

Series: Psalms

Title: Omnipotence in Weakness

Text: Psalm 17: 5

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Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

For every believer there is omnipotence in weakness. When we have no power except Christ, then and only then, do we have all power.

The Lord Jesus taught the apostle Paul, “**My strength** is made perfect **in weakness**. (2 Cor 12: 9) Each of us who God saves are totally weak. And God chose weak things to save us. Why? He said, “**My strength** is made perfect **in weakness**.”

So Paul learned, “when **I am weak**, then **am I strong**.” (2 Cor 12: 10) We are always weak. But sometimes we vainly imagine we are strong. It is when we behold our utter weakness that we depend entirely upon Christ. When we depend entirely upon Christ then we are all powerful because Christ is all powerful.

This is what I mean when I say there omnipotence in weakness. Psalm 17: 5 is the prayer of a believer who has been made to know this very thing by God’s grace.

Proposition: This is the prayer of the believer who has total confidence in God’s power and ability because he knows the utter weakness and inability of his own flesh.

Divisions: 1) **Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings...** who are we asking to do this?—the only one who can: the triune God in Christ Jesus. 2) Where are we asking him to hold up our goings?—**Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings in thy paths**,--we don’t want to walk in the paths of the destroyer, we want our goings to be in God’s paths; 3) Why are we asking him to hold up our goings in his paths?—**Psalm 17: 5:...that my footsteps slip not.**

I. WE ASK OUR TRIUNE GOD IN CHRIST—Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings...

We Began By God

How did we come to be in Christ in the first place? Was it by our power? No, it is by God’s grace and power.

1 Corinthians 1: 29: That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1 Corinthians 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Not a single believer has anything to glory in, not anything to boast of.

- God our Father chose who he would save--“BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED!”
- God the Son, Christ Jesus, put away the sins of all those God chose by his substitutionary death on the cross
- God the Holy Spirit quickened us and called us to faith in Christ—we were made willing in the day of Christ’s power!

John 3:27: John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

We Have Been Kept By God

Brethren, how have we been kept from the first hour until now? By his same grace and power.

1 Samuel 2:9: He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Psalm 37:23: The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. 24: Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand....28: For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

1 Peter 1: 5: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We Continue By God

So do we look to ourselves for strength to persevere in faith? No, we ask God in Christ, **Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings.** And God shall hold up each and everyone of his blood-bought children because he promised to do so:

Jeremiah 32:40: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Application: The blessing in being made to see our utter weakness is that he makes us to behold our Redeemer who is all powerful, who upholds us by the word of his power. The same Power who upholds this whole globe shall uphold you, believer. Cry unto him continually to “Hold up my goings.”

II. WHERE DO WE ASK HIM TO HOLD OUR GOINGS?--Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings in thy paths,

We don't want to walk in the paths of the destroyer, of transgressors, not even in our own paths. We want our goings to be in God's paths. Notice, “paths” is plural. There are many “paths” our God has ordered from eternity which each of his children shall walk in.

Christ the Way

First, is THE WAY—Christ Jesus himself.

John 14:6: Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The one Way by which the holy and just God brings elect sinners to him, in holiness and righteousness, is Christ Jesus

Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby **we must** be saved.

- All who God saves **must** be made righteous in the righteousness of Christ alone
- All who God saves **must** be made holy in Christ our Sanctification alone
- All who God saves **must** be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ alone
- Christ is the only Way God can remain just and God can also be the Justifier.

Coming to God through God-given faith in Christ is the only Way our boasting is excluded and God receives all the glory! Therefore, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” The only Way into God's holy presence is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

What are we saying when we declare that we believe on Christ? We are trusting Christ has fulfilled the law for us—justifying us of all our sins, making us the righteousness of God in him; we are trusting that by Christ being formed in our hearts we have Christ who is the “Holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb 12: 14) We are saying that we believe God that we are accepted of God in Christ the Beloved! We are saying that nothing can be added to Christ. In him we are complete!

Hebrews 7:25: Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Application: Sinner, are you like an orphan child looking in at a feast spread out on a table? You would love to feast with us but you feel as though you can't enter because your clothes, hands and face are dirty. Oh, may the Spirit of Christ speak effectually into your heart now, he says,

Isaiah 55: 1: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2: Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which* satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. 3: Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David.

Picture: When Israel was taken captive in Babylon. God promised through Isaiah to send a redeemer to set them free. And God promised **a highway** to bring them from Babylon back to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 35: 8: And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness;

Christ is that Way: He brings all God's elect from the captivity of Babylon—from sin, condemnation, darkness and death—into God's presence in heavens Mt. Zion, in heavenly Jerusalem. And what God declared here in the picture is true of Christ.

Isaiah 35: 8:...the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

The unclean shall not enter—and such were all his people by nature, but Christ washed us by his own blood and washed us in regeneration—if you can come through faith in Christ, you've been washed!

Isaiah 35: 9: No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

No beast shall be in Christ the Way—only chosen sheep! And neither shall any lion or ravenous beast shall hurt us in Christ the Way! The Redeemed shall walk there!—not run, but walk ye in Christ, protected and provided for forever! Sinner come to Christ today!

Application: The believers continual prayer is, “Hold up my goings in Christ the Way!” “Father, I want to be found in him. I do not want to be found having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith[fullness] of Christ. “Father, I want the righteousness which is of you by the faith[fullness] of Christ, given freely to me through faith in him.” (Php 3: 9) Hold up my goings in Christ the Way! And Christ the Way promises,

John 6: 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. CHRIST IS THE WAY!

The Path of the Gospel

Then there is the path of revealed truth, the Gospel of our salvation. We pray God uphold our goings in the path of the gospel! God teaches us the gospel:

- Divine election
- Inseparable union between Christ his church
- **The death Christ accomplished!** Christ accomplished the redemption of his particular people—
- Free justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us through faith
- Christ's fullness to supply all our needs,
- Perseverance of the saints,
- The final glory of all God's elect with none lost.

Illustration: There is book learning in the letter and there is knowing in the heart.

True knowledge is more than book learning in the letter. Christ teaches us in the heart making us to experience his grace. We can learn the doctrine of perseverance of the saints—that those who are truly his shall endure to the end in faith. But let a trial come where we find ourselves unable to lift up our heads to God. Then we learn that it is God preserving us by which we persevere. A man will be “carried about with every wind of doctrine” until Christ bring us into the storm and makes us to see he is our anchor within the veil.

Then the doctrine of grace becomes one unified doctrine in Christ himself: election becomes election in Christ, predestination become predestination to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, conformed to the image of Christ, everlasting, unchanging, particular love becomes love toward us in Christ and for Christ's sake. All doctrine becomes the living word in our living Redeemer.

Our Lord and Savior teaches us effectually in power by experience:

Ephesians 3:17: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18: May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19: And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Colossians 2:7...abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Then we thank God for the trials. We say with the Psalmist, Psalms 119:71: It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. What great grace of God to make us walk in this path! But for the vain professor it is a different outcome—many learn doctrine in the letter...

Matthew 13: 20: But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21: Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Rather than become offended, by his grace, we pray hold up our goings in thy path.

The Path of Tribulation

We ask God to hold us in God's path of tribulation. “Through much tribulation ye shall enter the kingdom.” (Acts 14: 22) Believers, like unbelievers, face poverty, disease, disappointments, worldly difficulties; but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have conflicts which the world knows nothing of. One of which is persecution for Christ's name. Christ promised us that because the gospel is so offensive to natural man,

Matthew 10: 21: And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. 22: And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

We ask "Lord hold up my goings in thy paths to the end!"

John 16: 2: They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. 3: And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

Application: Brethren, it is sad how many in our day speak of this word, of God our Father and of Christ our Lord, as if he were a fictional character, as if this was a fable. Yet, the things men believe to be truth are delusional! It appears God has done what he said he would do. He said men "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess 2: 10-12) Here is the cause of sodomy, along with all the other wickedness, and the acceptance of it in our nation today. Here is the cause:

Romans 1: 22: Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23: And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24: Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26: For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28: And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Brethren, you and I are no better by nature. Here is the only difference.

2 Thessalonians 10: 13: But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15: Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

2 Timothy 1:8: Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God;

It is that very power that we ask to uphold us in his paths.

2 Tim 2:11: It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:--Lord, don't let us deny you. Hold up our goings in thy path.

Application: We try to load our barns with wood, hay and stubble at times. God, in mercy, sends trials to save his child from false confidences, false comforts, and false joys. He brings us to his feet to ask him, **Psalm 17: 5: Hold up my goings in thy paths,**

III. WHY DO WE ASK GOD TO UPHOLD US—Psalm 17: 5...that my footsteps slip not.

Indeed, every believer is to keep ourselves by heeding the word of God—**Psalm 17: v4: Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer....**but immediately David said, **5: Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.**

The Scriptures are true. They show us what is good and evil.

Proverbs 16:17: The highway of the upright is to depart from evil: he that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.

Proverbs 13:6 Righteousness keepeth him that is upright in the way: but wickedness overthroweth the sinner.

The word of righteousness is the doctrine of the Gospel. It preserves us from sin, and keeps us in the right way. The doctrine of Christ turns us from the sin of self-will, self-wisdom, self-righteousness and self-sanctification. These holy scriptures instruct us in the performance of good works, to use all the privileges we have been given to serve God, to observe every command of Christ, to walk in all his ways is a great preservative from false doctrine and antichristian worship.

Yet, we depend entirely upon our Savior to keep our foot from slipping.

Jeremiah 10:23: O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

1 Corinthians 10: 12: Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

God keeps us in his paths.

Proverbs 2:8: He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

Christ our Wisdom says, Proverbs 8: 20: I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: 21: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

Let's end this message the same way we began—by remembering the word of Christ Jesus to the apostle Paul.

2 Corinthians 12: 9: And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10: Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Brethren, Psalm 17: 5 is our continual prayer:

- To whom? **Psalm 17: 5: [Heavenly Father] Hold up my goings**
- Where?--**in thy paths,**
- Why?—**that my footsteps slip not.**

Only one who has been made to know what we are apart from Christ, one who desires to be found in Christ alone, can ask this in spirit and in truth. And our God shall because he everlastingly loves his people in Christ. There is Omnipotence in Weakness.

Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25: To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. **Amen.**