

The Corn of Wheat



Strength Through Weakness (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. Our theme for this week is, "Strength Through Weakness." In my previous talks I've pointed out the two different kinds of strength: the strength which the world understands and acknowledges, and the strength which comes only from God and only through the cross of Jesus Christ. This second kind of strength is spiritual. In the eyes of the world it's weakness. And yet, it is this second kind of strength that is ultimately destined to triumph and to prevail throughout the entire universe.

The strength that the world recognizes is that of the wild beast: the lion, the tiger, the leopard. The only law it knows is the law of the jungle. But the strength that comes form God is represented by a Lamb looking as if it had been slain. This typifies two things that in the eyes of the world are the exact apposite of strength, it typifies meekness and weakness.

Today I want to answer the question: How can this second kind of strength be released in your life, the strength that comes only from God, the strength that is represented by a slain Lamb?

If I were to sum up my answer in one word, the word would be: yielding. To explain what I mean, I am going to turn to two passages in the gospels that record discourses of Jesus. The first passage is in Luke 9:23–24:

> "Then he said to them all, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my will save it.'" (NIV)

There's an absolutely universal statement, there are no exceptions. If anyone would follow Jesus, he must—there are no alternatives—he must do three things: he must deny himself, he must take up his cross daily, and then he must follow Jesus. The third step is following Jesus. But we cannot take the third step until we've taken the first two; until we have learned to deny ourselves and to take up our cross daily.

What does it mean to deny ourselves? It's not complicated. You don't have to be a theologian to know the answer to that. We all know the meaning of the word "deny." To deny means

to say "no." And that's what we have to do. We have to deny ourselves. We have to say "no" to ourselves.

Inside every one of us there's an ego—a soul—that wants to assert itself. It's full of its own wishes, its problems, its desires, its dissatisfactions. Its talking always to us like this: "I want, I think, I feel, I'm important, consult me, cater to me, I'm your life." And as long as we listen to that ego that's in each one of us, that's a rebel by birth, that is not in line with the will and purposes of God and never can be, as long as we go on listening to that ego, we cannot follow Jesus. The first step is to learn to say "no" to that ego. The ego says, "I want." We answer, "What you want isn't important." The ego says, "I think." We answer, "What you think isn't what matters. It's what God says." The ego says, "I feel." And we answer, "What you feel isn't important. It's what I believe that matters." There's an answer to the ego and we have to give it.

After that, after we've said no to the ego, to the selfish soul in each one of us; we have to take up our cross daily. What is your cross? Let me say two things about your cross. I heard this from a brother preacher, it's always stuck with me. First of all, your cross is the place where God's will and your will cross. Jesus came to that place in the Garden of Gethsemane. He never took up the physical cross until He'd come to that place. Remember what He said to God? "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, what You will." And He said it three times. He said it until there was nothing else in His mind but to do the will of God at the expense of His own will. Taking up your cross is doing just the same as Jesus. It's saying, "God, not what I will, but You will.

Secondly, the cross is the place appointed for you to die. Jesus knew that He was going to die on the cross. No one imposed that cross upon Him. He said, "I lay my life down of My own choice. I take it up again." No one can impose your cross on you. Your cross is something voluntary. I've heard Christians say some rather ridiculous things at times about their cross. I've heard a man say that his cross is his wife. Well, if you're free to take your wife up or lay her down, then maybe she could be your cross. I've heard Christians say that their cross is sickness. Well, if you're free to take your sickness up or lay it down, then maybe it is your cross. But you see, those are things that we are not normally free to do.

Our cross is voluntary. It only comes through a decision of our own will. Our cross is the place where we die. It's very clear the order: it's just like the order in the life of Jesus. At Gethsemane He said, "Not My will but Thine." He denied Himself. And then at Calvary, on the cross, He laid down His life. And Jesus says, "That's a pattern that all My followers have to take. They have to deny themselves. They have to follow me. They have to be willing to die on the place that God's appointed for them to come to the end of their own life."

You see, there's a life to find and a life to lose. As long as you hold on to the life that's so precious and exciting, that you're so concerned and eager about, that soul life, that self-assertive life, you cannot find the life that God has for you. But if you lose that first life, if you lay it down, then there's another life, a secret life, a hidden life, that God will open up for you. A life in His will, a life that's beyond the cross.

The second passage that I want to look at from the discourses of Jesus in the gospels is found in John 12:24–25. It says very much the same, but the figure that's used is just a little different. This is what Jesus says:

> "I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (NIV)

You see the same principle again? There's a life to lose, a life to give up. And then after losing that life, there's another kind of life to find. And Jesus uses the picture of a little grain or a kernel of wheat. And He says that as long as that grain remains on its own, remains in the hand of the father or in His seed basket or wherever it's kept or held or stored, it can't produce any kind of life or fruit. That little grain or kernel has a hard husk around it and that hard husk shuts in the potential life that's in it. And so Jesus says that grain has to be dropped out of the hand of the one that holds it. It has to fall to the earth. It has to go below the surface of the earth. And there where it's out of sight, in the darkness and in the dampness of the earth, a change takes place. That hard outer husk rots away. And when it's rotted away and the moisture can reach the seed that's in the heart, then a miracle takes place. Out of that grain that apparently disappeared and died, there comes forth a totally new kind of life. And the green shoot of the new life forces it's way up through the earth and comes out into the sunlight and we see the manifestation of a miracle. And Jesus says this is a picture of what it means to lose your own life and find the life that God has for you. To come to the end of your own ability, your own strength, your own wisdom—to let it all go, to drop it—and then out of it when it's died, when the outer husk has rotted away, there will come a new life. And this is the challenge that He offers us. It's a challenge for you, it's a challenge for me. Jesus is saying, "You've got your life. It's in your own hands. It's like that little kernel. You can hold onto it

as long as you like. But as long as you hold onto it, as long as you say ‘It’s mine,’ it remains alone, unproductive.”

There’s so many lonely people in the world. Do you know why they’re lonely? Because they are holding onto their own life. They’re shut up in that little husk of self. And yet they won’t let go. Jesus says if you’ll let go, if you’ll drop it, if you’ll let it go down into the ground, if you’ll lose control over it, if you’ll let it die, if you’ll let it go out of sight, if you’ll let it—in a sense—suffer, out of that process of death and suffering the old husk will be broken down and a new life will emerge.

That’s His offer to you. May I counsel you today. Take that life of yours that’s in your hand, release it and let it go. Surrender it to God, let it die. It seems mad, it seems crazy, but out of it will come a totally new life.

Well, our time is up for today. I’ll be with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I’ll be speaking about some men who learned to yield.

Radio Program

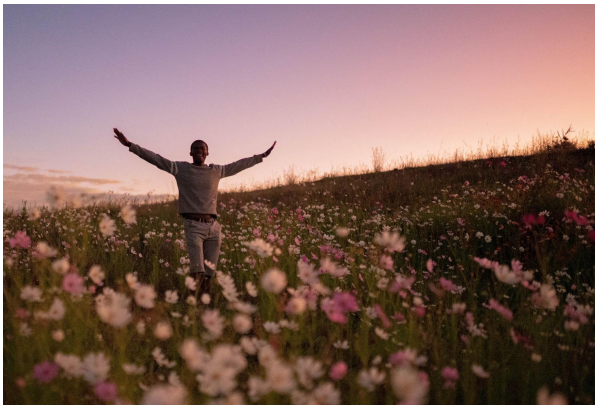
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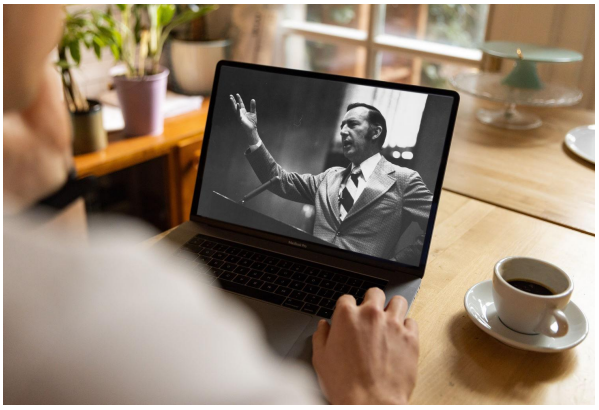
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