

The Dilemma of Strength and Weakness for a Believer.



When studying the four gospels it becomes clear that Jesus conflicts with our trained thinking, our education and what we consider our strengths and weaknesses. Yet, there are quite a few preachers telling us just that, be strong and believe you can do it. It is a good bait, but is that what the gospels teach?

Paul says, 'My speech and my preaching was not with appealing words of man's wisdom. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' (1Cor.2:4,2)

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

If he would have held on to being strong, he'd 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'd have followed Judas and [hung himself](#), as this thinking of, "**I should be 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 thought that he was 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 think that we are strong and can handle it ourselves? The only way to defeat today's giants and Goliaths; the negative, anxious, depressive powers, the lies, the filth, the porn and the demons of hate coming at us through the media, is by staying very close to Jesus to protect us.

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 and told his counsellors to be quiet and it would be their wisdom. He was still thinking that he was tough and 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 telling himself, 'I know how to handle it', but by confessing '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.

Then we have the issue of abundant living, thinking that we as believers should be well established, well thought of and financially blessed as this shows our good relationship with the Lord. Such Rubbish, as Jesus explained that [riches](#) are deceitful and can very well render us unfruitful. (Mt.13:22) 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)

Abundance 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 had quite

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

Hence, people that preach abundant living are inoculating potential disciples against the Lord's challenge to forsake all; to deny themselves and to take up their cross and follow him.' (Luke 9:23)

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 [nest-egg](#). He even told us, 'You cannot serve God and mammon.' (Mat.6:24; Luke 16:13) Mammon in Hebrew - ממון - literally means money. We have associated it with the pursuit of prosperity.)



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 greed. You are for them a very lovely song:** for they hear your words, but don't do them.' (Eze.33:31,32)



It says that, 'when we shall see him, there is no beauty, that we should desire him'. (Isa.53:2) However we stand hours in front of the mirror to be beautiful. We may even think, 'Maybe the Lord had no beauty, but I am beautiful.'

The funny thing is we don't realize that we are a product of our parents and the One who gave us life.

Do you know who is very 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.' (Ez.28:13-19)

Then there is the idea that, 'If thing happen or people criticize you or your ministry then 'just erase it.'

However, for 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 'just erase it' 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 that could just erase things.

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 say, 'I'll just erase it', 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 never said 'just erase it'. He gave people something to take home and think about in parable after parable.

Is that what Jesus said to the people, be strong and beautiful, have abundance, while they were lame, blind and 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, because that did not get us anywhere. Ezekiel says. 'The Lord will strengthen the sick: but will destroy the strong.' (Eze.34:16)

'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)

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 handsome preaching pastors, and TV evangelists, but the shepherds that came. If you know eastern culture, then you realize that shepherds live and sleep with their sheep, with little opportunity for bathing and laundry - a pretty smelly, uneducated 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 and greatest dignity.

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