

Did Jesus teach, 'I am strong, 'I am prosperous' and 'I am beautiful'?



I listened to a preacher saying, 'Repeat after me: I am strong, I am prosperous, I am beautiful, and if people say things that criticize you or your ministry then **hit the delete button.**' I think I understand what he is trying to say 'don't listen to the negative and toxic words; be strong, be positive and delete. I hope that he is trying to tell us, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' (Phil. 4:13) However, he is leaving Christ out of the picture, and that is no good. Paul says, 'my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom. For I determined not to know anything, save Jesus, and him crucified.' (1Cor.2:4,2)

Repeat after me: 'I am strong'

The classic sample is Peter thinking, 'I am strong', and telling Jesus, 'Though all men shall be offended because of you, I will never be offended.' (Mt.26:33) It is statements like this that will take us down. The stronger we think we are and the more we elevate ourselves, the harder we fall. And ouch, a few hours later he denied Jesus three times. Now that hurt badly and he went out and wept bitterly. (Mt.26:75) But he held on and he came through with flying colours.

Why was he crying; a full-grown man? He should not have cried, but should have said, 'I am strong,' Okay I denied him, but I'll just hit the delete button and go on.' If he'd have done that, he would have been useless for the Lord's work. Saying with his mouth, 'I am strong, while inside he would have been an emotional wreck, with disastrous mental health issues.



Most likely he would have followed Judas and hung himself, as this saying 'I am strong' is the opposite of saying, 'I'm so sorry, can you please forgive me?' By being strong he would have been unable to repent and lay his excruciating weight of guilt at Jesus' feet.

Goliath yelled, 'I am strong, fight me' - Teen David replied, 'I come to you in the name of my God.' And so the Lord worked with David to fell Goliath. (1Sam.17) Are we like David, counting on the Lord to protect us, or do we say 'be strong' and save yourself? The only way to defeat Goliath of today, is by staying close to Jesus to defeat the negative powers and lies, filth, porn and demons coming at us through the media.

Look at Job an intelligent and generous man. The Lord allowed Satan to put him to the test; 'Take everything away from him, but not his life.' Job lost everything. He had nothing left except a body full of boils, which he scraped with a piece of ceramic. He was tough, he told his counsellors to be quiet and it would be their wisdom. He was still thinking, 'I am strong', but it was not until he confessed, 'I am



vile'; closed his mouth and stopped being full of himself, before the Lord could speak to him. (Job 40:40) when he received what the Lord said then he confessed, 'I **abhor myself and repent** in dust and ashes.' It was not by saying, 'I am strong', but 'I'm sick of myself; I repent in dust and ashes.' (Job 42:6)

That confession was the pivotal turning point before the Lord could give him double of what he had before.

Repeat after me: 'I am prosperous'

Jesus explained that riches are deceitful, rendering us unfruitful. (Mt.13:22) While Paul said, 'The love of money is the root of **all evil.**' (1Tim.6:10) Mother Mary, as a young virgin said, '**the rich he has sent empty away.**' (Luke 1:53)

Prosperity was not exactly the in-thing with Jesus and his disciples, except for Judas and his rational thinking.



Jesus said to a serious young man: 'Sell all that you have. Give it to the poor; take up your cross and follow me.' - He could not do this as he was very

prosperous, which prevented him from forsaking all to be a disciple and follow Jesus. (Luke 14:33)

Hence, people that preach prosperity are inoculating potential disciples against the Lord's challenge to forsake all; to take up the cross and follow him.'

Are we still followers of Jesus, who was despised and rejected, he was more or less a vagrant, without a home or a nest, let alone a prosperous nest-egg. He even told us, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' (Mat.6:24; Luke 16:13) (Mammon in Hebrew (מַמּוֹן) literally means 'money'. We have associated it with the pursuit of prosperity.)



The Worship of Mammon
Part of Painting: Evelyn De Morgan

'Be warned, lest any man rots you with philosophy, and useless shams after the tradition of men, after the values of the world, and not after Christ.' (Col:2:8)

No, No, No, we prefer a popular message that soothes our nerves. We say, 'Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits:' (Isa 30:10) 'With their mouth they show much love, but **their heart follows their greed.** **You are for them a very lovely song:** for they hear your words, but don't do them.' (Eze.33:31,32)

Repeat after me 'I am beautiful'



It says that, 'when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him'. (Isa.53:2) Didn't he say, 'The servant is not greater than his lord.' (John 15:20) We may even think, 'Maybe the Lord had no beauty, but I am beautiful.'

Do you know who is beautiful? Listen to this from Jonas, an ex-satanist: 'I was given the rank of secretary of Lucifer. I went to the world of Tartarus where I met Lucifer. When I saw him, **I did not believe that that was the devil. He is really beautiful.**' - 'You were perfect in your ways - till - your heart was lifted up because of your beauty - and brightness.' (Eze.28:13-19)

'All our self-goodness is as filthy rags.' (Isaiah 64:6:)
'There's a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.' (Pro.30:12)

'If people say things that criticize you or your ministry then hit the delete button'

However, I'm not a computer, because to me words are real things. If people criticize me, then I prefer to take it to the Lord and ask him about it, to see if I should apologize or rectify any misunderstanding.

If we go through a disaster and we bury our child, or go through a divorce, we are devastated and then me saying 'I'll hit the delete button' is a joke, as I am lying to myself, pretending to be something that I am not; a person with human feelings and emotions. Life would be so much easier if I was an automaton with no emotions.

There is the account of Jesus 'teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day, and there was this woman which could in no wise lift herself up, for the last 18 years. When Jesus called her, he said, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.' He laid his hands on her: and she was made straight, and glorified God.'

The man in charge was outraged, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and he said to the people,

'There are six days when we ought to work: so come then and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.'

Did the Lord just hit the delete button and ignore him? Definitely not. Jesus told him, "You hypocrite, doesn't everyone lose his ox or his ass from the stall to lead it away for watering, on the Sabbath day? And should not this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham, which Satan has bound these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"

And his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for the things that he had done.' (Lk.13:10-17)
The Lord had plenty of criticism, but he had no delete button. He gave people something to take home and think about in parable after parable.

Is that what Jesus said to the people, be strong be beautiful, while they were lame and blind and were paralyzed, some with severe mental health issues?



No, he talked with them or their parents, "How long does he have this?" - 'Since a child'. "What would you like me to do for you?" - 'Lord, that I may see.' - "Do you believe that I can heal you?" - 'Yes Lord.' - "Then, according to your faith be it done unto you." - **"This is the work of God that they believe in me."** (Jn.6:29)

The word believe is used 85 times in the Gospel of John. Jesus said, "Do you believe that I can do this. Then according to your faith be it unto you." - Our faith in Jesus is what will perform the miracle, not faith in ourselves; not saying 'I am strong, prosperous and beautiful', because that won't get us anywhere.

Ezekiel says. 'The Lord will strengthen the sick: but will destroy the strong.' (Eze.34:16)

The first verse in the beatitudes is 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The original Greek word is **ptōchos** - meaning 'beggar', 'pauper' or 'destitute'. It signifies absolute poverty, reduced to begging, no wealth, influence or status.



Poor in spirit means being totally dependent on God's help, mercy protection, love and supply. These are the ones that Jesus gave priority to, and are the first ones he acknowledged (Mat.5:3) before the meek, peacemakers, pure in heart and the persecuted, etc.

Paul said, 'in me dwells no good thing... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' (Romans 7:18,24) 'Jesus said unto me, "My grace is sufficient for you: for **my strength is made perfect in your weakness.**" 'Therefore, I take pleasure in the difficulties that I face for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.' (2Cor.12:10,9)

First it was **ME**, then it was **ME** and Jesus, Then it became **JESUS** and me, now it is **only JESUS.**

'A Christian who stops repenting, stops growing' - 'God only uses broken men and women, no others will do.' - Many will testify, 'When I reached the end of my rope, there Jesus met me.'

It was not the strong, the prosperous, and beautiful pastors and preachers, but the shepherds that came. If you know any eastern culture, then you realize that shepherds live and sleep with their animals, with little opportunity for bathing and laundry - a pretty smelly lot. Not exactly the kind of people that you want around your new-born. Yet, the Father sent his top brass, his top angels, to invite them as the first and honoured guests to the celebration of his Son's birth, even before the wise men. **A stark lesson** to treat every "last and lowest" person with the highest respect.

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