

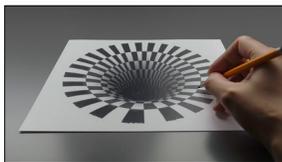
Weakened Warrior

Seeing Strength in Surrender

March 29, 2026



Today we're training ourselves to see how **vulnerability leads to invincibility**. Cuz our earthly eyes are *constrained* and *compromised* by this *material* world; and until we *overcome* the *deception* of their *perception* – we'll *stay* focused on *material wealth* and *physical power* as our sources of *strength*. And although everybody *knows* everything *earthly* ends up letting us *down* – we'll *let* ourselves *rely* on this world's *shallow* picture of strength until we take the time to look *deeper* and discover our *Creator's* bigger *truth*. So, **Are you seeing things clearly?**



Probably not! Cuz **our sight can't help but adapt to our environment – no matter how distorted!** I remember reading a crazy *study* in high school that always *stuck* with me – where people wore glasses that *flipped* their visual field *upside-down*. And at *first*, everything was chaos. They reached wrong, *walked* wrong, and *couldn't* *navigate* the world right in front of their *face* – and their *whole life* felt *broken*. **BUT** – after just *one* week, their brains began to *accept* the *distortion* and *adjust* their *perception*. *Suddenly*, things felt *normal* and they *became* *able* to *navigate* normally. *Upside-down* *became* right-side-up and *stayed* that way as long as the *glasses* were *on* – and *now*, when the glasses came *off* – *reality itself* appeared to be the problem. And it took *another* week to see things *right!* Let that sink in. Cuz it means that **we'll normalize anything if we look through the wrong lens long enough!** So, the *longer* we live with a *flipped perspective*, the *more* our *heart* will *treat* it like *truth!* *Isn't that wild?!*

We're so suggestible that when *our own* eyes tell us *lies*, our *heart's* willing to flip *everything* it *feels* about reality to *comply* with a *known lie!* *Yikes!* And *that's* why we're given such a *stern warning* about our *heart:*

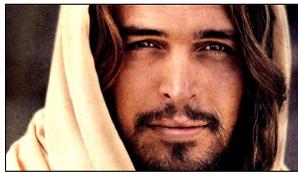
Above all else, guard your heart, for *everything you do* flows from it. **[And FYI]** – Proverbs 4:23 NIV

The heart is *deceitful* above all things and beyond cure. – Jeremiah 17:9 NIV

It's not *just* that our *eyes* can be *fooled* – **the deeper problem is how our hearts help hide the truth!** Cuz *they* can bend *our* reality by bending *themselves* to adjust *our perception* – just like the glass in a lens. And that *can* be bad or good. Cuz when a *lens* is *carefully* crafted to *your* condition, it can bring the *real world* into *focus*. But if it's the *wrong curve*, *prescription*, or *fit* – it can make everything *fuzzier*, *farther*, and more *distorted* than it *really* is. *That's* what happens when we let our *heart* *bend* to a *broken world*. It *normalizes* brokenness; **bent hearts help right look wrong.**

And if it's not *corrected*, it slowly *trains* us to *accept* and *adapt* to an *upside-down* version of *truth*. And it subtly *convinces* us that *we're* the weak link until we're *willing* call the *wrong* things *strong*. So, we start seeing *control* as a *strength* instead of a *struggle*. *Vulnerability* becomes *liability* instead of *sincerity*. *Surrender* looks like *losing a battle* instead of *building a bridge* and *power* takes the form *earthly intimidation* instead of *quiet confidence*. Cuz **we see this world as normal – until we see Jesus.**

Cuz **He refused to bend His heart to this world** and *instead*, lived His whole life *right-side-up* to paint the picture of *real* strength and *prove* the power of *real* truth. And on Palm Sunday, His *challenging claim* came to a *climax* when *He* came to *confront* our *false* perspective of *power*. Cuz a week *before* He flipped the *script* on *life and death* – he *turned the tables* on *war and peace* by charging into *battle* on the back of *donkey*. Cuz real power doesn't *rely* on *appearances* – when it has *references!* So:



This took place to fulfill what was spoken **[by God]** through the prophet: "Say to Daughter Zion **[aka Jerusalem]**, 'See, **your King** comes to you, gentle and riding on a **donkey**, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"... **[So the disciples went and]** brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. **[And as this unfolded, people assembled. And]** A very large crowd spread *their* cloaks on the road, while *others* cut branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. The crowds *that went ahead of Him* and *those that followed* shouted, "Hosanna **['Save us']** to the Son of David!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" **[Cuz to a faithful eye, the donkey didn't discredit His power – it confirmed His kingly identity! So,] ...[X]** When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." – Matthew 21:1-11 NIV

Which really meant, **"It's the 'You-know-who' that you won't say – and here's a hint to what we see: people only yell 'Save us!' to a Savior..."** And that's the secret message of Palm Sunday: **our heart has the power to conceal or reveal what's actually real.** The donkey *didn't* mean Jesus was *less powerful* than some *expected* – it meant He was *more powerful* than some *understood*. Y'see, we *forget* that we got things *flipped* – so down here, *weak men try to look strong* – when in *reality*, truly **strong men can afford to look weak.** So, while a *warhorse* might confirm an earthly *king* to earthly *eyes* – a prophetic *donkey* proves the *supernatural* sovereignty of the *Scriptural* Savior to those with a *spiritual* perspective!

[That's why Paul says:] The message of the cross *is foolishness* to those who are perishing, but to us who **[can see we]** are being saved it *is the power of God.* – 1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV

Notice that the *cross* itself *doesn't* change and neither does *Jesus* – **our heart has to change for reality to get recognized.** Cuz we can't *get* the help *we need* until we can see the Savior *we have*. And Palm Sunday was a wakeup call to *rethink* the way we see *this world*. Cuz *some* hearts saw *harmless* human on a *scrawny* donkey – while others *recognized* a *conquering* King *calling His shot*. And that *eye test* was a *reality check* to help us see *which way* our *heart's bent*: **worldly or holy.**

[Cuz] God *chose* the foolish things *of the world* to shame the **[so-called]** wise; **God chose the weak things of the world** to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things... so that no one may boast before *Him*. – 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 NIV

Y'see, God sent Jesus to *seek and destroy* every upside-down *belief* by personifying *perfection* – so *we'd* see how *backward* our belief *becomes* – when we bend *our heart* the *world's way*. So, He systematically *attacked* our most common *misconceptions* to inspire our *hearts* to *override* our *eyes*.



That is, **Jesus didn't just save us from sin — He *disarmed its deception by correcting our perception!*** And *first*, He showed us that **surrender can lead to freedom.** Cuz *this world naturally sees surrender as losing*, since we worship control. So, to *correct* our belief that *freedom means getting our way and staying in charge* — Jesus *abandoned His ego* and was *freed from earth's authority and anxiety.*

Cuz when *anyone* tells God, **“Not my will, but Yours”** we may be forfeiting *our control*, but we *also* get to *drop our defense!* And since God wins in the end, *surrendering to His command* just means *joining the winning side*; and under *His rule*, we *really follow one rule: accept and enjoy your real life!*

Because second, He showed us that **vulnerability can provide security.** Down *here*, we're scared to be *ourselves* cuz — in a *broken world without trust*, we see *exposure* as an *opportunity* to be *exploited*. So we *keep our cards close to our chest* and see *other people* as potential *intruders!* But Jesus lived an *open, inviting, and interruptible* life to welcome *children, strangers, and sinners* into a close *relationship* — cuz *He knew God's unbeatable battle plan: love conquers all.* Cuz *love builds bridges* where *walls* used to be — and transforms *threats* into *assets*. And on the cross, Jesus showed how *completely dropping our defenses* allows *love* to build a bridge to *Life itself* — cuz **we gotta be completely in God's hands if we want to be completely under His protection.**

Third, He showed us that **humility can produce unity.** The *world* says *humility* makes you *small*, and a *higher status* is what *attracts* us. But *pride* creates *distance* cuz our *ego obstructs* others from coming *too close*. So, Jesus *lowered Himself, served freely, and moved toward* people nobody else wanted. And that *humility* did *not* weaken His influence — it *deepened* it. The *proud* may gather a *crowd*, but only the *humble* create *closeness*. And **relationships built on fear will never be as strong as a family built by love.**

Fourth, He showed us that **scarcity can make you wealthy.** The *world* says *wealth* is *material* and it's measured by *quantity* cuz more *money* means more *options* and more *self-sufficiency*. But *scarcity* has a way of helping us see the *real riches* that *abundance* can *hide*. When you're *hungry*, the value of *bread* skyrockets and when you're *broke*, finding *five bucks* feels like winning the *lotto!* So Jesus lived a life *lacking* what the *world* wants — to *show* how it *trains* our eyes to recognize *real treasure*. Cuz *scarcity* doesn't save us — but it can *ready* us to *receive* God's *bigger gifts* by *emptying* our hands. **It's easier to claim your Heavenly estate when nothing worldly is holding you here!**

And *fifth*, He showed us that **weakness can become strength.** Cuz the *world* says *weakness* keeps *victory* out of reach and *strength* is the secret to *success*. So we *assume* an *image*, *conceal* our *cracks*, and *pretend* to have *power*. But Jesus *proved* that *worldly weakness* is *spiritual strength* cuz it *deepens* our dependance on God and *strengthens* our *connection* with the *King!* So, while His *donkey*, His *cross*, and His *tears* made Jesus look *weak* to *earthly eyes* — each moment *tightened* God's *grip* so He could pull Christ *back* into His *full potential*. So, when the *cross* seems to *weaken* us to *death* — look closer, cuz **weakness also gets us closer to the King; and there's no stronger lifeline here or beyond!**

And until we truly *understand* and *accept* that *reality*, we'll *misread* our *freedom, security, unity, wealth, and strength* — the same way *the world* misread *its King*. And until we take the *time* to take our glasses *off* and *stop* our *hearts* from looking through the *lens* of *this world*, we'll be *blind!*

And the Lord knows *I'm* learning *that* lesson! Cuz cancer has a way of forcing you to open your eyes and analyze the truth you've trained them to accept. And as much as we try to see ourselves as self-sufficient, God built our bodies with unavoidable weakness so we'd have to surrender to His strength! Cuz **God can't share His strength until we surrender to His will!** And boy has my sickness accelerated that process!



Cuz, as many of you know, cancer is a stone-cold killer! ... until you stop trusting your earthly eyes. Cuz just like Christ's Palm Sunday arrival, *looks* can be deceiving when *an enemy* appears to be approaching! But **even our infirmities might be allies** – *not* cuz they're blessings in *disguise*, but because *we're* still seeing *backward!*



And listen, over the last 8 weeks, I've *tried* to put *cancer* in its place by letting God's *bigger* picture *minimize* its *power* – but I gotta tell you, it still stings. Cuz, everyday I'm *frustrated* by how hard *swallowing* and *speaking* still is; I'm *angry* at the *routine* I *have to* maintain; I'm *overwhelmed* by *appointments*, *prescriptions*, and *bills*; and I'm *sad* that I even feel *bad*.



Because *that's* *natural!* **We all see things through the worldly lens by default**, cuz we put them on the day we were born – and they only *come off* when *we* reach up and *do it* ourselves! And, even *then* – it takes an uncomfortable period of *adjustment* before it resembles *reality*. But when I *take the time to make the effort* – I *can* see things a little more *right-side-up* – and this weakness **IS** building strength. And it starts with all of you.



Cuz I'm *not* social and I *don't* like asking for *help* by *default* – but your prayers, your *support*, your *encouragement*, and your *friendship* has *changed* the way I see. Cuz **the more vulnerable and humble I'm forced to be – the more close and connected I've become.** And when I *really* look *closer*, I can see that *since* all my *uncertainty* – I've never been more *reassured*; since all my *anxiety* – I've never felt more *supported*; since all my *fear* – I've never felt more *fearless!* So, as I go *back* to the *hospital* this week for more treatment – I *ain't* gonna *lie*, I *still* see it as *scary* and *uncomfortable*; but I *know* overturning my *heart* is just a matter of flipping my *perspective* by taking my *earthly* glasses *off*. And **the same goes for you and everything you're going through!**

So hear the question again: **Are you seeing things clearly?** When Jesus arrives in *your* life, do you see a *King* who can handle *anything?* Or do you still have things upside-down? When you see the unexpected way He approaches *your battles* – in *your health*, *your marriage*, or *your finances* – do you feel *dissatisfied* by His donkey, or are you *excited* to see the *solution* you *didn't* expect? Do you *still* see *defeat*, *danger*, and *weakness* as *reasons to worry* – instead of *signs of strength?* If so, you need to know that **the problem isn't Jesus – the problem is the lens.** The problem is a *heart* that has spent *too long* looking to a broken *world* while searching for a source of *strength!*

So **take off the glasses!** Turn to Jesus and let *His heart* be *your lens!* Cuz if the *earth* can turn our eyes upside-down in *one week* – *so can God!* And **that's what this Holy Week is all about!** From Palm Sunday to Easter morning – we're readjusting our eyes by focusing on the picture of reality that Christ came to paint. Cuz once we do, we'll see we have more than a weakened Warrior to *help* us fight our battles – we have a *King* who's already conquered *life*, *death*, and *this world!*

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.