



Perfect Strength By Perfect Weakness

II Corinthians 12:9

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

About six inches of snow blanketed the West Virginia hills. It was cold: 19 degrees to be exact, and the recent snow made the little road tricky, especially when the tire tracks we were following took a right at an unexpected fork in the road. Our Ford truck slid to a stop on the ice as we tried to get our bearings from the directions scribbled on a piece of paper during a phone conversation with Sister Jarvis.

Turn right on Valley Chapel Road. Some people call it Freeman Creek, but the name is really Valley Chapel. If the sign isn't knocked down, it says Freeman Creek. Go 8 miles to a three-way stop and turn right on Right Fork, and follow that all the way. It turns to gravel (which is the place we thought we were at because the tire tracks revealed a gravel surface). When the pavement turns to gravel, you are on Squirrel Road. Some people call it Elk Lick Road, but the name is really Squirrel Road. If you can find the road, it might be covered in snow, just keep driving. My house is at the end.

Why were we on this icy trail, deep in the hills of West Virginia? Ironically, it started in a prison in Florida. A brother named Michael Sanders, who has dedicated his life to spreading the Message inside the prisons of Georgia and Florida, sent an email to our Prison Ministries department and asked for us to send an inmate some Message books. He said the 90-year old grandmother who requested the material had been in *The Deep Calleth To The Deep* meetings in Washington DC. After a little research, we found that Sister Josephine Jarvis lived in the hills of West Virginia under some of the most primitive conditions that the United States has to offer. A snowstorm was on the way, and the old sister might need a little help making ready.

Without delay, Brother Joseph had a crew of three of us on the road. We didn't know what to expect, other than she mentioned that her house was cold because of drafts through her windows. Our mission was to help her get ready for winter, and also get a testimony or two that might be a blessing to other believers around the world.

After a few stops to get our bearings and digging through the snow to make sure we were on a gravel road, we finally arrived. The lonely old house was almost two hundred years old, and what seemed like miles from the nearest neighbor.

The front porch was covered in plastic, something we later learned that a kind brother from Ohio did to help keep the cold air from blowing through the house. Most of the windows had a thin sheet of plastic covering the hole that glass once filled. A couple of the windows were completely open, with nothing to stop the frigid air from freely blowing through. We did our best to stay upright while skating on the icy path to her back porch.

A dog barked from inside, announcing our presence. "Hello brothers," came out an uncovered window, and one of the most precious little old ladies you could imagine opened the back door.

Sister Jarvis was just shy of five feet tall and couldn't have weighed more than 80 pounds. She pulled her thin, red sweater close to her and hurried us inside to get out of the cold. She swayed back and forth when she walked, and each step produced a faint mechanical "squeak." The sound came from a steel leg brace, a result of a bout with polio decades ago. The age of the little house was obvious from the moment we stepped inside the drafty back door. Daylight was visible in many areas of the ceiling. There was no furnace or central air. Gas space heaters glowed throughout the house, which provided enough warmth if you were close by, but after only a few minutes inside, our feet were freezing cold.

She led us to a little kitchen table, where she had a fresh-baked turkey, and mashed potatoes and gravy. When we spoke earlier, she apologized that she wouldn't be able to feed us when we came because she hadn't been to the store in a couple weeks and was out of food. (It turns out that Sister Jarvis doesn't drive, and she depends on a kind neighbor to bring her to town every once in a while, where she can redeem her food stamps.) But she did have a few potatoes left and a frozen turkey, so she graciously had a hot meal ready for us when we arrived. We've all had hospitality before, but nothing could compare with what we received that snowy afternoon. She gave us everything she had.

Before we knew it, Sister Jarvis had all the dishes stacked up next to the sink and ready to wash. A rotten egg smell filled the room as the water ran from the faucet. She must have noticed our reaction and said, "It's sulfur water. You can't drink it, so I just use it for washing. I get my drinking water from the spring outside. My hair fell out for a while from washing in that water, but the Lord let it grow back. I'm thankful."

While the other two brothers in our crew went outside to start work on the house, I stayed with the hopes that I might hear a testimony or two about Brother Branham. From the moment I met her, I knew this little lady was something special, but I had no idea that I would hear such a story.

She looked me in the eye:

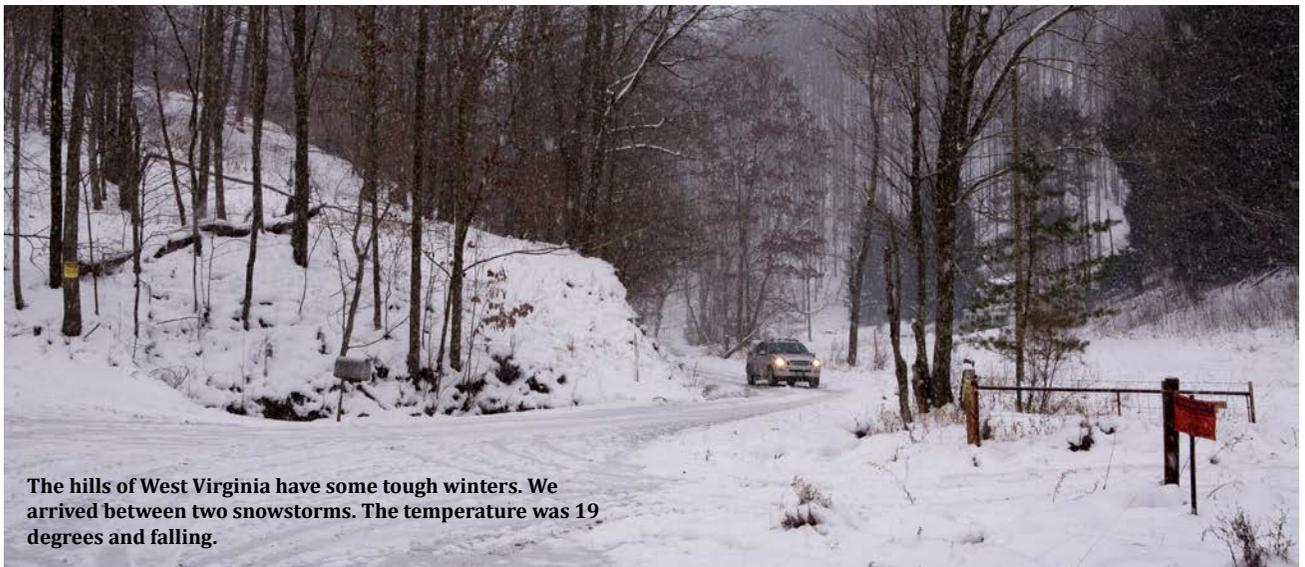
It's been a long, hard journey, but there has been a lot of blessings that balanced out the heartache. This Message is for real. There is no other life outside of It.

I could feel the love in her heart when she mentioned the Message. This was no lukewarm believer; this was the real thing. She had only said a few sentences and I was already at the edge of my chair, anticipating her next word.

I nearly died from polio when I was a baby. It crippled me up real bad.

Both of my parents died when I was four. My father was a sign painter and got kidney colic from lead paint. My mother just didn't want to live anymore and gave up. She took TB and died.

That left me to go stay with my grandmother, and she didn't want me. She filled out a request and sent it to three orphanages in South Carolina. She didn't care which one took us; she just wanted to get rid of me and my two brothers. The Baptist orphanage accepted us, so we went there. I had a real good home, the best. Better than a lot of children that had parents. Except for one thing...



The hills of West Virginia have some tough winters. We arrived between two snowstorms. The temperature was 19 degrees and falling.



We wrapped the back porch in plastic to keep the snow and ice out. Sister Jarvis has to walk out the back door and to the side of her house to get to her drinking water from the spring. The water inside the house is full of sulfur, and not safe to drink.

Below: The kitchen is where Sister Jarvis likes to be. She had a hot dinner waiting for us when we arrived.

Sister Josephine paused for a moment, raised her finger, and looked down at the table in front of her. She tapped the table a few times, unable to speak. She gathered her composure, looked up at me and said,

...I didn't have anybody to love me.

I was in the orphanage when the depression hit, and they closed the home. They put me up in a hospital building. That is when my testing time came. Having polio like I did, I was just one of those children that had a bad lot in life. I was crippled and had to turn sideways when I walked.

I did my best to keep up with the other kids. I was determined. The second grade school teacher decided she was going to have a coloring contest. The teacher had a son who had a pair of roller skates that he grew out of, so she said she would give away those skates for a prize. Most of the other kids had someone that would come see them and bring them things, but I didn't have nobody like that. I wanted those skates so bad, so I practiced and worked really hard. I did my best, and I won that contest. But they wouldn't give me the skates. They told me that I was crippled so I couldn't have them.

I held back the tears as I looked across the table at what was once a little crippled orphan. I briefly closed my eyes and imagined how devastated that precious child must



have been. Her classmates had visitors and maybe even a glimmer of hope that one day, they would return to a loving home. This little girl had nothing, not even a pair of second-hand roller skates. Now, after eighty-some years, that wound was still fresh in her mind.

It got me depressed for a little bit, but I just made up my mind that I could do as good as them. When the kids would go skating, I'd borrow one skate for my good leg. I was determined that I would keep up with everybody in every way.

A smile started to form as she seemed to jab a little at those that may have not been so kind to her while growing up.

I could read any book in the library when I was in second grade. By the time I was in high school I could play tennis as good as anyone. I played first base on the softball team! It gave me a little bit of a haughty attitude I guess, but I could do anything they could do.

When I was 16 years old, I did what all the rest of the girls and boys did: I talked to the superintendent and told him I wanted to be baptized. I didn't know what I was doing, it was just one of the rules of the orphanage. So I was baptized, with the wrong baptism of course. It didn't mean anything to me.

Tears filled her eyes and her voice shook for a moment as she continued.

But deep down in my heart, I knew there was something out there and some day I was going to find It. It was the deep calling to the deep... but I didn't know what it was.

I always went to church. I knew that if I kept searching, I would find It. I kept going to the Pentecostal churches. It was back when Oral Roberts and all the big-name preachers were on the field. And I went to every meeting that would come up. I married Wayne, and he would usually go with me.

We had a little apartment about 20 miles out of Washington DC, and I heard that Brother Branham was going to be in town. I caught the bus with my children and got there real early, about 2:00 in the afternoon. We sat on those big stone steps at Constitution Hall with my three children, waiting for the doors to open. When they opened, everybody rushed in to get a seat. We went up into the balcony where I could see real well. It was the first night of the meeting, and Brother Branham preached a sermon titled, "God's Eagle Saints." I don't think it's on tape.

He called a lot of people out that first night. There was a woman near me that had a turban around her head like the women used to wear. Brother Branham called her out and told her she had a tumor on her head.

The next day is when he preached "The Deep Calleth to the Deep." She came back and the cancer had fell

off. They sat two rows in front of us. She had that cancer in a jar and people were coming up looking at it. Course, I didn't understand things back then 'cause I never seen anything like that. I went to Oral Roberts' meetings before. I even went through his prayer line, but it didn't do anything for me. I had never seen anything like all those sick people in Brother Branham's meeting. It never left me because I knew the Deep was calling that night. I thought about it and thought about it. Then I thought, "Well, that's what's calling out to me... If I could just find it."

A little while after that, her husband left her (one of the many times), and she moved to North Carolina. Little Sister Jarvis almost came out of her seat when she began talking about that fateful day when she finally found what she had been searching for. She pounded her hand on the table as she spoke, not about another great evangelistic meeting, but about a five-hour tape her friend invited her to hear.

September 28, 1962 was the date. My friend told me, "You know that thing we been looking for? Well, I found it. Have you ever heard of William Branham?" I told her, "Oh yes." And I told her about when I was in Constitution Hall in DC and heard him preach. She came and got me and took me home with her. She told me that she wanted me to sit down and hear this. She warned me that it was about five hours long, and it was by Brother Branham. I got all excited about that. I listened and kept hitting on the table. I said, "This is it! This is it! I found it! I found it!"

She was a school teacher, so she had money to get the tapes. She made sure I heard the messages after that.

I knew my life had changed. But no matter how hard I struggled to get to one of Brother Branham's meetings, I couldn't get there. We went all the way to Jeffersonville one time, thinking we would see Brother Branham, but he went to Shreveport instead, and we didn't get to see him. I just wanted to hear more and more of Brother Branham.

After being orphaned and given to an uncaring grandmother, surviving a devastating battle with polio, growing up with no one to love her, and moving time and time again with her alcoholic husband, surely her life would change now that she had the Message. Indeed, her spiritual life changed drastically, but the worldly hardships never slowed down. Sister Jarvis then began to reflect on her family life. As she spoke, she didn't blame others for the hard times. She took it all in stride, and no matter how desperate the situation, she always held to what she had found that day in North Carolina.

When Wayne got drunk, whew! I'd run and hide with my children. It got to where the Spirit of the Lord would come on me when he would do those things, and I'd raise my hands up and start praying in tongues. (She smiled and nodded her head forward.) He'd run.



The house Sister Jarvis lives in has no glass in the windows, no central heating, and no insulation. There was six inches of snow on the ground, but notice there was no snow on the roof. The lack of insulation allows the heat to quickly escape through the roof and melt the snow.

He had to drink because he was so tormented. Many times, he just up and left me and the children with no money or food. We never had a home. We moved all the time.

We went to California. Wayne left me again on one of those trips he took; left me in the middle of Los Angeles with no place to stay, no money, nothing. He had a bad habit of doing that, but the Lord never failed to have somebody there to rescue me. My boys were old enough to work, so they went to the junkyard and got some parts to fix the old DeSoto car my husband wrecked (he hitchhiked out of town). I told them to go on, and I caught the bus back to Phoenix.

I got a job, then called Brother Fuller and Brother Outlaw, and they found me a place to live. Brother Branham came and preached "Harvest Time" while I was there. My husband showed up and called us, and my son took the car to go pick him up. He went to that meeting with me.

God knew what he was doing, and I always knew that I was supposed to stay with my husband. I can't say that God required it of me...

She didn't finish her sentence, but I could tell she knew the whole time that her husband would be saved one day, and she didn't regret a single thing. Again, her husband left her to fend for herself, and this time she ended up in North Carolina.

Wayne was gone for months on another one of his jaunts, and I had a dream to call a phone number. So, I called the number and asked if they knew where my husband was. The woman said that she knew, but her boyfriend told her not to tell. She told me enough to track him down, so my son and I went down there and found him. I'd always go find him and bring him back. He was on a long drinking binge. My son told me to leave him right where he was because I had enough trouble, and I wondered if I was doing the right thing. That night I had another dream. I dreamed I felt a hand on my shoulder and I turned around and it was him. He said, "Why did you take so long to come get me?" I could see that hurtful expression in his eyes that he wanted help so bad. So I knew I was supposed to get him. We went and picked him up. When I got into the front seat of the car, I felt my husband's hand on my shoulder, and I turned around to see his face just like I saw in the dream. Sure enough, he said, "Why did you take so long to come get me?"

I could see the love in her eyes as she thought about her husband. No matter how many times he left her with nothing or how many worryful nights she stayed up wondering where he was, she still loved him. And in the end, her testimony overcame the lure of alcohol to her husband.

My son Ron had found this place in West Virginia and we came out here.



We spent two days doing our best to make the house a little warmer. We wrapped the back porch in plastic, insulated the attic, plugged the holes in the ceiling, fixed the open windows, and filled her cupboards with food.

Wayne changed, he really did; he quit drinking. But he never gave up smoking. He got to where he would lose his breath so bad he couldn't talk. When he was laying there in the hospital with emphysema so bad, I asked him, "Do you ever talk to the Lord when you are laying there?" He didn't say anything, just shook his head up and down.

I couldn't go to see him one day, so I called the nurse on the phone. She put the phone next to his ear and I said, "Honey, I didn't get to come to see you today, but I'm coming tomorrow." He whispered "OK." I said, "I love you honey." He said, "I love you too." That's the first time he told me in years that he loved me. Those are the last words he said. He died that night.

Two of her three children have also passed away, both of them living rough lives, but finally giving their hearts to the Lord. The third is still running, but Sister Jarvis firmly insists that she has claimed him for the Lord's Kingdom. Through it all, she has experienced something over the past few years that had always eluded her: Peace.

I used to pray when I was young that I wouldn't live past 50 years old. I just couldn't imagine going through the things I went through at an old age, but, you know, the Lord gave me a break from it. I don't have to go through any of that now. He moved it all away so I could think about the Word. I really believe that I have been blessed knowing the Word like I have in the peaceful solitude of being here by myself. All the heartache I went through was for a purpose... (She broke down for a moment, paused, wiped her eyes, and continued.)

The Lord had something for me here. Just to talk to Him. He gave me a prayer ministry. Any time I feel led, I can just go in there in the room and pray. I can't get on my knees anymore, so I sit in that chair. I think He understands.

Tears were streaming down her face as she spoke. Above all the heartache, this was what meant the most to Sister Jarvis.

That life is real to me. I couldn't never replace what God has done for me. I'll listen to those tapes over and over. I go to sleep listening to him, and I wake up and he is still preaching. That's my life.

I thank God for all the heartaches and all the scourgings, because it brought me to the way of life that I know Him. I know It is the Truth. Perfect strength does come by perfect weakness. (She points to her heart.) This has to be perfectly weak and completely submitted to Him, and then you can be at rest. The Lord knew that was the desire of my heart. I believe it's almost over with.

The greatest part of my journey has been in the last few years, because I know that is when I have had the

greatest contact with Him. I can just sit and listen to Him and think about these things. I was doing it all the time really, but now... It is such a blessing to me that I don't have to worry about where I'm going to live tomorrow or if I'm going to have a roof over my head. (She looks down.) I never knew lots of times. I had to worry about those things so much that I didn't have the time to do the things I do now.

I read the *Catch The Visions* over and over. I pray for Brother and Sister Duarte (March 2009 issue) all the time. Especially Sister Duarte. Bless her heart having to live in a place like that. My heart goes out to her. I pray for Brother John in Africa too (Sep 2009 issue), and Brother Jefte (Summer 2010 issue) and his family.

I live like a rich person compared to the people in the *CTV*. It makes me feel guilty when somebody brings me a treat like strawberries. I also sure do appreciate the free gas I get. The gas company has to cross my property to get to one of their wells, so they give me free gas. I don't know how I would make it without that.

When we asked how many people that she had introduced to the Message, she rolled her eyes and started counting. "Well, there's Orpha, Frank and Melinda, David, Mary, Mildred..." The list went on and on, and some of those people are aunts and uncles or grandparents of people working here at VGR in Jeffersonville! She may be isolated to the backwoods of West Virginia, but this little sister has done quite a work for the Lord that is reaching worldwide, and she's not finished. We brought her a replacement set of MP3 CDs, because she passed hers out to some of the only people that she ever sees: employees of the local gas and timber companies. We also brought her a full set of the new Missionary CDs so she can keep her MP3s for herself.

By the time we left, we had the roof insulated, all the windows covered in plastic, the ceiling tacked up where it was falling down, the spring outside fixed so the ground wouldn't be dangerously slick, the holes in the ceiling plugged with insulation, and her cupboards filled with food. One specific request was that we would wrap the back porch in plastic so she could walk outside without slipping on the ice. This was important, not only so she could safely walk out to her spring, but also for another reason that meant a whole lot to her.

You know, Brother Branham said the rapture could happen between 6 and 9 in the morning. Now this could be a little hidden desire deep down in my heart, but I keep thinking that I'll go out the kitchen door and out on the porch some morning, and he'll be standing there. He'll say, "Good morning friend." (The passion in her voice was undeniable.) It's such a wonderful thought! And just being here by myself like I have been, I feel at peace.

The three of us stood in the kitchen with Sister Jarvis when we finally had to say goodbye. She asked one of us to pray. We responded, "Sister, thank you for allowing us to spend the past two days with you. We all three think it has been one of the greatest honors of our lives to come into this consecrated home. Would *you* pray?" We knew exactly what Brother Branham was talking about when he said, "You could tell she'd talked to Him before."

Lord Jesus, I don't know why Brother Joseph sent these brothers to the hills of West Virginia to help me. I'm nothing. I didn't think anybody cared about me, but You showed me that You care...

The Bible says, "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*" When we left Jeffersonville, this Scripture was on our minds. We were thinking that WE had the opportunity to do something for one of God's children. But now, our thoughts are different:

Sister Jarvis, thank you for what YOU did for us. As you read this article, you are probably sitting in your chair with the sound of your heaters sputtering in the background. But you are not alone. At this very moment, there are others wiping tears from their eyes and thanking the Lord for the life that He has given them. All the days that you were true to the call on your heart, and when it seemed like there was no one who cared, you were building a testimony that would encourage thousands of believers around the world. Now is that time. Thank you Sister Jarvis. †



The Catch The Vision Team (from left to right) Samuel Borders, Chad Vaughn, Daniel Evans, and our good friend, Sister Josephine Jarvis.