

## "HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR POWERLESSNESS"

(Acts 23:23-24:9)

(Chuck Swindoll)

From Paul's time in protective custody in Jerusalem throughout his transport to Caesarea and during his stay in the Praetorium, he surrendered to his powerless position, sandwiched between two unchangeable circumstances. His response to his powerlessness offers two lessons worth remembering.

First, *refuse to wrestle and learn to rest*. When you wrestle, you don't think clearly. When you wrestle, you talk much and pray little. When you wrestle, you panic rather than trust. When you wrestle, you think only about your way, your rights, your plan, your well-being. I'm not saying there's never a time to fight. When fighting can achieve a clear objective without committing a sin, then fight for all you're worth. If struggling against your circumstances could make things worse, or when any choice causes more problems than it solves, then it's time to take control of yourself and let God have control of your future.

Second, *release your pressure and claim God's peace*. In the book *Your Churning Place*, Robert Wise says that everyone has a place where we feel the physical effects of pressure, tension, anxiety, and frustration.

You discover [the churning place] in the early years of your life. It seems to be located either near the pit of your stomach or at the base of your neck, where every muscle tightens. When it begins to turn and pump like an old washing machine, you find that every other area of your life marches to its lumbering, dull, paralyzing beat....

Nothing exempts us from the relentless process created by haunting memories and bankrupt expectancies. As universal as the human heart and head, the existence of the churning place cannot be denied.

And it is not a constructive place. Positive thoughts lead to action and results, but the churning place is a tank that fills with anxieties that just settle in to a stagnant infection.

God never asked us to meet life's pressures and demands on our own terms or by relying upon our own strength. This self-reliance produces only an anxious, turbulent existence in which we become increasingly hardened and insensitive to God's leading. Earlier in his ministry, Paul had learned the secret to powerlessness-surrender. When Paul stopped wrestling against an issue over which he had no control, he learned to find strength in God's peace.

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. 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. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)

By releasing control into the hands of God, Paul found greater strength than he had ever imagined could be his.

