

## The Grace of God “Released Through Your Life”— The Power of the Cross, Part 2

1 Corinthians 1:23–2:5

Pastor Guy Gray

*“For the weakness of God is stronger than man’s strength” 1 Corinthians 1:25*

### **“For You” and “Through You” —Two Dimensions of the Power of the Cross**

Last week we studied the first dimension of the power of the Cross. Think of this dimension as God’s grace “for you”. This is the powerful message that Christ died “for” our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). This is the miracle of forgiveness and acceptance with God, given through the death of Christ “in your place”—as your substitute. Through this, if you really get it, you become a humble and grateful recipient of the grace of God through Christ. This is the first word of the gospel and it is powerful. But there is another dimension to the power of the Cross. This second dimension of the Cross is God’s grace “through you”. This dimension of the power of the Cross completes the message of the gospel. It reminds us that God does not “save us” only to forgive our sins and secure a place for us in heaven. God is “saving us” (1:18) that He might use us as agents of His grace in this fallen world. God has a purpose for our lives in this world. He intends to use us as individuals and as a community of faith, the church, to impact others with the love of Christ. The way He intends to do this comes as a surprise to us. His way is totally different than the way we are used to operating. His way is the way of Christ. It is the way of the Cross.

### **Power Through Weakness**

One of the words most emphasized in our passage is the word “weakness” (1:25 & 27; 2:3). This theme is used alongside a whole list of other words that paint a picture of the Cross—foolish, lowly, despised, things “that are not” fear and trembling. These are not the qualities that were esteemed in the culture at Corinth! The Corinthians were into strength, honor, personal achievement, status and demanding their rights. This sounds familiar, because these are the same qualities that are esteemed in our culture. The message of the Cross was foolishness in Corinth because it cut through their pride. It cut through their concept of how to actually get things done in the world. The way of God was totally different than their way. Who ever heard of power through weakness and humility?

### **A Different Way of Thinking and Living**

It’s pretty obvious that things weren’t going well for the Christians at Corinth. They were spiritually empty—they had no love—no impact for Christ and little experience of God’s power in their lives (even though they were proud of their “spiritual gifts”). The problem was, even though they had believed the gospel of God’s grace “for” them, there had been no change in their way of thinking and living. They were still living out of the mind-set of the culture of Corinth. But now they were being called to a different way of thinking and living—a radically different way—the way of the Cross. This is God’s call to us as well. In this new way of thinking and living we do what Jesus did. We seek first, not our own will, pleasure, success, status or comfort, but instead we seek to submit our lives to the will of God, even if it means denying ourselves. This is the way of the Cross. This is the way of being humble instead of proud—giving up our rights instead of demanding them—living in sacrificial love instead of pursuing our own preferences and agenda. This way appears weak to others. It makes no sense to those who do not understand the power of the Cross. It is the way of Christ and it **IS** the way of the God’s power!

### **The Miracle of God’s Grace “Through” Your Life is the Power of the Cross, Part Two**

When Christ yielded to the Cross, in submission, humility and weakness, he trusted that God almighty would intervene and raise Him up in resurrection power. That was the power of God at work through weakness! This is the same principle that is at work in our lives as we follow Christ. Both First and Second Corinthians are filled with teaching about this principle (in addition to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 see 2 Corinthians 1:5-9 & 4:8-11 & 12:9-10 & 13:4). Now it’s time for each of us to apply this principle in the daily details of our own lives. This means in our relationship with God and others. It starts with submitting your life to God and His purpose instead of demanding your own will. It is about being humble in relationships and acting in sacrificial love instead of seeking your own success—your own agenda—your own pleasure. This is radical. It is the way of the Cross. It is also the way of Christ’s resurrection power in our lives and in our world. Do you believe this? How can you act on this truth in the next week? How amazing and wonderful it will be to see the grace of God actually working through your life and touching the lives of others in this fallen world!

### **Ideas for Reflection and Discussion**

#### **God’s Grace Released Through You!**

This week we were reminded that the saving work of the Cross does more than just forgive us our sins. It prepares and equips us to be agents of God’s grace in this fallen world. What are some of the effects that the Cross should have in our daily life? Can you think of any scriptures that help us to understand how the Cross impacts us? (Luke 9:23, Philippians 3:10) To what extent do you see these

things at work in your life right now? How does the power of the Cross help us to minister in a broken world?

### **Humility and Sacrificial Love**

Think about the relationships in your life right now. Which of them need the humility and sacrificial love that the message of the Cross brings? How would that impact those relationships?

### **Today**

“HELP” needs your help!

Women’s ministry is collecting onesies & receiving blankets for HELP Ministries, located in the Philippines. Items can be left in the basket in the Lobby. Contact Maureen Gray for more information @ 638.9657

### **This Week**

Foundations—Thursdays starting October 4th, 7:00-8:30pm @ RWLG  
Foundations is a series of classes designed to help you stand strong in your Christian faith. Everyone is invited to come to any of the classes on a drop in basis. Childcare available with pre-registration. For more information contact Pastor Adam McMurray at 699.2226 or adam@riverwest.org.

### **Coming Up**

Fri 10/26-Sun 10/28  
High School Fall Retreat  
We’re on our way to the Mollala Retreat Center for a great weekend!  
Contact Pastor Josh at 699.2226 or josh@riverwest.org.