

Daily Devotional, September 11, 2020 In Our Weakness We Are Strong

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV)

J.R.R. Tolkien was a one of the great writers of the 20th century and one of my personal favorites when I was young. A professor of language and literature at Oxford University, Tolkien wrote poetry and epic full-length stories. He is most well-known for his great works of fantasy, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. His successful writings have led to J.R.R. Tolkien being known as the “Father” of modern fantasy literature.

In Tolkien’s amazing group of fantasy stories, great armies battle for control of Middle-earth. The characters of this story are led by powerful elves, dwarves, wizards, kings, and warriors who exert their skills and powers to influence and control the world around them. This amazing story quickly grips your imagination. The powerful characters do amazing things, but it is not those characters who are the centerpiece of the story.

The main character of the *Hobbit*, which is the prelude to the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is a small, ordinary hobbit named Bilbo Baggins. Bilbo lives a quiet life in a picturesque little community filled with other hobbits. Bilbo is unexpectedly caught up in a great adventure, led by the wizard, Gandalf. The adventure goes through beautiful and challenging terrain.

Along the way, they encounter challenges and battles of all kinds. Part way through the story, the princess elf, Galadriel, asks a question of Gandalf. She inquires as to why he has involved the little hobbit in this perilous adventure. After all, the hobbits were only Halflings—very small people.

Gandalf’s response is such a powerful reminder to us today about how we can be helpful in the world around us. Gandalf responds to the mighty elf, “Some believe it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. It is the small, everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love. Why Bilbo Baggins? Perhaps because I am afraid, and he gives me courage.”

Each day, we look around and see great challenges in front of us. The news is filled with never-ending news about COVID-19, political battles, protests and rioting, natural disasters such as the fires raging in the west and the hurricane-like storms ripping through the southern portions of our country. It is easy for us to look at these big problems and think that we are too small, too insignificant to make a difference. That is simply not true. When we offer acts of kindness and love in our everyday lives, we make a difference. As the stories of the *Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* play out, you find that the smallest of characters make the biggest contributions. That is how life is. “It is the small, everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay. Small acts of kindness and love.”

Prayer: Lord, I desperately need your strength to move forward. I need your Spirit to lead me. I feel weak and helpless. I feel as though I have no strength to carry on. But somewhere in the back of my mind, I know that in my weakness, you are strong. Your word tells me that I can be confident in all of my weakness, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. For in times of trouble, you are the very strength that I need to prevail. Thank you for never leaving me. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

A NOTE TO ALL OF OUR DEVOTIONAL READERS: As of tomorrow, there will no longer be a Saturday devotional sent out due to some scheduling difficulties. We will however be moving that devotion to Sunday morning, which will make it a true *Sunday Funnies Devotional!* I hope this works out well for all of you. I am pleased to make these little thoughts and inspirations available each day. I hope you will continue to make them a part of your daily prayers and meditations. Thanks for your understanding and God Bless!

Pastor Jim Andrews