

December 2018

Strength of Empowerment

Psalm 19

"God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself."

Dieterich Bonhoeffer

Arnold Schwarzenegger changed the way movie heroes would be seen when he first appeared in American theaters in "Conan the Barbarian." From that moment on, a real man (a "man's man") would be a chiseled, defined strongman with the ability to slay the dragon, win the girl, and save the world. And since that time in 1982, the media has continued to provide example after example of these perfectly formed men who are able to do anything and everything. The literal supermen of our generation.

Thus far, I have not been able to achieve that chiseled look through prayer and TV watching... but I haven't given up hope!

Did that last part make you giggle? Why? Because you know (just as I do) that it's ludicrous to assume that I could look like Arnold by praying and sitting? Or, because you're trying the same method? What if I told you we're being just as ridiculous with our spiritual life and the worship that we've been called to participate in? Would we giggle then?

Let's be honest – the life of a disciple is anything but easy. That's why Jesus said the things He did in Luke 14:25-35. That's why He almost seems to discourage people from being His disciple without first considering what it will cost them. This isn't works based salvation, this is works based IN salvation. But we can't do it alone. We can't live this life of worship on our own strength. What glorious news to know that we've been empowered to do it together! By God's gracious gift of His Spirit, we've been given everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Part of that gift was the gift of one another.

Paul wrote to the Galatians that they should "[B]ear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfil the law of Christ" (6:2). One of the most beautiful aspects of a life of worship is when we live out this command and seek to be active in fulfilling this "law." There are two ways that we can go about empowering one another to a fuller life of worship:

1. Be a helper.

It only takes a moment to find something that someone needs help with. If we look around and open our ears, we will recognize things in our church and community that "someone" should do something about. Be that "someone" and do something for the glory of Jesus! Chaperone that youth outing, cleanup that area of town covered in litter, or volunteer for that position at church. A thing "undone" is someone's burden. You've been given the strength to take it – so take it!

2. Be helped.

Here's the harder part: receiving help. Guys, we're the worst at this. Needing help means being weak... and we don't want to be weak. But, if we're honest, we need help. First, we need the help Jesus provides. After that, we need to accept the gifts of God's grace that He's giving through the help others provide to us. You're not an island, so allow yourself to be helped. And learn to ask for it. That's not weakness, it's discipleship.