

Weekly Reflection – Reminder of the power

Sometimes we need to be reminded of things that we already know. I can find myself living in less than what is actually available to me in Christ. I can live as less than who I really am in Christ. I think that as believers we can forget who we are in Christ and the power that is available to us through Christ. The remedy for forgetting is reminding; so here are a few reminders of the power that is ours in Jesus Christ.

The Power of the Cross.

If you are saved you have experienced the power of the cross to get saved. Jesus took our place, our sin, and our punishment; and we have received His righteousness. We have been justified, made right by the power of the cross. I wonder if at times we stop there, if we limit the power of the cross to our getting saved. At times I need to be reminded that the power of the cross is not only for my getting saved but also for my being saved.

“For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 ESV

Notice that in 1 Corinthians it doesn't say that the cross is the power for those who need to get saved. It is the power to get saved but that's not what Paul is talking about here. He says it's the power of God for those who are being saved. Sanctification. The cross is not only the power to get saved but it is the power for our being saved. It's by the power of the cross that we live day by day in victory, victory over sin, victory over the enemy, victory over the world, victory over our flesh. Too often I can forget this and find myself resorting back to living in my own strength and not living in the full power of the cross. I need to be reminded that the cross continues to provide everything I need for everything I am called to do and be. ***“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32 ESV)*** God will not give the most valuable thing, His Son, to get us saved and than not give us everything we will need to complete our salvation. And don't miss that He will graciously give us all things. It doesn't say that once you get saved you can earn everything you will need to complete your salvation. It's all grace.

The Power of Grace.

Grace is another area we are prone to limit God's power in our lives. We understand that ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,” (Ephesians 2:8 ESV)*** But do we limit grace to the free gift of getting saved? Do we limit grace to something that has happened to us in the past? If we do, we are not going to live in the full power of grace in our lives.

“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.” 2 Corinthians 9:8 ESV

I like the way that sounds, “God is able(willing) to make all (not just a little) grace abound to me.” Grace that will equip us and make us fully sufficient to do all things at all times. Grace that will enable me to do and be everything God has for me to do and be. This grace is the power of God towards us, the power of God for us. And this grace is available because of the cross. ***“But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10 ESV)*** Paul is saying, yes, I work hard but that is actually the grace of God abounding in me and through me.

***"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace (That's the kind of throne we're coming to.) that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* Hebrews 4:16 ESV**

This is clearly teaching that there is always more grace available to us to help us in our times of need. The truth is that you and I are always needy, always in need of help. And the greater truth is that because of the cross of Jesus Christ there is always grace to help us in our weakness. The question is not, "Is there grace and help available?" The question is, "Will you and I go to the throne of grace to receive the grace that is available?"

The Power of Prayer.

Do we access the throne of grace to get the help we need? That has a lot to do with prayer. The way we approach the throne of grace is by prayer. We humble ourselves before God and ask, seek, and receive the help that we need.

Here is a picture of the power of prayer from Isaiah 37-38. The king of Assyria surrounded Jerusalem and sent King Hezekiah a letter reminding him of all the lands Assyria had conquered. This is a portion of that letter: "...***'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, devoting them to destruction. And shall you be delivered?'*** (Isaiah 37:9-11 ESV) What is the first thing Hezekiah does? "***Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord:***" (Isaiah 37:14-15 ESV) What was Hezekiah's response? He prayed. He went to the temple and spread the letter out before the Lord, as if to say, "Look at this." Then he asked the Lord to deliver them to show the world that He was the true God. And God did. But before God delivered them, God responded to Hezekiah's prayer by sending the prophet Isaiah with a message that began, "***Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, this is the word that the Lord has spoken concerning him: ...*** (Isaiah 37:21-22 ESV) God's deliverance was a response to Hezekiah's prayer: "Because you have prayed to me." Let that sink in! These words infer that the deliverance that followed was God's response to Hezekiah's prayer. In other words, if Hezekiah hadn't prayed, they might not have been delivered. Are you living in the power of prayer? Jesus said in Matthew 7, "Ask and it will be given to you." This also implies that if you don't ask you won't receive. That as believers we have the capability to not live in and by what is actually available to us in Jesus.

Let us live in the power that is available to us in Jesus!