



When God Strengthens

- Billy Graham says: "As an evangelist, I have often felt too far spent to minister from the pulpit to men and women who have filled stadiums to hear a message from the Lord. Yet again and again my weakness has vanished, and my strength has been renewed. I have been filled with God's power not only in my soul but physically. On many occasions, God has become especially real, and has sent His unseen angelic visitors to touch my body to let me be His messenger for heaven speaking as a dying man to dying men."

- Encouragement is wonderful and can fill us with hope and a desire to “do all things through Christ who strengthens me”
- There are also times when we need more than encouragement, hope, more than a promise
- We need strength, both spiritually and physically

- **2nd Timothy 4:16-18 NIV** 16 At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. 17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- His strength comes when we finally release all of us and allow His Holy Spirit to fill us, strengthen us and march us into victory
- The Greatness of a Man's Power is the measure of his surrender

- When J. Wilbur Chapman was in London, he had an opportunity to meet General Booth, who at that time was past eighty years of age. Dr. Chapman listened reverently as the old general spoke of the trials and the conflicts and the victories. Then the American evangelist asked the general if he would disclose his secret for success.

- “He hesitated a second,” Dr. Chapman said, “and I saw the tears come into his eyes and steal down his cheeks, and then he said, ‘I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities; but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with the poor of London, I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was.”

- And if there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life.’”

- Dr. Chapman said he went away from that meeting with General Booth knowing that, “the greatness of a man’s power is the measure of surrender.”
- We are going to look this evening at God’s promise for strength and power as we yield our all to Him

**Deuteronomy 31:6 NLT** So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.

- The greatest drainer of strength is the feeling of being alone

- **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT** 9 Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11 Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12 A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

- The Israelites were getting ready to enter the promise land of Canaan
  - There were armies greater and more experience than them
  - There were walled cities stronger than them
  - They were strangers in the land
  - And there were giants, compared to them, in the land

- The Israelites were getting ready to enter the promise land of Canaan
  - Then God tells them not to be afraid and panic when they see the task at hand
  - Both will happen when you are depending only upon yourself or fragile mankind

- God gives them the reason
  - He will personally go ahead of you in preparation
  - He will never fail or abandon them
- Even when God allows other nations to discipline them because of sin

- **Lamentations 3:22-23 NIV** 22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions (mercies) never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

- When G. Campbell Morgan was a young man he visited two elderly ladies each week to read the Bible to them. When he read **Matthew 28:20**, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”
- He said, “Isn’t that a wonderful promise?” One of the ladies quickly replied, “Young man, that is not a promise. It is a fact!” All of God’s promises are fact.

- **Isaiah 40:27-31 NLT** O Jacob, how can you say the Lord does not see your troubles? O Israel, how can you say God ignores your rights? 28 Have you never heard? Have you never understood? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth. He never grows weak or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. 29 He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.

- **Isaiah 40:27-31 NLT** 30 Even youths will become weak and tired, and young men will fall in exhaustion. 31 But those who trust (wait) in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

- God never grows weak in His promises nor weary with our sinfulness
- **Vs. 29** He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless
- **Vs. 31** Those who trust and wait on the Lord will find new strength
- They will soar with childlike faith and stand and continue to march forward not fainting

- Why/How? They have learned to lean upon their Heavenly Father and trust everything to Him
- The nation of Israel had to wait until the time of cleansing was done before God gave them permission to enter the Promised Land
  - Upon waiting, God gave them the victory

- **Ephesians 6:10 NLT** A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
- Paul had just completed talking about being a Christian in the home, fathers, masters and slaves

- **Ephesians 6:5-7 NLT** 5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. 6 Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. 7 Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. HOW!!!!

- Only one way, being strong in the character, power and promises of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
- We want to be strong in ourselves
- Pride tells us to pull ourselves up by our bootstraps
- Envy tells us we are just as strong as powerful and the next Christian

- **Psalms 103:13-14 NLT** The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. 14 For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.
- We must yield to the strength and power God offers to us

- **Deuteronomy 31:6 MSG** “Be strong. Take courage. Don’t be intimidated. Don’t give them a second thought because God, your God, is striding ahead of you. He’s right there with you. He won’t let you down; he won’t leave you.”

- **2nd Corinthians 12:7-9 NLT** So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. 8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

- God's power always comes through our weakness
  - Even when it seems to be our physical strength or determination, it must be yielded to His glory
- Paul begged the Lord to let him be strong again
- God's response was always the same, "No, I have given you something greater, my grace."

- Notice, Paul rejected this three time
  - No God, I think I need the thorn gone to be able to do and be all you have called me for
  - I know better God

- Listen to what God tells Paul, “You need my power and my power works best in your weakness.”
- Did Paul have it all figured out when he was going through this?
- I don’t think so, but he got excited about what God was going to do in his life through his weakness

- Philip Yancey tells of a letter he received from a friend whose daughter, Peggie, was terminally ill. The mother wrote: The weekend before she went into the hospital for the last time, Peggie came home all excited about a quotation from William Barclay that her minister had used. She was so taken with it that she had copied it down on a 3 x 5 card for me:

- "Endurance is not just the ability to bear a hard thing, but to turn it into glory." She said her minister must have had a hard week, because after he read it he banged the pulpit and then turned his back to them and cried

- Yes, life can be tough. Funerals come unexpectedly. Doctors read reports that spell out very bad news. Relationships sour. Stock-market losses mean dramatic change to retirement incomes, investments, and financial security.
- In the midst of any bad news, it is critically important to stay the course, and to work hard, always moving toward the finish line.



**Nehemiah 8:10 AMP** do not be worried,  
for the joy of the Lord is your strength