

I watched a lot of cartoons when I was growing up. Sometimes the character would come up to a platform with a back on it like a thermometer. The character would swing a large hammer down on the platform and a weight would shoot up the thing that looked like a thermometer and ring a bell at the top. I always thought that was interesting. I never saw one until I was in my teens. I came across one at a carnival. So I had to try it.

The whole idea was to see how strong you were. I wasn't very. And the weight did not rise very high. I left feeling a bit chagrined, but glad for the experience.

Our current situation is like trying to ring the bell. Some people are looking at the current crisis as if God is saying, "How strong are you?" We are trying to be strong. But all the time there is a low grade anxiety building in us. And maybe a couple of times a day it reaches near the surface of our conscious mind and feels like dread or defeat or despair. In those moments we feel like failed Christians.

But we are looking at this situation all wrong. God is not looking to see how strong we are. God already knows our strengths and weaknesses. He knows how strong or weak our faith is. He knows we have never faced such a situation before. The experience of this crisis is not for showing something to God. It is for showing US something. It is showing our great need for Him.

How long will this crisis last? How bad will it be? If we lift restrictions soon will we see a second, maybe worse wave of illness and death? Will the food keep flowing? Will the health system get overwhelmed? Will there be help if I get the virus? Will I live through it? Will I live whole through it? Will a vaccine ever be available? Will the virus mutate each year like the flu does?

We don't have the answers to any of these questions. In the face of such questions, God does not expect any of us to be strong for weeks and months on end. God is not looking for strength in us. Instead, I believe...

God is looking for us to come to him to admit how weak we are. God is expecting us to depend on him, to learn how to live by faith in him.

Isn't it true that until this you were pretty self-sufficient? In the face of the above questions, we are not self-sufficient. We don't have the answers to our kids' questions. We can't assure them of the future. We can't make definite plans for the future. We can't even count on having a summer vacation, much less a retirement.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "We go to Christ for forgiveness, and then too often look to ourselves for power to fight our sins."

We don't have the power to fight our sins. We need God's help. We need his Word. We need the Holy Spirit filling us, leading us, working his will in us, transforming us.

It is only when we admit our weakness, both to ourselves and God, that HE will be strong through us. I cannot be like Jesus in every situation I face. But Jesus can be Jesus through me as I trustingly yield to Him.

Don't pretend to be strong in this crisis. Admit your need and seek God out for His strength.