

Stop Making Excuses

In opening my Bible, seemingly at random, I read Paul's description of his battle over his 'thorn' and his weaknesses, yet he delighted in all things that gave God the opportunity to reveal his strength.

But [the Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

In the next chapter Paul, addressing the church in Corinth, writes:

[Jesus Christ] was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live in him... Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realise that Christ Jesus is in you...? 2 Corinthians 13:4-5a.

Do you not realise that Christ Jesus is in you? Do I not realise Christ Jesus is in me? I then opened our Bible study book and the heading leapt off the page: Jesus lives in you.

Jesus lives in me.

"Stop making excuses." I am sure this is the word of the Holy Spirit for me. If God's grace was sufficient for Paul, not just because of obvious persecution and opposition but despite his 'thorn' whatever that was, despite his 'history', despite his difficulty with writing ('See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!' Galatians 6:11.); then his grace is also sufficient for me. When Paul writes about pressing on, he writes about 'forgetting what is behind. What is behind can hold us back. Peter could have made the excuses that he was just an uneducated fisherman but when he spoke with authority to the Jewish religious leaders, they took note that he had been with Jesus and they were amazed at his eloquence.

This is the time to stop focusing on my weaknesses and to acknowledge God's strength in me. His grace, his power. Past failures, missed opportunities, regrets, embarrassments, hurts, griefs and sorrows, feelings, crushed spirit, wrong self-image, words spoken against me, being overlooked or thwarted, character weaknesses, wrong choices, curses, wrong teaching, wrong influences, manipulation and domination, strongholds, unfairness, habits; whatever the area: relationships, emotions, desires, reputation, business, finances, health, ministry—they all come under the heading of forgetting what is past, forgetting the former things, not dwelling on the past, because God is doing a new thing.

If God's grace is sufficient then everything else is an excuse for not moving on, for not having faith, for not stepping out, for not receiving every provision from God.