



Your NAWE Companion

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Weakness as Power

Lauren Helveston, Tallapoosa, GA

The New Testament is full of paradoxes: we lose life to find it - give and it shall be given - we must be last to be first - we have nothing and yet possess everything - we are set free to become a slave. These paradoxical truths characterized the life and ministry of Jesus Christ the Messiah. The Kingdom He came to establish was based upon standards, principles, laws, and truths that ran contrary to the kingdom of this world. So much so that the Jewish people of His day for the most part would not believe His claim that the Kingdom of God was present in Him, nor that He was the Messiah they had been anticipating for centuries. The Jews, and even His disciples, expected the Messiah to be either a conquering Davidic King before whom the enemies of God and of God's people could not stand; or He would be a heavenly supernatural being who would come to earth with power and great glory to destroy the wicked and to bring the Kingdom of God in power. How could the Kingdom of God be present when sin and evil was still present, and their enemies still ruled over them? Jesus did not "fit the bill" of their expectations. The King, the Messiah does not suffer and die a horrible death. Yet His ways are not our ways, and His thoughts are not our thoughts. The King of Glory, the long awaited Anointed One, came as a man among men in humility and weakness. And here is another paradox - weakness as power.

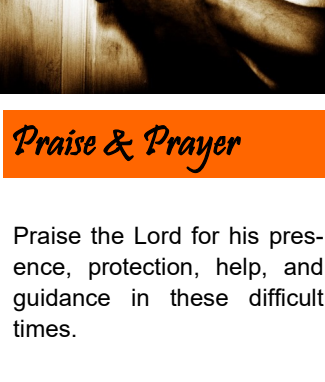
Jonathan Bonk, in his book *Missions and Money-Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem*, has a section in a chapter entitled "Grappling with Affluence" where Bonk talks about theological moorings and he states: "Among the richly varied theological motifs running through the pages of the NT, three (3) are of such broad significance as to touch upon every other facet of Christian faith and practice—the Incarnation, the Cross and **weakness as power**." Paul, the Apostle and missionary, expressed it this way in **2 Cor.12:10b**: "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

For all of us raised in a culture and society obsessed with power, and in most cases families where it was either taught or modeled that we should live from a position of power - this seems so unreasonable, unrealistic, and unnatural. Yet as those who have entered the now Kingdom of God through being born of the Spirit, this paradoxical reality is saying to us that:

My weaknesses, my inabilities, my powerlessness, my hardships, my problems, my insurmountable scenarios, my failures, my difficulties, my utterly desperate times, and my limitations that cut me down to size—are the opportunities, the open doors for the Lord to move in on my weakness with His strength and power.

As the people of the Kingdom of God move toward Holy Week, we once again celebrate the Lord, the Messiah, the King, moving in on our weakness and powerlessness to overcome sin, Satan, and the grave; and willingly laying down His life as apparent weakness, only to be raised from the dead by the power of God. In doing so He broke the power of sin, death and Satan and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And so beloved, now by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit our weakness allows the demonstration of God's power in our lives. Let Paul the Apostle have the last word: "So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."
(2 Corinthians 12:9b NLT)

April—May 2020



Praise & Prayer

Praise the Lord for his presence, protection, help, and guidance in these difficult times.

Give thanks that **Charles Powers (Erlanger, KY)** has recovered from his case of the Coronavirus.

Pray for the Lord's protection from this virus and His help in dealing with its effects on our lives, communities, and churches.

Pray for guidance for our churches and ministers as they seek to continue to be the Church and to be faithful in the ministries God has given them.

Continue to pray for **Laurens Hudson (Kennesaw, GA)** concerning his diagnosis with liver cancer and as he begins immunotherapy treatment. He and Pat express their heartfelt gratitude for all your prayers.

Prayer & Fasting on Wednesdays is needed now more than ever. Pray for our nation and leaders. Pray that this current situation might lead to revival in the Church.

Association News

Ministering during a Pandemic

As you face the challenges associated with a world dealing with COVID-19, we have a page of resources on our website (www.theNAWE.com). Hopefully you will find these to be helpful. Check out the Facebook pages and websites of our churches and ministers to see what they are doing. Please share ideas with us that we can pass along to others. Use opportunities to tune in to services or listen to messages from your fellow churches and pastors in the NAWE.

This situation presents tremendous challenges that require courage, creativity, and flexibility. However, it also presents some great opportunities for expanding our ministries, to try new ways of doing things, to add to our personal skillset, and to reach out to some different people. Let's not simply long for the time when things will get back to normal, but move forward to a new day in our lives and ministries.

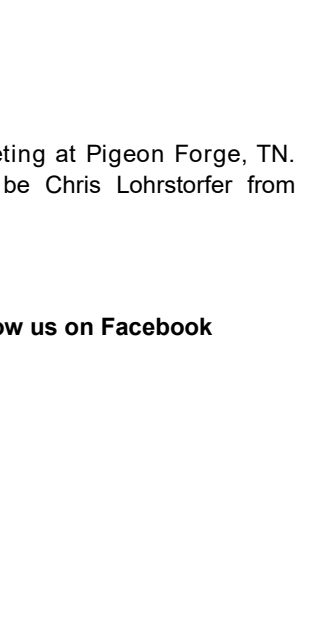
We are here to help. Please contact us if we can be of assistance in any way.

Ministers' & Wives' Retreat

Although it was obviously necessary, it was still disappointing to have to cancel this year's retreat. However, we are already rescheduled for next spring, April 6-8, at the same location and with the same speaker. So let's mark our calendars and look forward to that opportunity.

Annual Meeting

At this point we are still planning to hold our Annual Meeting. Our previously announced speaker, Rob Poci, had to cancel due to his wife undergoing cancer treatments and surgery in July. Instead our speaker will be Dr. Chris Lohrstorfer, Vice-president of Academic Affairs and Assistant Professor of Wesleyan Theology at Wesley Biblical Seminary. He is from Elizabeth, Indiana and now resides in Raymond, Mississippi where he and his wife Mary are the parents of two teenagers, Diana and Nicolas. Dr. Lohrstorfer has served as Senior Pastor at Hinds Independent Methodist Church in Raymond since 1997 and has been actively involved in higher education for 25 years both teaching and as an administrator. He is currently finishing his third book with Teleios Press entitled, *Learning to Breathe: Mastering the Art of Spiritual Respiration*.



Calendar



July 14-16: Annual Meeting at Pigeon Forge, TN. Our guest speaker will be Chris Lohrstorfer from Wesley Biblical Seminary.

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