

Strong in the Grace of God

When you experience sexual abuse, be it as an adult or a child, you are at that point vulnerable, helpless and *weak*. The weakness might be the product of physical force used by your assailant/s; for some it might be a product of mental/emotional manipulation, as is sometimes the case in child abuse for example. You have no real power and no real control. Perhaps you are now absolutely determined to always be in control. Or perhaps you find yourself in a pattern of helplessness, of weakness. God speaks about weakness. He speaks of His power being made perfect in weakness. Some of you might feel revulsion at that statement. Weakness for you is associated with abuse, either the abuse that resulted in weakness, or the weakness that allowed for the abuse; either way, the statement angers. The weakness, however, that God speaks of is not the weakness of abuse. Rather it is the weakness that allows us to live in God's strength, the weakness that brings us close to Him, that closeness bringing a comfort as well as awe at His perfect power—a power that is never abusive. The apostle Paul (2 Corinthians, 7-10) experienced afflictions which he asked God to remove. He refused. Why? Not because God is some cruel taskmaster. Paul experienced wonderful blessings of the knowledge, closeness and absolute reality of God as his weakness led him to absolute dependency upon God. Our weakness leads us to Him. Our weakness is a means whereby God's power is made known and more than that, it becomes a means of grace to us as we are reminded of His love and strength. That is a blessed comfort. His power shown through our weakness becomes a source of satisfaction of eternal importance. Christian reading this: do not be fooled by the lies of the devil who whispers that the only way forward from the despair of abuse is to become strong in yourself, to have control yourself over your life. As Matthew Henry commented ' *When we are weak in ourselves, then we are strong in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; when we feel that we are weak in ourselves, then we go to Christ, receive strength from him, and enjoy most the supplies of divine strength and grace*'. Non-Christian reading this: does this offend? Does it anger? I encourage you to take those feelings to Him in prayer, to ask for

understanding, to share your anger and hurt. What seems like madness through eyes blinded by this world becomes a wonderful realisation of hope, comfort and purpose. Ask the Lord to open your eyes this very day.