

Could He be Your God by Pastor Kurt Hoover

Could He be Litany based on Psalm 43

Leader: I sought the Lord, and he answered me

All: and delivered me from all my fears.

Leader: Those who look to him are radiant,

All: and their faces shall never be ashamed.

Leader: This poor child cried, and the Lord heard me

All: and saved me out of all my troubles.

Leader: The angel of the Lord encamps

All: around those who fear him, and delivers them.

Leader: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!

All: Blessed is the child who takes refuge in him!

Ezekiel 2:1-8 And he said to me, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”² And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.³ And he said to me, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day.⁴ The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’⁵ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them.⁶ And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house.⁷ And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.⁸ “But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”

2 Corinthians 2:7-10⁷ So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me.⁹ But he 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 of

my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1-13 He went away from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴ And Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household.” ⁵ And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ And he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts— ⁹ but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics. ¹⁰ And he said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you depart from there. ¹¹ And if any place will not receive you and they will not listen to you, when you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

We get three stories of calling. Ezekiel catching a glimpse of How God was already using him to preach to the rebellious house of Jerusalem. Eight-time God speaks of their rebellion. That is the focus this morning the connection between weakness and rebellion.

Part of Paul's calling. He sees how God has been using him in spite of his weakness.

And the calling and sending of the 12 disciples given permission to be completely dependent on God taking no provision, not even a second cloak incase no one takes them in, and they have to sleep in the town square or along the road.

Is it possible that God is calling you to see your life in a different way. It has not been your careful and faithful investments over the years to build for you and yours a particular way of life. It has been God at work through you the whole time. God's promise creating faith through weakness?

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Mark 6 gives us a glimpse of Jesus return to His hometown, after His Baptism ... God's promise fully and freely being given, for all.

And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? ³ Is not this the carpenter... (Mark 6:2-3)

Believe it or not you have thought these same thoughts. You have rebelled in this same way.

You would be completely justified if you were to say to yourself – God is not speaking to me right now through this sermon, through that pastor, these words you are reading.

Our church has just been through this very same doubt in our own minds. Can I trust what the pastor has to say? Having a pastor leave your church for another church, although it is a normal and necessary function of the Kingdom of God... You are forced to be offended by the office.

This is the play of doubt that Jesus disciples witnessed the people of Nazaeth go through. Any reason to not trust the words that God is speaking through a message. ...Any reason to not see God in a song or the sacrament.

For the people it was watching Jesus grow up, knowing his humanity a little too well. God can't possibly have anything to say about me through a frail, limited, mortal being.

For us losing a pastor has the same affect. What can I trust anymore? Is pastor Kurt next? I am not!

And there are certainly better pastors then me out there anyway. The office of pastor has nothing to do with how well you know me, and I know you... God knows you better than any pastor could, and It is God speaking to you in church, not the family friend.

The rebellion in our mind is the same. An excuse, any excuse, to say that God may be able to do amazing

things, has done so for me in this place before, but he isn't going to do it today.

God is not in fact, right now calling me to set my struggle for identity aside and be His presence for the sake of others. I have all that I need in this same old empty promise and idea of how I think the world and God ought to work. I am just going to keep on doing God's job for him as I think it ought to be done, clinging to my own good works deserving a relationship with God... until it finally fails me. And someday I will be forced, like the few very sick In Nazareth that day, to depend on God's healing.

Not now, not today, I don't need God. I am doing fine on my own... thank you!

Let's be honest. We like the people of Jesus hometown... you and I don't want a God. You want to be God.

It does not surprise God that you right now, as you hear him speaking to you, rebelled against His act of building faith in you, to see him as he really is, to take him at his word.

The issue is this. We as human beings are not well equipped to – 'Take God at His word.' Well, that is not entirely true. We were made to hear God's voice and trust it. God is so powerful in this world that we cannot

help but hear his voice... God's grace is sufficient for us.

But our experience is contrary. We are tricked to believe that we are far too distracted by other voices demanding our attention and energy... We actually do experience dependence on God as weakness, inability, frustration in our own ability. We come to the end of ourselves. And we don't like it. It doesn't feel good to be weak and Dependent, certainly God wants more, ... And yet that is what we were made to be.

We are convinced that this is not a good experience. We have grown fond of trusting in other things, despite God's jealous and zealous reuniting and building of a Faith in him and Him alone.

We set our eyes on what we can see, and understand, and control – our part, our responsibility, who we are. ... that is what we relate to, when the whole time there has been something much richer and deeper going on, outside of our control. God setting our eyes and ears and understanding – our hope and faith - back on him, on others, on the mystery and joy of living life one step at a time.

The 6th chapter of Mark is an experiential chapter. This isn't parables and teachings. This is Jesus forcing people to see the world in different ways. Will they?? And will we?

It is a several key moments when people were forced to ask this question. Is Jesus who he says He is, Because if he is then I have been focused on the wrong things. I am being called into a life that revolves around him and not my own agendas. A completely different way of thinking about the world. A world where God is working outside of the rules to show himself ...to me. More than 6 times in the Gospel of Mark Jesus does and describes himself in a way that forces us to let go of our preconceived notions of how the world works. God does this to weaken our rebellion.

Is God truly God and can he truly walk into the midst of my storms, feed my needs and call me into the lives of others? Is there this wholly separate power at work in this world on which I have been and am completely dependent. Is my life actually - simply a reflection of God's goodness and nothing of my own invention.

Reading Mark 6 - They and I have no choice but to surrender to the presence of God flowing in and around me every day... And most especially I have no choice in this moment as I hear him once again offer me his bread, his hand, his sight through the words written and spoken there.

I am simply kidding myself to think that I have any ability to change or corrupt God's plan for me. When I am weak he is strong isn't an invitation – it is your reality.

It is not that you have been doing it wrong, it is that you have not been set free to see the constant and vigilant presence of God guiding and pushing your every thought and action. And right now God is inviting you to see it, and be present in His presence.

God may not be calling you to change anything other than your perspective. With your faith in what God is actually doing and is going to do for you – what you perceive as temptation and failure, desperation, your weakness, becomes your strength. When you come to the end of your own struggle for identity you are actually of use to God. When you come to the end of yourself God is strong in you.

Paul remembers a Promise from God:

But [God] 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 of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. – 2 Cor 12:9-10

Let me wrap it up by examining that one little word. Weakness.

You are weak. And that is exactly as God intends it. You are dependent on Him! You have little free will or responsibility in His eternal work. You can't earn

God's love nor contribute to that work of faith you desire for you and yours.

In fact, the idea that you have a stake or ability or strength at all to adjust God's plan... to give you life and to speak life and love and forgiveness into the lives of others... the idea that you have any strength to offer to that ... that is your rebellion.

You have not failed God. Your rebellion is not an apathy to do what God has asked of you, it is the occasions that you would see the world in any other way than the will of God unfolding through you and in spite of you - and for that reason try to take things into your own hands. And even in this God is more than capable of overcoming and overpowering your feeble attempts to do His job.

Jesus Christ is here and he says to you the same thing he said in sending out every prophet, apostle and disciple before you.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Speak it out loud to yourself, and trust it.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

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