



## PUTTING ON THE LORD'S STRENGTH

The conflict of the ages is dawning upon us. The church has entered into a divine process of renewal to prepare her, both as a bride and as a mighty army, for days of darkness and glory that will mark a final great end-time harvest of souls.

Realizing that his time is short, Satan is attacking Christians by spirits of condemnation, sickness, discouragement, depression, etc. Despite the fact he was totally defeated at Calvary, Satan seeks to

deceive believers with lying symptoms to bring them under bondages of mourning, hopelessness and despair. Many are under this attack today, and it is vital that we recognize the lies and tactics of the adversary, and obey our Lord's command to be strong in Him and in the strength of His might (Eph. 6:10).

The question we face is how to achieve this wonderful state of divine strength. Too often we equate spiritual strength to our knowledge of scripture, or some experience we may have had (such as baptism in the Spirit). However, to be strong in the Lord, particularly against the deception and darkness of these days, it is essential for our life and ministry to be firmly established in the following three fundamental truths.

**1. Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man."** The tap root of humility is recognition of the utter weakness of our flesh. This is the first truth we must embrace.

*All flesh is as grass, and all its glory is like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls off. (1 Peter 1:24)*

The prophet Joel exhorts believers who live during the day of the Lord to prepare for war (Joel 3). He issues this command: Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man." Only those who know they are weak are to make this confession. The first step toward spiritual strength is **to recognize our human weakness**. We must be small in our own eyes. Weakness is an inherent property of all flesh (and "saved flesh" is no exception). The spirit may be willing but the flesh is always weak. Nothing good dwells in our flesh.

The problem is that too often we are not anchored in this truth. As long as we believe that we can accomplish something on our own, we do not seek for the Lord's strength, and so prayer and intercession are neglected.

The truth is that we never can put confidence in our flesh!

However, we can also err by being overly discouraged because of an apparent weakness such as physical handicap, lack of education, inability to speak as well as other difficult personal circumstances, etc., and to despair of serving the Lord. In fact, these very weaknesses are divine opportunities for Jesus to become our strength. He can make all things, including human weaknesses, work together for good to those who love Him! Consider the blindness of Fanny Crosby, or the physical limitations of many intercessors.

*He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. (Is. 40:24)*

God delights to choose those who are weak in the world and to demonstrate His power through them, in order to shame the things that are strong in the world, and so receive all the glory for Himself (1 Cor. 1:27). The fruit of Paul's ministry reveals how well he walked in this truth (1 Cor. 2:3).

*Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weakness, that the power of Christ may dwell in me....for when I am weak then I am strong. (2 Cor. 12:9-10)*

A people kneeling at the cross and crying out to God in their weakness leads us to the second truth.

**2. God's Provision Through the Cross.** The second essential truth in putting on the Lord's strength is simply this: **all that we ever need for a life of victory has been provided for us in Christ's death and resurrection!** Our human nature with its sins and weaknesses was nailed to the cross with Christ in His death, and we were raised up together with Him in a divine resurrection of life, to be seated with Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:5-6).

Salvation offers us the privilege of living an exchanged life; of putting off our old and putting on His new! We invite Him to live His life in and through us. By faith He becomes our source of glory and strength (Gal 2:20). We live by His power and not by our weaknesses; we live in His victory, not in our failures.

The word of the cross: "Christ crucified" expresses the power and wisdom of God. To be saved is to become a child of God with all the privileges of His family and kingdom. We no longer have to be weak, depressed, or in bondage. The Son has set us free! We can reign in life through Him (Rm. 5:17). This tremendous transformation in our state of being is not achieved by any endeavor of the flesh, it is entirely by the love and mercy of God. Thus, we are to be strong in the grace that is in Christ

Jesus, a grace by which we partake of the indwelling power and insight of the Holy Spirit according to the will of God. Divine strength is our inheritance. He is able to do great things through us according to His power that works within us (Eph. 3:20).

*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)*

The anointing of the Holy Spirit teaches and equips us for the particular gift or ministry that He has called us to in His body.

We are now ready for the third truth:

**3. Taking Up Our Cross.** With such provision, what else could be lacking? When one considers the lack of power that is so often evident, it is clear that something is missing. This leads us to the third truth. One thing that is not part of Christ's victory on the cross is the coercion of our will. We are free to accept or reject the will of God, to go our own way or to allow His will and life to be expressed through us as living members of His body. We remain totally responsible in the exercise of our will.

The purpose of God can only be achieved through the will of God. Jesus came to do the will of His Father, which meant His death on the cross. We are also called to do the will of God, which requires us to embrace our cross of self denial. He must be Lord in our life!

*If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself (his will and ambitions), and take up his cross (embrace the call of God along with all related circumstances), and follow Me. (Mt. 16:24)*

The way of the cross is God's method of providing His power and strength to us. The issue is not whether God has given us an adequate supply of His Holy Spirit to serve Him. Nor is the issue the magnitude of our weakness or personal limitation; the real issue is whether or not we have embraced our cross. Obedience, faith, prayer and worship releases His strength in us.

We reign by denying our will and ambitions, and making Jesus our primary emphasis, love and goal. Nothing else is as important. We are not called to work for Him, but to allow Him to work through us. Not our agenda but His will is key. Such qualities promote unity and accountability in the church.

Too often we promote our programs and burdens more than we do the Lord Jesus Christ; we seek to excel in what we can do for Christ rather than embracing the cross He has placed before us. Such attitudes weaken the body of Christ, and limit the release of His power and glory. There is great weariness for those who strive in personal agendas of service. On the other hand, the way of the cross brings rest and peace. Thus the invitation:

*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. (Mt. 11:28-29)*

The great end-time harvest, including salvation in Israel, can only be accomplished by the sovereign power of God (Is. 60:1-7). The best efforts by contemporary Christian endeavors would utterly fail. The glory must go to Jesus!

For that reason, the Lord is restoring the church. He is raising up a "faceless people" who know that their place of strength is kneeling in brokenness and humility at the cross seeking only to do His will. The days of individual self-promoting ministry are coming to an end. The body of Christ is being empowered for the work of God. Let us embrace our cross and walk in His strength...

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71 Old Kings Highway ♦ Lake Katrine, NY 12449

(845) 336-7333 ♦ [www.thefountain.org](http://www.thefountain.org)

Dale Rumble can be reached at (845) 382-1953