

WITH CHRIST YOU CAN

Text Phil. 4:13

Read v.s. 11b-13 (KJV)

INTRODUCTION

No matter what your problem or difficulty or burden may be, you can handle it more effectively and with a greater sense of power if you have Christ within you.

Here is the soul-stirring, power-releasing word of Paul for you, "I can do all things ~~in~~ ^{Christ} who strengthens me." ^{through}

And you, too, can do all things through Christ ~~in~~ ^{who} will strengthen you.

I. YOU CAN, BECAUSE PAUL COULD.

A. The same power is available to you that was available to Paul. The same Christ wants to be YOUR companion and helper.

Paul wasn't writing about something he just ~~thought~~ THOUGHT might work. He was telling his own experience of something that worked again and again for him.

His life in Christ is a glowing illustration of his word about Christ.

B. Paul faced tough circumstances in his life.

While writing these words he was a prisoner, and he said he was in want at times of many things.

But he knew how to handle such circumstances. The secret was in Christ who strengthened him.

C. Paul faced physical handicaps.

One was a recurrent illness with severe pain.

He described it as "a thorn in the flesh."

He prayed earnestly for its removal.

His prayer wasn't granted, but he did become more aware of God's power in Christ through the experience. (2 Cor. 11 & 12).

If your will is surrendered to Jesus Christ, you CAN do anything you WANT to do.

II. YOU CAN, BECAUSE OTHERS COULD

A. Other men and women in all sorts of situations have discovered in Christ abundant power for all their needs.

The word of Paul comes to us out of the rich experience of 19 centuries.

We are encouraged to say, "What others have done through Christ I can do through Christ."

B. Through Christ Martin Luther found courage and strength to proclaim, "Here I stand.

God help me. I can do no other."

Through Christ David Livingston dared to open up a dark continent to the gospel.

C. Think of Oliver Cromwell, such a striking figure of the 17th century. In the late prime of his intellectual vigor, but with physical energy depleted by incessant strain, he was overtaken by a fatal illness.

When he rallied momentarily, he called for his Bible and asked "an honorable and godly person" to read to him that passage in Philippians which ends with the words "in him who strengthens me." He said, "This scripture did once save my life when my eldest son died - which went as a dagger to my heart; indeed it did."

D. Behind the experience of outstanding persons like Paul, Luther, Livingston, Cromwell there is the less conspicuous but nevertheless real experience of countless unknown people who have learned the power of faith.

They have lived in every generation.

They are with us today.

God alone knows how many men and women live right here in this area with quiet courage because again and again they repeat "I can do all things ~~in him~~ who strengthens me." ~~through Christ~~

I challenge you to make this text your motto. Say it over to yourself at least ten times each day. "I can do all things ~~in him~~ who strengthens me."

through Christ

E. Don't let your handicaps become excuses to keep you from realizing your potential by the power of Christ.

Much of the great work of the world has been done by handicapped people.

Beethoven was deaf. He couldn't even hear his own compositions.

Milton was blind but he wrote a sonnet on his blindness.

Lincoln never had more than three month's formal schooling, but he would not allow himself to be denied an education.

These people were living testimony to the truth of the old proverb, "All the water in the seven seas cannot sink a ship unless it gets inside the ship."

All the handicaps and problems in the world cannot destroy a personality unless they get inside the personality and sink it with self pity.

How ridiculous it is to lament, "I can't succeed because I'm too old, or too fat, or too sick, or too dumb, or too slow, or too ~~anything~~ anything else." You can do anything you ~~want~~ to do if you want to do it bad enough, and if you will do your very best and trust Christ to do the rest.

III. YOU CAN, WHEN YOU SHIFT YOUR ATTENTION TO CHRIST.

A. It makes a big difference when you turn your attention away from yourself and your weaknesses to Christ and his strength. (NOTE)

➤ B. Perhaps the weakness that troubles you is that strange inability you find to live up to your own good resolutions.

You mean sincerely to avoid doing something you know is wrong, but you keep doing it to your own shame and discouragement.

In this case a drastic shift of attention away from your false friends, and away from your low ideals, is called for.

"Lift your eyes upon Jesus; look full in his wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace."

* - Yes, "We are weak, but He is strong." (3)

* ^(May 1917) HOW PROFOUND THE PHILOSOPHY EXPRESSED IN THE CHILDREN'S HYMN:

"Little ones to Him belong;
We are weak, but He is strong!"

Marvelously strong Jesus was in his character and in his wonderful works!

How strong he was when ~~the~~ heaven hung out its brightest star to mark his birthplace!

How strong intellectually he was when he startled the wise men in the temple, being only twelve years old!

How strong he was in speech when he spoke "as one having authority and not as the Scribes and Pharisees"!

How strong he was when he arose from sleep in a tempest-tossed boat and rebuked the winds into peace and the waves into rest!

How strong he was when he walked on the waves as though they were floors of opal and ~~gold~~ emerald!

How strong he was when leprosy fled from his presence and twisted limbs were made straight at his touch!

How strong he was when he stopped a funeral procession and broke it up!

How strong was his trumpet voice when he called Lazarus from the grave.

How strong was his dedication when he refused to come down from the cross!

How wonderfully strong he was when he arose from the dead, and became "the first fruits of them that slept"!

How strong he was when he walked through ~~solid~~ walls into the upper room,

"the doors being shut where the disciples were

and said, "Peace be unto you!"

This same strong savior is available to help you do anything you ought to do for the glory of God and the good of mankind.

Shift your attention to Him!

~~(may omit)~~ And this looked like the end, the bloody, wretched, lonely, loveless end--~~of~~ of this bleeding body on the battlefield.

But there was life in that body. It was motionless with weakness.

But in the brain a mighty parade of thought was passing. All that his father and mother had taught him of religion and God came back to him. He was converted there that night, waiting for someone to come and pick him up. The next morning when someone came and found him alive they took him to the hospital. This ~~boy~~ ^{young} captain called the chaplain and told him that from then on, he was going to be a Christian. From that hour he took on the yoke of Jesus Christ and walked in the path of His unselfish and wounded feet. What was the possibility of that bleeding battle-bruised boy on that battlefield that night? The stretcher bearer thought none. And so it seemed!

But that night the Christ of God laid His hands upon that wounded and bleeding young officer even as he had laid them on millions of others who trusted Him.

That night Jesus Christ walked across that war-scarred, cannon-cut battlefield and entered the heart feebly beating in that chest blown open and shrapnel-shredded.

And what came of that bleeding 20 year old captain there on the battlefield that night? For one thing, the great Temple University of Philadelphia through which have passed tens of thousand of students. For another thing, three great hospitals. For another thing the education of hundreds of young men and young women, to which object Dr. Russell Conwell donated more than \$8,000,000 earned in lecturing, primarily in giving the best known of all lectures entitled "Acres of Diamonds."

For another thing a great church.

For another thing more than 20 books superbly written and widely read and influential.

(over)

For another thing thousands of unbelievers won to a personal and vital faith in Jesus Christ. For another thing America's most amazing man who, though he earned millions of dollars, never had more than \$100 of his own at any time.

All this was possible in that pitiful heap of a wounded, bleeding Union soldier at Kenesaw Mountain, whose chest was blown open and whose mouth because of thirst was hot like an oven. And it was all possible through the domination of Christ in his life.

You may not be a Russell Conwell, But you can achieve spiritual greatness through the power of Jesus Christ if only you will surrender your life to him as your Lord and Master, and let Him give you strength. Everyone here is capable of some kind of high spiritual achievement if you will let God have his way in your life.

let God have his way in your life. Jesus Christ be the strength of your life.

(may omit)

dedicated to Christ

Many are the possibilities hidden in a life, and there are many illustrations of them.

I would like to give just two.

1. Michael Faraday.

a. When just a boy he heard a great scientist lecture, and he went out burning and consumed with the desire to become a great scientist himself; he wrote to Sir Joseph Banks, then president of the Royal Society, asking him for a place to work.

But no answer was ever returned to his letter. If the president of the society could have known that some day ten thousands would know the name of Michael Faraday, where one knew the name of Joseph Banks, probably he would have answered that boy's letter.

b. Years later a crowded gathering of distinguished scientists had been listening spellbound to the masterly expositions of Michael Faraday. For an hour he had held his brilliant audience enthralled as he demonstrated the nature and properties of the magnet. He brought his lecture to a close with an experiment so novel, so bewildering and so triumphant that, for some time after he resumed his seat, the house rocked with enthusiastic applause. And then the Prince of Wales--afterward King Edward the Seventh--rose to propose a motion of congratulation. The resolution, having been duly seconded, was carried with renewed thunders of applause. But the uproar was succeeded by a strange silence. The assembly waited for Faraday's reply. But the lecturer had vanished. What had become of him? The hour at which Faraday had concluded his lecture was the hour for the mid-week prayer meeting, and that meeting he never neglected.

So under cover of the cheering and applause he had slipped out of the crowded hall and hurried off to the little church where a few Christians had met to renew their fellowship with God.

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c. At other times men saw Faraday pass up a meeting of the Royal Society to sit at the feet of a certain local preacher who was notorious for his illiteracy, but famed for his spiritual dedication; and this spectacle filled unbelieving men with bewilderment and wonder.

d. And finally as he lay dying they tried to interview the professor, the scientist, the intellectual genius, but it was the simple Christian believer that answered them:

"What are your speculations?" they asked.

"Speculations! I have none. I am resting on CERTAINTIES. I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

WHAT MARVELOUS POSSIBILITIES ARE OURS
FOR NOBLE SPIRITUAL ACHIEVEMENT
IF WE WILL ONLY GIVE OUR LIVES TO CHRIST!

2. Another illustration of this great truth is in the life of one of America's most amazing men, one who was wounded on the battlefield of Kenesaw Mountain as a 20 year old captain. A stretcher bearer, seeking for the wounded, bent down to try to hear some heartbeats. "He's gone!" said the stretcher bearer. "His chest is blown open!" So they went away and left that pile of bleeding flesh in the darkness. You would not have thought that the world could expect any more from that heap of bloody misery. There it lay through the night--no bedding but the ground, no pitying eyes but the stars, no companions but the dead.

Up in a little town in Massachusetts a father and mother had been praying for this boy through all the months of fighting. That boy had run away from home twice. At Yale University he had worked in kitchens and wherever else he could find odd jobs to pay his tuition. He gave up his religious faith and registered as an atheist.

IV. YOU CAN WHEN YOU THINK YOU CAN. HAVE FAITH.

A. It makes a vital difference when you take an affirmative, confident attitude toward life. We defeat ourselves by our defeatist attitudes. We win spiritual victories when we learn to say in the spirit and power of Christ "I can." The way we think about ourselves is highly important. It is not wrong for us to think about ourselves in the same way. God thinks about us. God loves us and he must feel that we are someone of great worth, because he gave his own son to die for us. You can say, "I'm OK because of God's grace and God's love."

B. Jesus said, "According to your faith be it done to you." (Mt 9:29) ~~★ *~~ (TOP) (P. 6) (NOTE)

To believe that God is good, that his purpose toward us is gracious, and that even now he is seeking to help us right where we are -- such belief, held deeply and affirmed repeatedly in prayer, releases tremendous power.

It turns weakness into strength.

Not all religions teach us that God loves and cares for us. According to Greek Mythology, Zeus was the king of the gods on Mt. Olympus. Prometheus was a lesser deity who had a caring feeling for humanity. The concerns of men were of concern to him, so on an act of impulse he stole fire from the altar of Olympus and gave it to men for warmth and light. When Zeus discovered this he was furious at what Prometheus had done, for the attitudes of the gods toward men ranged from indifference to hostility. Prometheus for his act of caring was chained to a rock on a mountain where a vulture was permitted to claw at his body. Now contrast that with a God who so cared for men that He sent his only Son. Contrast that with the One who called himself the Good Shepherd -- who cared so much He was crucified between two thieves. God loves and cares for you. You can count on that no matter what happens. With his help and strength you can do whatever you think you can and whatever you really want to do for his glory.

see CONCLUSION: (P. 6)

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When Rear Admiral Du Pont gave to his superior officer, Farragut, the explanation of why he had failed to take his ships into Charleston Harbor, Farragut heard him through to the end and then said, "Admiral, there is one explanation which you haven't given."

"What is that?" asked Du Pont.

"This. You didn't BELIEVE that you could do it."

That lack of confidence has been the secret of failures not only in the field of war but also in this greater warfare of the soul.

The reason why Christians don't have more power over

anti-Christian forces is because of their lack of faith or lack of confidence in Christ.

There is NOTHING we can't do through Christ and to suggest otherwise is to capitulate to flimsy excuses and pitiful alibis.

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CONCLUSION: What shall we say then to these things? Do we dare take Paul's motto in Philippians 4:13 as our life's motto, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This is not just the power of positive thinking; it is the confidence of dynamic faith in Jesus.

Because Paul the Apostle found this true in his life, because countless other mighty heroes of the cross found it true in their lives, you can discover the wonderful secret in your life too.

When you direct your attention to Christ instead of the stormy waves of doubt, when you really believe that Christ will give you the necessary strength and grace, you will find out that you REALLY CAN do anything you ought to do -- anything God has put in your heart to do through Christ.

Seven Springs Chapel, NFR, FL, 2-16-89
1st Baja Ch. Sex, Al. Aug 5, 1979

Emmanuel B.C. St. Pete. Aug. 12, 1979

Bal. Praes. Hoop - Det. '79 no. 1411
Gasteria B. & S. B. 1879

Gateway B.C. St. Pete - Oct. 26, 1980

here May, B.C. Sep. 20, '81.
Norwood, B.C. 12 50 P.M.

Wood, Bas. Ch. St. Pete, June 6, '82 Max Hts. 11.50

Mar. 27, '88

Sept. 21, 1955

