

THE UPSIDE OF WEAKNESS

October 4, 2020 2 Corinthians 11:16-33 by Bob Branch
Real Faith in Raw Times, part 19

Have you ever had to write a resume?

BIG IDEA: There is strength in weakness when we let it direct us into deeper trust in God.

¹⁶ I'll say it again: don't let anyone think I'm a fool! But if they do—well, all right then, welcome me as a fool, so that I can do a little bit of boasting! ¹⁷ What I'm going to say now, I'm not saying as if it came from the Lord, but as if I was a fool, as if I really did want to indulge myself in this kind of boasting. ¹⁸ Plenty of people are boasting in human terms, after all, so why shouldn't I boast as well? ¹⁹ After all, you put up with fools readily enough, since you are so wise yourselves. ²⁰ You put up with it if someone makes you their slave, or if they eat up your property, or overpower you, or give themselves airs, or slap you in the face. ²¹ Well, I'm ashamed to say it: we weren't strong enough for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about (I'm talking nonsense, remember), I'll boast as well. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of the Messiah?—I'm talking like a raving madman—I'm a better one. I've worked harder, been in prison more often, been beaten more times than I can count, and I've often been close to death. ²⁴ Five times I've had the Jewish beating, forty lashes less one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; I was adrift in the sea for a night and a day. ²⁶ I've been constantly travelling, facing dangers from rivers, dangers from brigands, dangers from my own people, dangers from foreigners, dangers in the town, dangers in the countryside, dangers at sea, dangers from false believers. ²⁷ I've toiled and laboured, I've burnt the candle at both ends, I've been hungry and thirsty, I've often gone without food altogether, I've been cold and naked.

²⁸ Quite apart from all that, I have this daily pressure on me, my care for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak and I'm not weak? Who is offended without me burning with shame?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of my weaknesses. ³¹ The God and father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed for ever, knows that I'm not lying: ³² in Damascus, King Aretas, the local ruler, was guarding the city of Damascus so that he could capture me, ³³ but I was let down in a basket through a window and over the wall, and I escaped his clutches. NTE

1. _____ **from the clash of kingdoms/values.** (*thlipsis*)

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” **2 Timothy 3:12**

“If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” **John 15:19**

2. _____ **& Authenticity.** *boast of my weaknesses.*

“I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.” **Acts 9:16** CSB

“I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.” **1 Corinthians 2:3**

Weak is not wimpy.

EXERCISE: List your weaknesses, inadequacies out loud to God. Place them in his hands. Take the situations you have little/no control over and turn them over to him.

3. _____ **on God...** *We must find that God is enough; Where you come to the end of yourself, and he is there!* (2 Cor. 12:9; Ps. 73:26; 23:4; Is. 40:29)