

so the weaker I get, the stronger I become.” (2 Cor. 12:10)

In the hurly burly of life Paul isn't tempted to take over, to work harder so that he achieves more, so that he's in control. No Paul goes back to the gift; unwraps it, uses it, lives in it, lives this wonderful relationship he has in Jesus talking with him, seeing how he does things, and then the whole context of his life changes.

Paul's life now, in every aspect, becomes an opportunity to let this amazing love of God in Jesus find living expression in all he does. Paul isn't shaped by what happens to him, rather in Jesus; Paul is now empowered to shape the world around him. Paul is empowered by Jesus to live loved, to live true to who he is; Father's

loved child, with whom he is well pleased.

Paul is free from being bulldozed or being a bulldozer. He's not trapped in that misconception of reality. Paul now sees his life in the context of Jesus; his death and resurrection, the Spirit's presence, the wonderful expectation of Jesus return. The more Paul unwraps that precious gift of Jesus, the stronger the life of Jesus becomes in him.

Today Jesus is inviting you to sit with him and unwrap his gift, that the context of your life is his grace. Where might you have lost this context over the last week? In what relationship might you have lost this context; only treating people like they treat you, according to what you figure they deserve?

Today Jesus is inviting you to unwrap his gift and live your life in the wonderful context of his grace. Letting every situation be transformed into an opportunity to live loved, to grow in Jesus, knowing him more and more intimately. And wonderfully as you live this way instead of the hurly burly of life sapping the life right out of you, you'll be breathing Jesus life into all you do.

Let's pray.

Jesus, I invite you to show me where I've started seeing life not out of the context of your grace. I invite you to send the Spirit that I might change and live life daily in the context of your gift; your loving presence. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

8 July 2018

WHEN I AM WEAK THEM I AM STRONG

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

When I first read this letter of Paul to the community of believers in Corinth I was left wondering what this phrase really meant; "For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10)

When you heard that phrase what came to your mind? I was struggling to see how it could be lived out in my daily life. It had a nice religious feel to it; but what did it mean in the hurly burly of life?

Does this mean I just let people walk all over me? Is that what it means to be weak? I've noticed the bullies in this world will happily bulldoze over you as they take what they want, or think is right. Am I meant to allow this to happen to me?

I don't know about you but I'm over being ignored and walked all

over. I'm over not having an opinion, of keeping it to myself. I've noticed that I just get bulldozed and the pushy take over. I don't think Jesus is calling me to say nothing and let the loud and pushy get their way.

What does it mean in the hurly burly of life; that when I am weak then I am strong?

So I went back and re-read what Paul wrote; but this time I took more notice of the context. In other words I read what came before these words rather than trying to understand them outside of their context; on their own.

Have you ever taken a person's words out of context, only focusing on part of what they say? I've discovered that's a good way to misunderstand a

person and get things totally wrong.

I still remember my Mother feeling frustrated with my Grandmother who wouldn't use her hearing aids, which meant she only got part of the story. And for some unknown reason she only heard the negative parts, which meant she'd got things horribly mixed up.

So I read Paul's letter again. Paul mentions he had asked Jesus three times to remove what he called 'a thorn in the flesh'. And these are the words he heard from Jesus. 'My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness.'

Then I had an 'Ah Ha' moment. Jesus is reminding me to not bulldoze over what he has planned. How easy

it is for me to bulldoze straight over Jesus' grace as I seek to do what I think needs to be done, as I do what I think is right.

I reckon that was Paul's character; a real go getter. He would have gone 110% at things, working hard, seeking to be the best at what he did. I reckon Paul might have been in danger of thinking the harder he worked the better Jesus' kingdom would grow.

I reckon Paul was in danger of not living life in the context of Jesus' personal presence. Paul could have been tempted to rely on what he could achieve. Focusing on his effort. Work harder, achieve more. Paul it depends on you, work harder, achieve more.

Where have you been told to work harder to achieve more? It's good to be focused. It's good to work hard. But if that's all I look at I'm viewing life totally out of context. And when you

take things out of context what happens?

I've noticed that when I take things out of context in the hurly burly of life I'm like my grandmother; I only seem to hear the negative things and feel put down. Maybe not the best way to live life to the full, to live life in Jesus' fullness.

Living life in the context of Jesus' personal presence.

Jesus reminded Paul to see life in the context of his grace. Jesus' grace is the fact that he has given himself for us out of love. Out of love Jesus has gifted us forgiveness of sins through his crucifixion. Out of love Jesus has gifted us new life lived up close and personal with him; all fear and condemnation removed. In Jesus we have the gift of resurrection; life lived with our loving heavenly Father, forever. In Jesus' grace

we have the gift of the Spirit; God in person, walking with us in the hurly burly of life. We get to walk with the Spirit, walking to his tune of life, having our daily lives woven into God master plan for life.

I recon this is the place, the context, to discover and live life to the full, life lived in Jesus' fullness.

Do you notice grace doesn't start with hard work, my effort, what I can

achieve, me being right? Where does grace start?

It is a gift, and a gift always begins with the giver. In this instance that's Jesus.

I don't deserve a gift; that's not the nature of a gift is it. If I turn a gift into something I deserve I've taken it out of context, and we know that doesn't work well.

The word grace simply means that God has chosen to give us a gift;

and the gift is himself. The gift is himself in a loving, caring, passionate relationship; 100%. What a gift!

Once you have received a gift, what's the next step?

Here's where things can get interesting. Sometimes I've received a gift, unwrapped it, not appreciated it, and even been tempted to put it on 'Gumtree' for sale! Sometimes I've unwrapped the gift and loved it, putting it somewhere safe, but then I haven't used it.

I see me being 'weak', being the fact that the gift Jesus gives doesn't come from me. I'm not the source of the gift.

That could be a bit strange, me giving myself a gift. Would that be a gift? Where's the source of the gift Paul is talking about?

The source of the gift is God, the source of the gift flows from God's heart of love for you. To

God you are precious, because God has chosen to see you as precious. The source of the gift is God; the Father out of love sending his Son, Jesus, that you might know him personally, intimately, freely, joyfully. Jesus has sent the Spirit so you can now begin to live this relationship person to

I am weak; all I do is receive. I don't create the gift.

person with God. The source of the gift is God.

I am weak; all I do is receive. I don't create the gift.

Sadly at times I'm tempted to act as if the gift comes from me; after all why wouldn't God be pleased to know me; I'm a good bloke, aren't I? I could be tempted to thing God's lucky to have me; it's all my great attributes I'm sure he's responding to.

If a person was thinking this way; they're fantastic and you're lucky to know them, what might run through you mind about them?

The source of God's love is God; it is after all his nature as John wrote in his letter; 'God is love'.

Now that I have God's love gifted to me in Jesus, guess what I can do? I can live this loving relationship. I can live out this loving relationship. I can let this loving relationship shape me and the way I view life. Loved people can do what?

Good News, the hurly burly of life no longer determines who I am, or needs to shape how I live.

Paul expressed is this way; "Now I take limitations in stride, and with good cheer, these limitations that cut me down to size – abuse, accidents, oppositions, bad breaks. I just let Christ take over! And