

Awesome God #3

By Bill Denton

INTRODUCTION

A. The last couple of weeks we've been talking about the awesome God

1. The Bible says we can know some awesome things just from the creation
 - a. we can know about God's divine nature
 - b. we can know about God's eternal power
 - c. when you look at creation, you ought to be amazed
2. The Bible reveals awesome things about God that we can't know from creation
 - a. God's nature is awesome – He is spirit, not physical or material
 - b. God's characteristics are awesome – omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent
3. These are basic, fundamental truths about God which we must know if we are to understand who God is, and every one of them is awesome

B. Today, I want to take your mind down an altogether different track – still focused on the awesomeness of God, but show you that awesome really means awesome

1. Illustration

A man was shipwrecked and all passengers aboard drowned except him. He washed up on a deserted island with barely enough food and shelter to survive. For months, he scraped together material to build a little hut to escape the heat of the sun. He managed to find enough to eat, learned to catch a few fish. He kept praying that someone would find him and rescue him. Nobody ever came. One day, he had to go quite a distance to find enough to eat. He turned to go back to his camp, and he saw a column of smoke. He ran back to discover the wind had fanned the fire and burned down his hut and all his supplies. Distraught and discouraged, he wept. Later he wandered down to the shore and in the distance, he saw a ship headed his way. Soon a small boat was launched and his rescuers arrived. "How did you ever find me?" he asked. "We saw the smoke from your signal fire," they replied.

- a. it's amazing how things turn out sometimes
- b. here's a man who discovered that when he thought all was lost, he was saved

2. Illustration

If you were a football coach and had the opportunity to pick the players for your team, for the chance to play against the #1 ranked team, who would you choose? Fast 300 pounders for the line? Tall receivers with sure hands as receivers. Running backs with speed, agility and the ability to hold on to the ball. A quarterback with a quick mind and a strong arm. Nobody would pick a team of runts, slow on their feet, ball-droppers, untalented and uncoordinated. But that describes the people God chooses.

I. OUR AWESOME GOD WORKS FROM A POSITION OF WEAKNESS

A. Let's read a couple of passages from the Bible

1. 2 Corinthians 4:7

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; NASU

2. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me — to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. NASU

B. The first passage tells us something that is hard for many to understand

1. If I were God, I would stack the deck in my favor – I'd be able to do so
2. As a Christian, I often want God to stack the deck in my favor
3. God chooses to work from a position of weakness
4. 2 Cor 4:7 tells us something important about ourselves
 - a. the gospel is the treasure and we are just a container
 - b. can you imagine finding a pirate's treasure chest full of gold and jewels and dumping the treasure so you could have the chest?
 - c. look at the reason God put the treasure in an earthen vessel (clay jar) – so that the power will be of God, not us
 - d. in effect, God did stack the deck – it's his power that works through the gospel, not ours – the same creator God who made the universe

C. The second passage tells us to relax, accept the position of weakness so God can work

1. Paul's weakness eliminated pride and kept him humble – exactly what we need
2. Paul's weakness drove him to God instead of self – exactly what we need
3. Paul's weakness unleashed God's power – exactly what we need
4. God becomes awesome in amazing ways when we learn what Paul learned
 - a. "My grace is sufficient for you"
 - b. "power is perfected in weakness"
 - c. "when I am weak, then I am strong"

II. GOD HAS PROVEN HIS POWER THROUGH HUMAN WEAKNESS

A. Throughout the Bible, God has taken the weak and accomplished great things

1. Moses had a speech problem
2. Noah was a drunk
3. Abraham was an old man
4. Isaac was a daydreamer
5. Jacob was a liar
6. Joseph was abused
7. Gideon was afraid
8. Rahab was a prostitute
9. David was an adulterer
10. Elijah was suicidal
11. Jonah ran away
12. Naomi was a widow
13. Job went bankrupt and was diseased
14. Peter denied Jesus
15. the disciples went to sleep
16. the Samaritan woman was divorced
17. Zaccheus was too small
18. Paul was a religious zealot
19. Timothy had a weak stomach
20. Lazarus was dead!

B. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

2 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. NASU

1. There is an ultimate reason that the awesome God works from a position of human weakness – so that our faith will not rest on human wisdom but on the power of God
2. Great men and women of God are not great because they are great, but because the power of God works in and through them
 - a. they are people in whom the Spirit of God lives, works and effects great change
 - b. they are people with faith, not in self, but in an awesome God and they are not paralyzed by fear or lack of confidence
 - c. they are people who have a message that is the power of God to save

CONCLUSION

A. The awesome God displays his power through weakness

B. Heaven's call