



FROM THE CHAPLAIN

How can a group of strong individuals achieve strength as a unit?

Class of 2017 farewelled us this week. Their final reminder was that they are stronger together.

1 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.

2 Each of us should please our neighbours for their good, to build them up.

3 For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.'

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

5 May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

6 So that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:1-6)

This passage isn't talking about strength in terms of physical strength, it's talking about having strong faith in God. And that Christians should have been given a strong faith should 'bear with' those who are 'weak' in their faith. That is, they are to 'carry' and 'support' those who are in need.

But there's a principle here.

Those who are stronger or more capable are to look to support those who are in need. This is the opposite of how we are tempted to behave, but the strong shouldn't please themselves. To be self-centred and self-seeking is natural, but to build a strong team we aren't to use our strength to serve our own advantage. Those with a strong conscience must not trample on the consciences of the weak. All of us should please our neighbour for their good, to build them up.

Pleasing others isn't 'flattering' someone. Flattering people is usually the opposite to pleasing God. When we flatter someone, we're trying to get something from them, approval, or our own way. But even Christ did not please himself.

Instead of pleasing himself, Jesus gave himself in the service of his Father and of human beings. Jesus refused to please himself. He was willing to be insulted on another's behalf. Jesus was persecuted and crucified for those weakened by sin. So that they could be restored to a right relationship with God.

If we are weak...struggling in our faith, struggling with a sin, struggling in a relationship, remember that he knows our weakness and has provided a way out. If we're feeling weak, it is not a weakness to admit that or to ask for help. To seek the support of others. To put up our hand and say – I'm struggling and I need help.

If you need help in your exams, in your relationships, in your mental health, if you're feeling weak seek the support of others.

All of us need each of us. We are stronger together!
