

And that isn't always because I'd want to, but by the time I'd purchased an excellent pair of jeans at a rock bottom price, only then would it dawn on me that the clothes I hold in my hand are the result of some poor child being exploited so that I could have comfortable jeans at a convenient price. And then it would dawn on me that actually I've been exploited by a multi-national conglomerate so that they can increase their profit margin and feel justified in their actions.

I'm more than happy to be weak and trust in Jesus' strength, being totally dependent on

him, and wonderfully interdependent with the rest of his family. When I don't seek to live life based on my own strength and massive intellect, but rather Jesus' grace; that involves his love, his mercy, his wisdom, his forgiveness, then I have a strength that saves me from my self, from my own pride. Then I have a loving relationship which sets me free to enjoy life, celebrating Jesus' life with him, not trying to control everything, including you, and worrying if I've got it right or not.

For when I am weak, admitting that I am

totally vulnerable and dependent on Jesus, then I am strong.

Let us pray.
Jesus free me from the oppression of trying to control everything. Free me from others obsession of having to control everything. I thank and praise you for being in control and inviting each of us to trust you, and enjoy living loved and precious, discovering more and more of your loving grace. Open my heart to know you more intimately and trust you completely, giving up my god aspirations.
Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

5 July 2009

WHEN I AM WEAK, THEN I AM STRONG

2 Corinthians 12

What would you say is the worst of all sicknesses? Take a few moments to discuss it. What would be the worst sickness that could happen to young Jaxon, or to you?

The most dangerous disease is pride. That's what brought down the Devil. He became conceited. That's what caused Adam and Eve to fall, they believed in their own judgment, more than the clear word of their friend, God.

The Apostle Paul was in danger of contracting this disease so Jesus had to act by giving him what is commonly known as his 'thorn in the flesh'. Jesus allowed this continuing physical ailment; "in order to keep *Paul* from becoming

conceited." (2 Cor. 12:5)

Do you know of anyone who is in danger of this most lethal virus? Do you know anyone who only believes what they can prove according to their own intellect? If I can't make sense of it, obviously it must be wrong. Or maybe I'm the one who doesn't understand!

Jesus was rejected by his own friends and family because he was just the carpenter's son who they'd grown up with. They couldn't understand what was going on, so they rejected him, even driving Jesus out of their town. It didn't make sense to them so it had to be wrong. That's the first part of our Gospel reading for today.

Sadly they were wrong and many of the sick in that town stayed ill, simply because they chose to believe in themselves more than in Jesus. What a tragedy when help was so close at hand.

I know I'm tempted by pride. I'm tempted to trust myself and what I can achieve, especially in those areas I have some proficiency. It is so easy to believe that I'm in control of my life when everything is going well. I've made good choices. I've invested well. I've worked hard. The reason I'm doing well isn't a fluke, I've planned it. When things are going well it's easy to believe in yourself.

But how quickly things can change? In the blink of an eye everything can change.

Sickness comes overnight. An accident happens in a moment. Finances that you were trusting in for retirement are gone because of another's greed.

When I begin to believe that I'm in control of my life, and that I call the shots, I'm living an illusion. Sure I make decisions, and those decisions have an effect, but ultimately I don't control what happens in the world. I'm not god.

Of course that's what pride is; declaring myself to be god!

Actually when I think about it for a bit, if my life solely depended on me I'd be in all sorts of problems. So much happens without my slightest awareness let alone my understanding. I don't keep thinking about the world spinning so that gravity works and we all don't fall of.

Actually why would the world spinning not fling me off instead of hold me on? How fast does the earth have to rotate so that we don't levitate? If I had to set the speed we'd have all fallen off a long time ago.

When I'm tempted to believe the world

Pride is: declaring myself to be god

revolves around me, I'm tempted to put my faith in a lie. The ultimate proof that the world doesn't revolve around me will be my death. When I die, the world won't miss a beat. Someone else is in control.

The simple reality of life is that I'm dependent. I can't exist on my own; I need air, food, and friends. Without other people to share life with I'm lost. Without the love of

other people life's just a pain. I'm not independent but I'm designed to be part of a complex community that is dependent on each other. Pride might at times get me to believe that the world revolves around me, but that's just plainly wrong. If nothing else when I meet another

person infected with the pride virus, they believe the world revolves round them. Which obviously it can't because I'm at the centre – this could be the start of something nasty.

I've got 'Good News' for you today; the world doesn't revolve around me. And we all can thank God for that! The world doesn't revolve around the Apostle Paul either, and we can all join with him in thanking God for that. The world doesn't revolve around him either. Wouldn't that be a weight to

carry, that the fate of the whole world was resting on your shoulders.

Of course Jesus is the one on whose shoulders the fate of the world rests. On Jesus shoulders rests your eternal destiny. With that responsibility I certainly hope he far exceeds what I can understand or make sense of.

I'm quite happy to have my life dependent on Jesus and not on me. I'm actually relieved that it all doesn't depend on me, but I can depend on Jesus to get things right. I'm more than happy to surrender control of my life to Jesus, trusting him, believing he knows what's best, not only for me, but for all people.

God knows I can't even get things right in my own life, what an absolute mess things would be if your life

and all people in the world were dependent on me.

I'm more than happy to celebrate with Paul taking Jesus at his word; "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9)

I'm not god. Jesus is!!!

I'm more than happy to surrender my god aspirations to Jesus living dependent on him. And that's not such a foolish decision, seeing Jesus is God, and the world does revolve around him.

What Jesus' says actually happens. So I'm more than happy to have Jesus declare me through my baptism to be the Father's precious, loved child, with whom he is pleased. Jesus promise

in baptism isn't empty words.

That's all they'd be if it depended on me. Jesus is God. Jesus has paid the price with his death on the cross so that whoever he declares through the waters of baptism to be the Father's precious, loved child, with whom he is pleased, that's what you are. It's not an empty promise but one built on Jesus very real life, death and resurrection.

One whose foundation is God's promise based on Jesus life, paid for with his death.

I'm more than happy to surrender my god aspirations to Jesus knowing he loves me more than his own life, more than his own comfort and convenience. If the world were left up to me, sadly I'd sacrifice millions of people for my own comfort and convenience.