

**"THE POWER OF GOD DETERMINES YOUR ATTITUDE"**

Philippians 4:10-13

Today, all throughout the Christian Church, people will be waving their palm branches and saying at sometime during the service "Hosanna" as they remember or even reenact that day when a parade line formed along the road to Jerusalem as Jesus rode triumphantly into the holy city- that day now known as "Palm Sunday." And with all the cheering and celebrating that was going on that first Palm Sunday as He rode into the city, Jesus knew what awaited Him; Jesus knew what was at the end of the road- death on a cross. So how did He keep it all together that day? How was He able to let them cry out, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven" knowing full well that they would turn on Him by the end of the week? How was it that He did not take a detour down some side street, ditch the donkey and filter into the crowd? It had to have been the power of God that determined His attitude that day.

It must have been His knowledge and conviction that His mission was set before Him and He was the only one who could bring it to completion. It must have been the power of God that determined His attitude.

I heard about another parade that took place several years ago on New Year's Day. It was the Tournament of Roses Parade. The parade was moving along smoothly when all of a sudden a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and came to a stop. The float was out of gas and the entire parade came to a screeching halt until someone could get a can of gas. And what was so amusing was that this float represented the Standard Oil Company. With all its vast oil resources, the truck that pulled the float was out of gas. And you know what? Sometimes we Christians are like that truck. We have all the resources we could ever want or need to do what Christ wants us to do, but we feel like we are out of gas.

If you have been with us for the past several Sundays we have been on a 70 Days of Vision journey as we have attempted to look through a

Biblical worldview over-and-against a secular world view. Today we want to talk about our spiritual resources and what fuels our ability to accomplish the ministries that God has called us to do. We know what fueled Jesus tank, what about us? And when you think about Jesus and how He dealt with all He confronted that last week of His life, that Holy Week, He had to rely on all the spiritual resources that He possessed to accomplish what God had called Him to do, namely, lay down His very life for us.

**God's Word tells us in Luke 24:49 that we are clothed with power.** The Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:13 that we are capable of doing "all things through him who strengthens [us]." And I really think that this wonderful principle concerning the power of Christ that is in us is misunderstood. What is Paul saying to us when he says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me?" Does he somehow mean that if I just believe that I will be able to go out this afternoon and run a marathon, even though I have not trained for such an arduous task?

Does it mean that I could go into my daughter Ashley's Calculus Class and take the final exam and get an A without even studying? What Paul means, literally, is that "I have strength for all things in Christ who strengthens me." But many people take the words, "I have strength for all things" to mean "I can do all things."

I think a key to understanding Paul is to go back to verse 11 when he states, "not that I am referring to being in need," for he is letting the reader know that his happiness is not dependent on things or circumstances. Paul is not going to let outside circumstances dictate his attitude. So where was Paul going to get his strength? From Christ who would give him what he needed to do the ministry to which he had been called, and that was sharing the Good News of Christ with a hurting world, desperately in need of the Savior. It was the power of Jesus Christ that gave Paul this "I can do it attitude."

Paul believes we can and should be able to accomplish certain things through the power of Christ. It goes much further than the material abundance or needs in this earthly life that we need the power of Christ to get us through. There are everyday issues that require Christ's strength. Let me share a few of these. First, **the wherewithal to love one another in spite of our differences**. If you turn to Philippians 4:2 you read where Paul is urging Euodia and Syntche to, "be of the same mind in the Lord." Now something had happened between these two women that caused Paul to address the need for them to come together and settle their disagreement that had spilled over into the fellowship of believers. For Paul asks the church, in verse 3, to help these women work out their differences because it obviously was having an adverse effect on the body of Christ in Philippi. As believers, they were being called on to mend their fences and love one another in spite of their differences.

The hard reality is there are going to be people in your family, in your work place, at school, in the organizations you might belong to, why, even in the church who you are going to differ with and maybe even strongly disagree. Why, there might be someone you dislike. But that doesn't mean you pick up your marbles and leave or you do not work for reconciliation or compromise, without compromising the Gospel. We are called to love one another and it is the power of God that will see us through. Friends, the power of God determines your attitude.

Second, **through Christ's strength we can overcome times of worry**. Look with me to Philippians 4:6 and let us read what it says. "Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." What is the point of this verse? It lets us know that we can make it through times of worry and distress and we can do it through Christ's strength. There are a lot of people who are living day-to-day, waking hour by waking hour with worry- worry

about their job or lack of job, worry about having a roof over their heads, worry about finances, putting food on their table, their sick relative or friend, the friend who is having marital problems and the list can go on and on.

There is not a one of us today who is not carrying a burden or worry or concern- not a one of us and if I would bring the blood pressure cuff around right now, some of us would have a reading that would show great distress.

But Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." We can worry and stress and fret all we want and it will not alter or change the situation or

circumstance. But what we can do is **navigate through times of worry and distress with Christ's strength.** Someone once said that worrying is bad because it is a subtle form of distrust in God- I guess I never thought of it that way. And yet when we worry we are saying that we don't trust God enough to provide and I too have been prone to this mindset. And when this happens it leads to helplessness and hopelessness and even paralysis.

So the only cure to this ailment is dependence on God for our confidence in God's power affects our attitude.

Third, **through Christ's strength we can put into practice what we learn.** Paul says in Philippians 4:9 to, "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen." Another way to translate what Paul is saying is, "do what I taught you to do and continue doing it." And it is through the strength of Christ that we can unite together our thinking and our doing, and when we think and do, we find and experience the peace of God that passes all earthly understanding. So when it seems like the world is crashing in all around us, we will be able to weather the storm, because we have applied what we have learned and we put it into practice.

There is an old legend of 3 men and their sacks. Each man had 2 sacks, one tied in front of his neck and the other tied on his back. When the first man was asked what was in his sacks, he said, "In the sack on my back

are all the good deeds friends and family have done for me. That way they're hidden from view and I don't think about them. In the front sack are all the bad things that have happened to me that I continue to worry about. Every now and then I stop, open the front sack, take the things out, examine them, and think about them and worry about them." But because he stopped so much to concentrate on all the bad stuff and to worry about it all, he really didn't make much progress in life. The second man was asked about his sacks. He replied, "In the front sack are all the good things I've done. I like to see them, so quite often I take them out to show them off to people. The sack in the back? I keep all my mistakes, anxieties, and worries in there and carry them all the time. Sure, they're heavy. They slow me down, but you know, for some reason I can't put them down." When the third man was asked about his sacks, he answered, "The sack in the front is great. There I keep all the positive thoughts I have about people, all the blessings I've experienced, all the great deeds other people have done for

me and all the times God has delivered me with His power. The weight isn't the problem. The sack is like the sail of a ship. It keeps me moving forward. The sack on my back is empty. There's nothing in it. I cut a big hole in its bottom. In there I put all the bad things that I can think about myself or hear about others. I put in there all the things that make me afraid or cause me to doubt God. They go in one end and out the other, so I'm not carrying around any extra weight at all." The question for us to answer is, **what are we carrying in our sacks?** (H. Norman Wright, *The Perfect Catch* (Bethany House, 2000), pp. 28-29; submitted by Bonne Steffen, editor, Wheaton, Illinois.) Friends, what we carry around in our sacks affects our attitude and how we see the power of God affects those same attitudes.

And finally, **through Christ's strength we can learn to be content.**

Paul says in verse 11, "for I have learned to be content with whatever I have." This contentment is a sense of well-being and it is something we

learn. Does it come natural and easy? Probably not. But we can learn to be content.

Folks, in the good times and in the not so good times we need to call on Christ to give us strength. Call on Him, He will not let you down. A question- how is your attitude? Do you need an "attitude check?" Read Philippians and let Christ and the truth of His Word move you to a positive attitude that can set you free so you can move even beyond your situation or circumstances. The bottom line is this- the power of God determines your attitude. Look at what it did for Jesus, especially as He approached the final week of His earthly life. Amen.

**“THE POWER OF GOD DETERMINES YOUR ATTITUDE”**

Philippians 4:10-13

Introduction: Today is Palm Sunday...

Our spiritual resources and what fuels our ability to accomplish the ministries God has called us to do

**God’s Word tells us in Luke 24:49 that we are clothed with \_\_\_\_\_**

Philippians 4:13- we are capable of doing “all things through him who strengthens us

Everyday issues that require Christ’s strength:

First, **the wherewithal to love one another in spite of our**

\_\_\_\_\_ Phil. 4:2

Second, **through Christ’s strength we can overcome times of**

\_\_\_\_\_ Phil. 4:6

Matthew 11:28—“Come to me... and I will give you rest”

Navigate through times of worry and distress with Christ’s strength

Third, **through Christ’s strength we can put into \_\_\_\_\_ what we learn**

Phil. 4:9

The legend of 3 men and their sacks...

**What are we carrying in our sacks?**

Finally, **through Christ’s strength we can learn to be \_\_\_\_\_**

Phil. 4:11

Conclusion: The power of God determines your attitude—look at what it did for Jesus, especially as He approached the final week of His earthly life