



water from rock

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – January 10, 2023

The Lord be with you.

The children's book, *The Little Engine That Could* was a very popular bedtime story at our home. It's a story about The Little Engine needing to get over the mountain with a lot of toys for the boys and girls. And, as a little injured begins to gather steam to get over the high mountain, it begins to say, I think I can. I think I can, I think I can. I think I can, I think again, saying it each time a little faster than before and up over the mountain, the little engine goes... I think I can, I think I can. I think, again, I think again... Well, I love the story, but... Well, it's not entirely biblical.

There are two important differences between the Little Engine story and the Bible. First, the Little Engine says, I think I can, but the Bible says, I know I can. And the second important difference is that the little engine relies on its own power to get over the mountain, but you and I as believers in Jesus Christ, we have the power to get over any mountain before us. As followers of Jesus, we know that Jesus will give us all the strength and we need to do whatever He calls us to do, the Jesus will give us whatever we need to face, whatever he calls us to face. I know, I can.

We see that in a wonderful verse of scripture that you might know the verse, you might have memorized it. Is Philippians chapter 4:13, where the apostle Paul says, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. You might feel like the little engine today facing a mountain, it might be a mountain of financial difficulty. It might be bad news from the doctor, it might be trouble in your career... Well, this verse is telling us that you and I, that we are ready for anything through the strength of Jesus who lives within us, that you can do everything God wants you to do. You can fulfill God's will for you through Jesus Christ. Now, it's helpful to keep in mind just where the Apostle Paul is as he writes, is confident scripture... Well, Paul is in a Roman prison, he's in a Roman prison where he has been able to meet the circumstances of life head on through the strength that Christ supplies, so Paul is no armchair theorist here writing about the Christian life. Paul knows struggle. Paul knows problems, and Paul knows that he is ready for anything through Christ, who strengthens him. It's not I think I can. It's I know I can, because Christ lives in him.



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It is Christ in Paul, Christ in the believer, that is the secret here to facing any mountain before us today. Earlier in Paul's letter to the flipping Christians, he explains that the most important thing in life for him is Christ. Philippians 1:21, Paul writes to me, to live is Christ. It is in Christ that Paul has discovered the strength for anything in life. Then over in Chapter 3 of Philippians, Paul tells how he has learned to put no confidence in the flesh, to put no confidence in his own strength. Now, I have seen Philippians 4:13, I've seen it written on football helmets as the verse is promising that through Christ they could take it. Win the football game. Well, I'm not sure that this verse is saying that The through Christ, I could run a four-minute mile, rather this verse is promising that through the power of Christ, you and I can face whatever comes our way. If it's good, we can enjoy it, if it's not so good, well, we'll have the power to deal with all the circumstances of life because we have the strength of Christ. That Christ will strengthen you to deal with any trial, He will strengthen you to face any temptation to take on any demands that are placed on you, you will be ready for all eventualities through Christ who strengthens you.

This is not a one-time strengthening, rather this is a moment-by moment strengthening as we put our reliance on Jesus Christ, as we are weak in our own cells, we can live and work strong in the Lord, not strong in our own power, or in our own abilities. I can't help but think here of what the Apostle Paul says in Second Corinthians 12. God said to me, My grace is sufficient for you. My 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. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

This verse Philippians 4:13, it's God's word for you today, that you will find in Christ everything you need for body, mind, and spirit to do whatever God wants you to do as long as he wants you to do it because you can. You can do all things through Christ, who strengthens you. Remember the little engine wanting to go over the high Mountain and saying, I think I can I think I can again and again. Well, what... Today, you can say, you can say, I know I can through the power of Christ in me.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thanks for listening until next time.