

The Foolishness and Weakness of God

What are your weaknesses or limitations? What things would you like to change in your life? Maybe you feel like you've never measured up to others. Maybe relationships are just plain hard for you. Maybe you "have a past" that you just can't seem to shake. Whatever your weaknesses, most likely you've tended to view them as a kind of curse. Today, we are looking at a passage that reminds us that our weaknesses are not a curse and they don't disqualify us from experiencing God's best. In fact, our weaknesses can be the places where God most fully and clearly demonstrates His power in our lives because, as Paul said, His power is perfected in weakness (2 Cor. 12:9). And so may this passage encourage you as you consider the message of the cross.

Opening Discussion: Where have you felt weakness recently?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

1. What sticks out to you from this passage?
2. Why does the "word of the cross" look like foolishness and weakness to those who are perishing (v. 18)?
3. How do you understand the meaning of verse 25?
4. How does Paul use the Corinthians' experience with the Gospel (vv. 26-31) as well as his own example of ministry among the Corinthians (2:1-5) to point to the principle of power through weakness?
5. How would you summarize Paul's teaching about foolishness/weakness and wisdom/might in this passage?

Steve said:

Perry Downs, one of my seminary professors used to say that "People don't need to see perfection. They need to see redemption." Every weakness and limitation can be redeemed; every failure and defeat we experience can be redeemed. God can buy them back for His purposes. Our weaknesses and limitations don't disqualify us from having an influence in the lives of others; they provide an opportunity for us to exhibit the Spirit and power of God.

6. What do you think it looks like for people to see redemption, not perfection, in a believer's life when it comes to our weaknesses?

7. As you think about the places in your own life where you are weak, what might it look like for people to see redemption in those areas? How might it be an opportunity to exhibit the Spirit and power of God?

8. What do you sense is the main thing God is saying to you through this passage?