternoon when I was told to go into a deep state of relaxation, I did.

I fell asleep. And I always worried that I snored or something, but nobody ever said, George, you fell asleep during the exercise. But the point is that it's often that, at least from the eyes of the world, that Christians are told to do really weird things.

[ 2 : 31 ]     One of the things that, one of the reasons why Hollywood loves Roman Catholicism is because, I don't know, you know, when there's a big trouble or something like that, there's a terrible disaster, the monster's about to eat, eat the people.

Well, you know, you can see people doing all these crosses like this or saying, Hail Mary, full of grace, something like that. I mean, what would they do about Protestants? We're so boring. I don't know.

What would we do? We'd read the Bible and have an offering or something. I don't know. There wouldn't be much that we would do that is very dramatic. The text that Emily read is a very, very interesting text because it touches on a lot of the fears that people have in our culture about what it means to be a Christian.

Because the Bible text seems to say that we're sort of willingly, to willingly embrace and pursue weakness. And, you know, in our culture, weakness is often just being odd.

It's just being different. It's just, well, you know, it's generally speaking, unless it's sort of a culturally accepted type of kookiness, kookiness makes you weird, makes you weak.

[ 3 : 41 ] And so this text, you know, if people were just to hear it, and it's odd fascination with embrace and weakness and pursuing weakness.

For many people, it sounds like those, you know, legendary Christian practices of wearing really uncomfortable clothing or whipping yourself or just doing something to make you weak and uncomfortable.

Fasting, all those things to make you weak. So is that what's going on in the Bible? It'd be a great help if you were to take your Bibles and open them up to 2 Corinthians chapter 13. We're going to go to 2 Corinthians chapter 13.

Actually, so now go first to 2 Corinthians chapter 12. We'll read the sort of the key bit that's just before the text that Emily read earlier on today. And next week, by the way, we finish, God willing, the book of 2 Corinthians.

So this is our second last go at it. And as I shared with you last week, most Bible scholars, it doesn't matter whether you're a very conservative or a very liberal scholar.

[ 4 : 47 ] Most scholars would agree that this verse I'm about to read in verse 9 is like the basic message of the whole book of 2 Corinthians. Corinthians. And it's this verse 9 of 2 Corinthians 12.

But he said to me, Jesus said to me, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

And the text that Emily read that's very similar to this, that sort of puts this idea of the weakness and strength and all together, that's in verses 3 and 4 of 2 Corinthians 13.

And, you know, just before we read it, is this text telling us as well that, I don't know, like, I mean, is that why these weird, legendary Christians would wear a shirt that's really, really, really, really purposefully uncomfortable?

[ 6 : 01 ] That by being made weaker, then God's going to do something for them? Is this like a type of spell that Christians are being encouraged to use?

That, I don't know, you whip yourself and you beat yourself? You get pain and therefore God's going to somehow give you power? Is that what it's? Well, listen again to 2 Corinthians 13 verses 3 through 4.

Just to catch you up, he's sort of finishing a sentence. Since you seek proof that Christ is speaking in me, but here's the bit, the second part of the third verse, he, that's Christ, is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him by the power of God.

He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him by the power of God.

[ 7 : 11 ] It does sort of seem a little bit, doesn't it, as if it's saying that in all of these texts that somehow our weakness makes us strong.

And you could easily see how people would then think that doing sort of kooky things would somehow give us some type of power. But the real puzzling thing about all of this is this central little bit that was there in those, you know, that three beat of four that I just read.

Did you notice it? For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For he, that's referring to Jesus, was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God.

And that changes everything and everything to do with the text. I mean, it's describing very, very simply that when Jesus died upon the cross, I mean, he obviously appeared to be very, very weak.

He was whipped. He was beaten. He's hanging on the cross. He's between two thieves. He's being abused by those in power and authority.

[ 8 : 28 ] There's nothing he can do. In the entire history of the Roman Empire, of the hundreds of thousands of crucifixions that they did, there's only one recorded case of any person surviving, even being on a cross for a day.

All of recorded history, hundreds of thousands of crucifixions, only one recorded instance. And even then, it was only for a day. And there were doctors present and everything like that that came in and swept in and were able to nurse the man back to health.

So you see him. He's obviously weak. And obviously, Christians as well believe that after Jesus had died, on the third day, he rose from the dead. But the text is trying to remind us of more than that because there's been, those of you who've been here throughout many of the services, you might remember that there's these two powerful verses in 2 Corinthians that come up before this that try to really bring home this idea of what Jesus was doing for us on the cross.

If you just turn back to the one that's the closest to it, if you turn back, it's in 2 Corinthians 8, verse 9. 2 Corinthians 8, verse 9.

And what Paul does there is Paul uses the image of money to try to help us to understand what Jesus was doing for us on the cross. And look what it says in 2 Corinthians 8, 9.

[ 9 : 53 ] And so what is this text telling us?

This text is telling us that when we see Jesus, what we're seeing is we're seeing grace. We're seeing undeserved favor, undeserved love, undeserved kindness, which is also perfectly good and perfectly just.

It doesn't violate justice. It doesn't violate goodness. But it's perfect love, perfect kindness, perfect affection that comes with real power to change lives.

That's what you're seeing when you see Jesus. But then after giving that sort of very big description and very couple of words, right? For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then it says, goes a little bit, but how was that grace shown? Well, that grace was shown because if you think about it, before God, the Son of God, was created in the womb of Mary, who was a virgin, that that same God, the Son of God, well, he was rich.

[ 11 : 14 ] That's a simple way of describing that he was in heaven, that he was in perfect union with the Father and the Holy Spirit, that he was surrounded by angels, that he had all of the glory and all of the splendor and all of the power and all of the majesty and all of the praise of God.

He was rich. Yet what does the text say? That though he was rich, yet for your sake. And here he's speaking to you and me, that if Paul was here beside us right now, if Jesus was here right beside us now, he would say, yes, I was thinking of you.

I knew of you because I'm God. I knew of you and you and you and you and you. And I saw how you were, and the Bible again uses the word, the imagery of money, that you were poorer than poor, that you were mortal, that you would die, that you were separate from me, that you were at enmity from me, that you would be separate and at enmity from me from all eternity.

And I saw that you were poor. And so for your sake, Jesus became poor. Him being on the cross and him dying.

And here the image is just like, you know, there was a time in Louise in my life where we had a real miracle that happened. And we were really burdened with a lot of debt.

[ 12 : 54 ] And it was very, very, very hard. We had bill collectors calling us and everything like that. It was very, very hard. And through a series of things, you know, but ultimately just in prayer, one day we got a check in the mail.

It's one of those stories, you know. And I remember opening up the check, and I thought at first it was, you know, a lot of money. And it was going to go a big step towards helping us.

But then, because we were living in Eganville, and I was walking back from the post office, then after I'd gone about 200 steps, I paused and I thought, there was one more zero.

And I opened up, and there was. And it covered all my debts. Like the overwhelming debts, it covered it. It was one of those real miracles in our lives.

And the text is saying here that this is what Jesus does for us on the cross. That if you think about somehow his riches and him becoming poor, it's all in a sense, I spend, I spend, I cover your debt, I cover your debt, I cover your debt, I cover your debt, I cover your debt, I cover your debt.

[ 14 : 09 ] And more than that, so that you by his poverty might become rich. Because, you know, he rises from the dead. He sits at the right hand of the Father.

And when we put our faith and trust in him and he takes us as his child, he will fit us to spend all eternity in the new heaven and the new earth with his people and with him.

And those riches are ours. And that's what Paul means when he said he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God.

But Paul uses earlier, remember, I said two of the most wonderful verses in the Bible about what Jesus does for us in the cross are in 2 Corinthians. The other one is just a little bit earlier. 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 21.

Why don't you turn to it? 2 Corinthians 5, 21. For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[ 15 : 14 ] Now, this is far more complicated theological language. Once again, notice it was for our sake. God, the Son of God, God the Father, and in other texts, we know that the Holy Spirit, all of the Trinity, is involved in this mighty act to save us.

But God made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Some of you have heard this story before, but the very, very, when I got ordained on a Wednesday night and the fellow who was going to be my boss, the rector, he said, oh, you can take Thursday, Friday, Saturday off.

And I did. Just show up at church on a Sunday morning and I did. I helped at the two services. And in between the two services, he said, I have two funerals tomorrow. One of them is going to be a really big funeral.

It's a great way for you to begin your ministry to come and help me with the funeral services. And so the first funeral that I helped at, and obviously, I had just shown up on Sunday morning, so I didn't know either of the deceased.

And I might have the details just slightly wrong, but they're fundamentally right. The woman who had died taught, I think it was grade five in the public school was right across the street.

[ 16 : 29 ] She died of cancer relatively suddenly. So she taught grade five students at the public school in the neighborhood. She left behind three children, 12, 17, and 19, and they now had no parents because the father had died tragically in an accident about a year or two later.

As you can well imagine, the church was packed. All the grade five students and their parents, you know, and everybody else, it was one of the, probably the teariest funerals I have ever been at in my entire life.

It was the first one I helped at. I didn't know the woman. I could hardly read the Bible passage. That's all I was asked to do because it was just, the emotion was immense. The sorrow was immense in the room and I, I, I, I was just, you know, I was just overwhelmed by it and just like trying to, it was just like on me, you know, probably would be for you too unless you're really hard-hearted.

You know who you are and maybe actually your friends know who you are. That's a separate sermon. That's a separate sermon topic.

Anyway, so I get into the, the, I didn't know this. I'm learning how to do it, right? So I get into the, the rector and I, Peter, Peter and I go out. The funeral director ushers us to a special car and we go in and sit there and the funeral director looking very, very solemn, very, very serious.

[ 18 : 03 ] He, he goes out and is helping the family and all that and then he sits down in the car, starts to pull off. He asks, you know, is the air conditioning all right? We said, yeah, it's good and then he said, what about the Blue Jays?

He meant the baseball team, by the way and, and it sort of really struck me that he has to go to funerals like that all the time and if he let the sadness and the sorrow and the death and all of that, if he let it affect him, it would probably break him and so for most of us, in some ways, that's what we want but what this text is saying here when it says, for our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God that what the Bible is saying here is that God, the Father and God, the Son looks down and sees our great need.

He sees that we are burdened with things that we've done wrong. He sees that we are burdened with a fear of death. He sees that we are burdened with shame. He sees that we are burdened with weakness.

He sees that we are burdened with emotions and memories that we just cannot handle. He sees that we are burdened with so many things and he himself is not burdened with any of those things because he is in heaven but for our sake, he comes down to earth and he is not like the funeral director who just has learned how to have all of the emotion and all of the things that are going around in the face of tragic death and he has learned how to have it be just like water off a duck's back and Jesus is not like that funeral director.

God made him to be sin. Not just grief and shame but everything that weighs us down, everything that keeps us from God, everything that accuses us, everything, everything that what we see when we see Jesus dying on the cross is we see in a sense him saying, George, for all of that that is on you, it comes on me.

[ 20 : 24 ] I am not the funeral director. I am the savior. I will take all of that upon myself.

I, in my weakness of death, is taking all that that makes you weak and it is on me. And so when the text is saying for our sake, not for his own but for you and me, God made him to be sin who knew no sin.

It's describing in the terms of relationship and of evil and of shame and of fear of death, it all being laid upon him and absorbed by him and dealt with him and all of it's done when it says that we might become the righteousness of God, all of it's done is so that we can be made right with God.

That's what the word righteousness here in this particular context, that it's made right. You know, how many of us have, you know, relationships and we wish that we could be reconciled to them, that we could make it right and we just can't make it right?

It's a constant thing that comes up in counseling and conversation. We just can't be reconciled. It just can't happen. We can't make it right. And this, what's described here is that by all of these things being laid on Jesus, there is a way by which his weakness, his death, when we accept what he's done for us by faith, it makes us right with God and doesn't just make us right with God for a tiny moment while we have a type of emotional release, but objectively, truly, in the eyes of God and for all eternity that he's made us right with him.

[ 22 : 18 ] You see, that's what the Bible means. If you go back to 2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 4, for he was, listen to it again now, in light of what I've just said, what Paul has already said, listen to it again, beginning at verse 3b, he is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you, we will live with him by the power of God.

you see, as the gospel grounds us, as this thing that he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God, as this grips us, as it starts to become the ground on which we stand and we can see ourselves and we can see our world, it starts to shape us, as it grips us, it starts to pull us into doing certain things that we would never have done before, it starts to push us, nudge us into doing things that we have never done before, and as it's grounding us and helping us to see the world in maybe a way that we hadn't realized that you could see the world, and that's how you're starting to grow in Christ, is you start to realize that when you look at others, and you look at the church, and you look at God, and you look at yourself, and you look at your family, and you look at sexuality, you look at money, you look at time, meaning, you look at purpose, you look at art, you look at culture, you look at dance, and as you're grounded on that and gripped by that, it starts to, by standing in such a place and being gripped by such a truth and believing that that really actually happened, and being pushed and pulled and shaped, it changes you.

You see, this is Paul's second letter to Corinth, and if you go back to his first letter in Corinth, and you know, this is really hard for us to look at chapter one, this is really hard for us to understand that there was a time in the world where there was no television, no radio, no newspapers, no Twitter, no Facebook, no Instagram, and so it's hard to remember that there was a time when words were few, and so because words were few, they often stuck longer.

So the people in Corinth would have very clearly remembered this part here in 1 Corinthians 1. I'll begin reading verse 18. Once I start going into it, you'll recognize it as a famous passage if you've been a Christian for a while.

[ 25 : 13 ] For the word of the cross is folly, it's foolish to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of the world, the world did not know God through wisdom, how do we know God through He became poor so that we might become rich.

He took upon Himself, He wasn't like that funeral director, He took upon Himself everything that we might be made right with God. See that again in verse 21, for since in the wisdom of God the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach, what I just told you, what Paul just writes in Corinthians to save those who believe, for Jews demand signs, that's a type of miracle, powerful miracle with a sign, and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews, a stumbling block to those who are in love with power, that's what it's really saying, and folly to those who are in love with wisdom, but to those who are called, because you see, even now, right now, if you're in this room, and I don't know if you consider yourself a Christian or not, if you're in this room, hopefully right now, at least in some sense, emotionally, if not intellectually, you understand that Jesus is calling you right now.

That pressure you might feel is him knocking on the door of your heart, and he's calling to you, and he's saying, whatever your name is, I'll just say George, he's saying, George, open the door, and let me come and be your savior.

But to those who are called, both those who love power and those who love wisdom, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, here's the key verse, for the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

[ 27 : 28 ] For the foolishness of God is wiser than men. By that he means all human power, and the weakness of God is stronger than all human power. So let's go back to 2 Corinthians 13.

You know, those of you who come here often, you know, I don't often flip around a bit, but we're coming to the end of the book, and weakness has been a theme all the way through the time of 2 Corinthians, and it's time to sort of try to gather that up a little bit as to what the Bible means.

Look at here again at 2 Corinthians 3, verses 3 and 4, the second part of verse 3, he is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you for he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God for we also are weak in him but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.

And last week we talked a little bit about Paul having a thorn in the flesh. and so part of this teaching of weakness is some of you know the story of Gideon where God is going to deliver the people and he gets Gideon to be the leader and I can't remember what it was but he has tens of thousands of soldiers and God says to Gideon too many soldiers why are there too many soldiers because you're going to end up thinking it was your might that delivered you and I need you to have an army of tens of thousands of people he's left with 300 guys and the thorn of the flesh is that there's going to be times in our Christian life where what God really wants us to do is to step out in faith and then afterwards whether we're aware of it or not but we should be people will have to say only God could do that because George if you looked at you and your church there's no way you guys could do that and that should warm our heart and the other sense of weakness which we've talked about a little bit up until now was just the constant reminder that at the end of the day our

God project is a complete and utter vain and futile thing and that we are called just to remember that we're jars of clay that we're mortal that we're not God and that's the second type of weakness but the third type of weakness is what we need to look at right now it's the type of weakness that's been hinted around but maybe never always been especially clear and I'm going to put it this way if we think about it prayer is weak humility is weak reading the Bible is weak thinking about what the Bible says about money will only make us weak thinking about what the Bible says about sexuality will only make us weak because chastity and faithfulness is weak and having to obey and having to submit and having to trust and having to believe and having to surrender is all weak

[ 30 : 40 ] I want to help you to see that Andrew could you put up the first point it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about money it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about money remember I said we're going to look at what Emily said look just I don't have to go all the way through the 2nd Corinthians just look at how Emily began chapter 12 verse 14 2nd Corinthians 12 14 here for the third time I am ready to come to you and I will not be a burden for I seek not what is yours but you I seek not what is yours but you for children are not obligated to save up for their parents but parents for their children by the way it's not Paul has a bit of a purpose here for your aged parents he's not talking about everything to do about parents and children he's trying to drive home a particular point you have to keep going

I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls if I love you am I to be loved less but granting that I did not burden you I was crafty you say and got the better of you by deceit did I take advantage of you through any of those of whom I sent to you I urged Titus to go and sent a brother with him did Titus take advantage of you did we not act in the same spirit did we not take the same steps and so if you're just a guest here and you haven't heard this text before what Paul is reminding them of he's talked about it earlier is that Paul came and all the time that he was building the church and all of his visits he never took a penny from the congregation not a penny he either trusted God to provide him in a miraculous way from outside of the congregation outside of Corinth or he worked with his hands and rather than him and not only did he do that all of his co-workers did that that they didn't take a single penny they became financially weaker by doing that because the people there would have loved to have given him money but in this particular case his desire was to so show for people who were so confused about money and so used money to analyze situations and so were thinking about money all of the time and how to make a buck and how to put a dollar with every type of thing and

I know Canadians can't identify with a world where everything has a monetary price to it and you're always thinking about money and bills and value and getting a good job and thinking other people are getting paid more than you or worried that other people like I know that doesn't happen in Canada that was a joke by the way if you didn't gather it and and so Paul had this sense that when he was to go here all he was called to do was to spend and spend and spend and spend and spend out of love and for their good it didn't make him at all rich you know you know for us we give a lot of our money as a church away to things that don't benefit us you know most of the money that we spend on some of the staff salaries go to do things like church on Wednesday or the youth group that doesn't benefit us our supportive missionaries doesn't benefit us you know and obviously in some benefits us but really at the end of the day we're investing money in people who might then go on to have a 10 20 30 40 year career blessing other churches and not us and our support for orphans in

Africa or to bring in refugees or to develop royal seminary is not benefiting us it's making us weak the biblical teaching which is so very hard for us to understand is that as we're gripped by the gospel we come to the point in time to realize that if we're going to deal with idolatry of money and if we're going to deal with our preoccupation with money and if we're going to deal with the different ways that money bends us out of shape that as the gospel grabs us as we understand that the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom and that the weakness of God is stronger than human strength and as that grips us as it shapes the way we see the world as it grips the way that we see ourselves then the biblical teaching that we are to give away 10% of our money for the furtherance of the gospel that always makes us weaker doesn't it now I can add that in the eyes of the world it makes us weaker and I earlier told you of a story where God miraculously helped



Louise and me and I could tell you other stories but the biblical teaching doesn't say give money so I'll give you 10 times more money that's not what the Bible says it says you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you through his poverty might become rich and as that grips us and grounds us and shapes us and pulls us and draws us it comes to that point in time where we realize you know what every financial planner in the nation will tell you that if you give 10% of your money away you will not become richer choose weakness anyway what about power Andrew the next point it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about power look at verses 19 21 have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you it is in the sight of

[ 36 : 49 ] God that we have been speaking in Christ all for your up building in other words Paul said you know listen if you think I'm spending all my time in this letter just trying to puff myself up it's not I want you to be stronger I want you to be wiser I want you to be more holy than I am I want you to have greater trust and everything I've been writing is so that you are stronger if at the end of the day when I die you are all vastly better Christians than I am that will not make me depressed or sad that will only make me happy you know you can pray for me and for us as we take on interns no our desire should be that each of the interns that comes our way that God sends us any person that we can mentor that they will be vastly better Christians and vastly better pastors and vastly better speakers that's not how power works is it but look how it even gets better or worse depending on your point of view for

I fear that I perhaps when I come may find you not as I wish that you might find me not as you wish that perhaps there may be quarreling jealousy anger hostility slander gossip conceit and disorder I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you and I may have to mourn over many of those who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity sexual immorality and sensuality that they have practiced so here's the thing there's all this disorder going on in the church there's a type of evil order that's starting to take over the church and Paul is writing the letter partially because the type of evil order that is bending the church out of shape and is hurting people and beating people up he's going to come and have to deal with it and how do you deal with unrepentant people because that's what they're going to do the unrepentant people he's worried that when he comes what's going to quarrel they're going to yell at him they're going to express their jealousy they're going to be angry they're going to be hostile they're going to slander him they're going to gossip they're going to build up the word hostility there can also be translated as creating factions against people and conceit and disorder and

I'm not just saying that that's the world but often the way you deal with power is you bring your game face you don't back down they give you one you give them two you do that you do that you're going to go how to be strong how to be assertive how to be aggressive how to not have doubts how to be confident keep your chin up for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich Paul talks about that God is going to humble him and that part of his response to the order which is an evil order which is hurting people in the church yet so many people in the church love this order that hurts them is that his primary response is to mourn for them to be humbled to be clear and to pray but to show rather than that he has a harder heart than them to come against them with power that what's going on breaks his heart very briefly next one

Andrew it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about sexuality and sex this is a real problem this might be other than money this is probably the bigger problem for most of us listen again to verse 21 part of the problem he's having to deal with is I may have to mourn over many of those who have sinned who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity sexual immorality and sensuality that they have practiced impurity here means basically sexualizing relationships I know it's hard for us to imagine because you know advertising isn't sexualized and we don't want to sexualize children in schools but it's sexualizing everything that's in a sense what impurity means and sensuality could also just mean what it really means is times when you just let go let everything go doesn't mean you let go all of the time but it means that you just say you know there's really just some times in your life you want to sexually just let go you know a guy a girl guys and girls just just sexually let go and sexual immorality here the

Greek word is pornea and it means anything outside any sexual knowing or sexual expression outside faithfulness in heterosexual marriage anything out of faithfulness any type of sexualization outside of the intimate relationship of heterosexual marriage is viewed as a sin now why is it that I say that in the eyes of the world it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about sexuality and sin well try saying what I've just said on a university campus I know there's probably people here who struggle with sexual identity and to say to your friends who are identifying themselves as transsexual that this text is what base your life on would be seen as unbelievably weak for those of you who are same sex attracted and to say to your friends that because of what

[ 42 : 57 ] Jesus did for you on the cross you're going to trust that this verse is wisdom you would be seen as unbelievably weak and in profound denial and I'll just use the example of young women how many of you young women face pressure when and how much of the advice and how much of the pressure in you says this seems like a nice guy and not a jerk and if I don't sleep with him he won't stay with me and if you say to your friends that because of the gospel when I hear this biblical teaching about faithfulness and heterosexual marriage or sexual absence and singleness it means I'm going to trust God that not sleeping with this guy will end up for my good your friends will think you're a fool how many of us get pressure to say what you're going to get married without living with each other first like are you stupid like are you idiots like who nowadays gets married without living with each other don't you think that virtually every advice columnist in the world would say that after you've been gripped by the gospel that to trust this text would be seen as weak and foolish do you see why we have problems and troubles listen again to verse three and four he is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you he saves you he's fitting you for heaven he's doing things only for your good for he was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of

God the cross he died on the cross but the grave is empty the body is gone he defeated death he defeated sin he defeated all hostile spiritual powers in his resurrection he shares that with you when you put your faith and trust in him like this bible text isn't telling you that to feel really guilty because you know maybe you've slept with your boyfriend maybe you've done it with many boyfriends maybe you've lived with different people and this text isn't just saying these things because it wants to make you feel guilty it's so that you know how much your savior loves you and how he will not turn you away and how that when you come and you've received what he has done on the cross because though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich and as you're gripped with understanding that that is his heart and that is his power and that is what he has done for you and that he really exists and then you start stronger than the power of human beings this biblical teaching in the context of the gospel is an invitation to be healed to be received and made right with

God and to begin to be restored to sanity very briefly the last ones I've gone a little bit long Andrew if you could put it up it is weak to trust and obey what the Bible says about the gospel just bear with me I've used this analogy before I mean what is the gospel how do we receive the gospel by faith it is an act of surrender if you view your life as like a medieval castle and you are a mighty warrior and you come before God and you have all these scars and wounds you have the scars and wounds of people who hurt you the scars and wounds of your death the scars and wounds that you have done to hurt other people but you have your armor and you have your castle and you have your moat and you have your strength and everybody is around you just trying to tell you better ways to fix your armor better ways to sharpen your sword better ways to fight with the sword and what does the gospel tell you the gospel says that on the other side of your moat sitting on a donkey is a man with wounds in his hands and wounds in his feet and scar in his side who died for you who became poor for you that you might become rich and how do you become rich you get out of your tower and you let down the draw bridge and then you take off you drop your sword and you drop your shield and you take off your armor and you get down on your knee and you surrender to the wounded guy and the donkey you surrender to the wounded guy and the donkey and we're fit for heaven and we begin to know the power of

God because the wisdom of God is wiser than human wisdom and the foolish the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than human power Andrew could you put up the two prayers here's the first one just this isn't any type of I don't have time to go into it but dear Lord please help me to recognize and then eliminate all of my attempts to either manipulate you or to put you in my debt amen you can't sort of embrace weakness hoping that if you can trick God into making you powerful and the final one Andrew could could you stand stand I mean this is the challenge of the text to have you want to pray this from your heart if you haven't given your life to Jesus this can be your conversion prayer the day that you the means by which you lay down your sword and you lay down your shield and you take off your armor and you get on your knee and you let the wounded guy and the donkey cross into your castle to be your lord and your savior and as you call out to him this can be your prayer to call out to him to begin the

Christian life for all whom the Lord leads would you pray with me dear Lord please make me a disciple of Jesus gripped by the gospel who chooses the weakness of knowing trusting believing and obeying all of your word will live for you and I don't have the right words down those are the right words let's just pray father thank you that you sent Jesus to be our savior thank you that though he was rich he became poor so that you the people like jars of clay rebels like like me through his poverty might become rich father make us help us to be so gripped by the gospel that it grounds us and shapes us and pushes us and pulls us to know and trust and obey and believe even though it seems weak in the eyes of the world just to believe and trust knowing that as we do that we are fit for heaven that we in fact become strong as we are saved by you all these things we ask in the name of

[ 50 : 41 ] Jesus your son and our savior amen