

“CLAIM THIS PROMISE WHEN YOU THINK YOU CAN’T”

TEXT: Phil. 4:13

INTRO: A. Three times in Mark’s Gospel we are told that “all things are possible.”

Mark 9:23

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. (Belief may make things possible.)

Mark 10:27

And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (God makes things possible.)

Mark 14:36

And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. (Things possible may not always be best.)

B. Our text states that “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Paul is stating that when you think you can’t, you can claim this promise. (It may not be coincidental that I chose this verse and subject almost 2 months ago, before having my chest opened twice in surgery!)

C. What this verse does not mean is that we will be able to do impossible, improbable or idiotic things. It does not mean we are superhuman. It does mean that in God’s will, what men consider impossible or improbable or even idiotic may become a reality. David, the lad was able to slay Goliath the Giant! Daniel’s 3 friends were able to survive the fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was able to escape the lion’s den unscathed. A missionary may have already lived through an ordeal which has

killed others. A preacher (Paul) may have survived unbelievable horrors so that he could “finish (his) course.” “Of the Jews 5 times received I forty stripes save one...(195 lashes!)” But he couldn’t be silenced. “Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned.” But his ministry continued. “Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.” But he kept on preaching. He had poor health, yet within his lifetime he evangelized the known world and even took the Gospel into the palace of the Roman Caesar. He apparently suffered from a severe eye problem, yet his letters comprise most of the NEW TESTAMENT THIS is the man who wrote our text! One of the few who could! While you may not be able to have written this text, YOU CAN CLAIM ITS PROMISE! “CLAIM THIS PROMISE WHEN YOU THINK YOU CAN’T!”

I. YOU CAN DO ‘ALL THINGS’ WITHIN GOD’S WILL:

A. This Is Not An “Umbrella Promise”:

1. This is not a promise of God’s strength for foolish or carnal things.
2. This is not the “all things” of Romans 8:28 which IS an “umbrella promise.”
3. This is a promise specifically connected to God’s will for a believer’s life.

ILLUS: In the previous verses Paul speaks of his dependence on others for physical necessities (v.10). He also spoke of personal deprivation (v.11-12). I believe Paul is saying that whatever circumstance he found himself, within God’s will, the Lord strengthened him to live above the circumstances and gave him the peace and comfort he needed.

In Eph. 6:10 Paul spoke of being “strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” In 2 Tim.2:1 he spoke of being “strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.” In Eph.3:16 he said “we are strengthened with His might by His Spirit in the inner man.” This was no boast of a self-sufficient man, but one who was wholly dependent upon the strength of His Savior.

4. Paul is speaking as one who is wholly dependent upon the Lord’s provision for the believer walking in His will.
5. When you think you can’t take it any more, when you think you can’t put up with it anymore, when you think you can’t do it anymore...if you are in God’s will YOU CAN CLAIM THIS PROMISE!

II. YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS “THROUGH CHRIST”:

A. This Is A Conditional Promise Of Dependence:

1. Paul declared this dependence again and again in his ministry.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

2. Paul was not some egotist depending on his ability, gifts, intelligence, or self-righteousness or even his past success as a Pharisee.
3. Paul is wholly dependent upon His Savior for any success, strength or supernatural manifestation in his ministry.

ILLUS: The question is often asked of believers if there is anything in their life which can only be explained supernaturally or could they simply continue doing whatever they do apart from the Lord or

the Holy Spirit in their life. This question would not be difficult for Paul to answer. How about for you?

4. Paul sees himself as victorious regardless of circumstances because of the strength of Christ imparted to him.

ILLUS: The way we can claim this verse is to rely upon the same Source of strength.(from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

- (1) that we need not sink under any trial, for there is one who can strengthen us.
- (2) that we need not yield to temptation. There is one who is able to make a way for our escape.
- (3) that we need not be harassed, and vexed, and tortured with improper thoughts and unholy desires. There is one who can enable us to banish such thoughts from the mind, and restore the right balance to the affections of the soul.
- (4) that we need not dread what is to come. Trials, temptations, poverty, want, persecution, may await us; but we need not sink into despondency. At every step of life, Christ is able to strengthen us, and can bring us triumphantly through. What a privilege it is, therefore, to be a Christian - to feel, in the trials of life, that we have one friend, unchanging and most mighty, who can always help us! How cheerfully should we engage in our duties, and meet the trials that are before us, leaning on the arm of our Almighty Redeemer! Let us not shrink from duty; let us not dread persecution let us not fear the bed of death. In all circumstances, Christ, our unchanging Friend, can uphold us. Let the eye and the affections of the heart be fixed on him; let the simple, fervent, believing prayer be directed always to him when trials come, when temptations assail, when duty presses hard upon us, and when a crowd of unholy and forbidden thoughts rush into the soul: and we shall be safe.

NOTE: Someone said there are 2 kinds of Christians. Thermometer Christians and Thermostat Christians. The Thermometer Christian simply registers the prevailing spiritual temperature; his satisfaction is totally dependent on circumstances. The Thermostat Christian whose satisfaction is totally independent of circumstances; they rely on the Lord Who they see as being in control of the circumstances and as giving them strength when those circumstances are difficult.

III. YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS IN HIS POWER:

A. This Is A Promise That Involves A Choice:

1. We can either live "in the flesh" or in the power of His strength.

ILLUS: Jack Hyles used to speak about "good flesh" and "bad flesh" and concluded that both are still flesh! We may work on a bus route or teach a Sunday School class or give to the Lord's work out of duty with the wrong motives (flesh), or we can do these things as we are led by the Spirit of God and relying on Him. What we do is "good" but it is still out of the flesh. Perhaps it is just as much sin as lust or pride because it is still flesh. He often said that sin is not only bad because of what we do, but because it keeps us from doing what we should be doing. It is not only sinful to go to the barroom, but if we should be going soul-winning, going there keeps us from doing right. Doing wrong is always wrong, but doing wrong also keeps us from doing right.

2. We can make decisions in life apart from the Lord or with His direction.
3. We may live in the energy of the flesh or in the energy of the Spirit.

ILLUS: Whichever nature we feed will determine which nature grows. If you want the old nature to be your strength, just feed it. If you want the Lord to be your strength, feed the indwelling Holy Spirit. (How?)

*Ephesians 3:16 **

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man...

Ephesians 3:20-21

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

CONCL: "CLAIM THIS PROMISE WHEN YOU THINK YOU CAN'T!" But remember that it is a promise that operates within God's will for your life, that you cannot do all things apart from Him and that you must depend upon His strength in you as you grow spiritually in dependence upon Him for everything.