

Strengthening Yourself In The Lord Your God

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Preacher: Josh Christophersen

[0 : 00] I'm going to talk to you this morning about strengthening yourself in the Lord your God. Strengthening yourself in the Lord your God. Very important skill set to have, right?

To be able to strengthen yourself in the Lord. That title comes from 1 Samuel 30 verse 6, which we'll get to in a little bit. But David said this at one point in time.

But Seth talked last week about victim mentality. And a lot of times when we feel weak or weary, it's easy to blame other people for our weakness or weariness.

Instead of strengthening ourselves in the Lord, right? Instead of strengthening ourselves in the Lord, we can just say, well, I'm weary or I'm weak because of this circumstance or this person or whatever it may be.

Instead of going to the Lord and finding strength, right? And I really believe that over the course of time with this church, that God has exposed certain levels of a lack of character and order.

[1 : 08] And that's why God's having us to focus on that this year. But I also think that God is weaning Christ's church from an unhealthy dependence on others to get life and strength.

And what keeps us from getting a reservoir in God in ourselves, right? Where we're filling up with the strength of the Lord.

And when you have a new church plant, it presses those things, right? Because it's like, hey, there's not a lot of people to feed off of. You just, here we are, you know?

And if everybody, if the morale goes low, it's like, okay, well, now who's going to encourage me? Well, the Lord. You've got to strengthen yourself in the Lord. But that needs to be kind of a church planting mentality, an apostolic mentality that we're bringing something out of nothing, right?

It's a new church. And so maybe whether you were part of the church that sent us out or you're part of some other church at some point in time in your life, we have different churches where it's easy to just come into the life of the church and just enjoy the life and feed off the life and, you know, experience this kind of encouragement and excitement and momentum.

[2 : 28] And you can do that and then not even realize, oh, I'm not actually getting, having my own reservoir in God. I'm just drinking from everybody else's, right? So this concept of strengthening yourself in the Lord, it's really important.

And it's really important for us as a church that we develop this skill as a church so that we can be a healthy church, right? There's all going to be times we're going to have to dig deep as a church to say, okay, Lord, I need to find my strength in you.

You know, maybe as much as I'd want my friends to be encouraging me and being strong for me right now, maybe they're not right now. Sometimes that's your own spouse, right? It's like, oh, I want you to be strong when I'm weak.

We can't be weak at the same time. That doesn't work. It happens though, right? And so this skill, this ability to be able to strengthen yourself in the Lord like David did, so important.

And so important for us as a new church plant. So now, before we look into that verse and look into it, I want to say a couple of things. And that is, first of all, strength is not a feeling.

[3 : 39] Okay? Now, when you are strong, you can feel strong. But sometimes we can get moved way too much by our feelings and we just need to be strengthened in the Lord, right?

And I've been hearing actually a lot of people say, just in general, as I've talked to different people over the last probably six months in this church and talking with other people, I'll hear people say that.

And I'm sure you've heard this before. People say, I got to get out of my head. Right? Have you heard people say that before? And I've actually been telling people, I think you actually need to get into your head.

You're already out of your head and that's the problem. Your problem is that you're being ruled and led by your feelings rather than letting faith and reason rule your feelings.

C.S. Lewis, I read this quote last month and it's just been really encouraging to me. He said, faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods.

[4 : 48] All right? Let me say that again. Faith is the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted in spite of your changing moods. Isn't that good? Let me ask you a question.

What do we call people who are crazy? We say they're out of their mind. Right? And what do you call someone who's not crazy? They're in their right mind.

Do you see what I'm saying? And you can see this in the Bible actually too. In Mark 5, remember the demoniac that Jesus came up to? After Jesus delivered him, he was sitting clothed and in his right mind.

Right? Right? Remember when Jesus' family came in Mark 3 and wanted to have a little intervention? Why did they need a little intervention with Jesus?

They wanted to see him because what did they say about him? They said he's out of his mind. Right? In Acts chapter 12, when Peter got out of jail because the angel sprung him loose and everybody's praying for him to be sprung loose and he was already sprung loose.

[5 : 52] And he came to the door. The lady's like, hey, Peter's here. And what did they say about her? You're out of your mind. Right? That's what they said to her. And then Paul, when he was talking to Festus, he said in Acts chapter 26, Festus says to Paul, Paul, you're out of your mind.

Your great learning is driving you out of your mind. And Paul said, I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. Okay?

Being in your mind is basing things on truth and reason. But we live in an age of sensuality, meaning like we're motivated or driven by our senses, what we feel.

Okay? And life ruled by feelings. Making decisions or taking actions primarily based on emotions, impulses, or moods. Allowing desires or emotions such as anger, sadness, and excitement to dictate behavior without considering logic, facts, or long-term consequences.

Okay? And so, sometimes you can feel strong and you're not really strong. And then sometimes you can feel like you're not strong, but you actually have the strength of God.

[7 : 11] And so, we can't be moved and tossed to and fro by our feelings. We have to access the real deal. Right? And where does that come from? Strength comes from God. Plain and simple.

Okay? Isaiah 40. Isaiah 40, verses 28 to 31. He says, Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint. And to him who has no might, he increases strength.

You believe that? That's the word of the Lord right there. Right? Do we believe that though? You might say, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I don't believe that. What about when you're weak?

Do you believe that? Where do you go? Are you going to the one who gives might? Are you going to the one who has no might, he increases their strength?

[8 : 13] Where do you go when you are weak? Where do you go when you're weary? Well, you should go to the source. You should go to the one who gives strength. He goes on. He says, And many of you know that verse.

Maybe even memorize that verse, right? And it's great to be able to quote it. But do we do it? Do we go to the Lord? He gives power to the faint. And to him who has no might, he increases strength.

When you're feeling faint. When you're feeling weary. Where do you go? Where do you go? Are you going to the well? Are you going to the place where your strength comes from?

Or are we going other things? Are we complaining? Or are we blaming? You know, like Seth was saying last week. Do we have this kind of victim mentality? And feel like, well, I would be strong if so-and-so was pulling their weight.

Or doing this. Or doing that. Or if my circumstances were different. Or if this happened. Or if the church was different. Or if my job was different. Or I mean, go to my spouse is different. Or I had a spouse.

[9 : 30] Or you know, whatever. You can go down the list, right? Or do we go to the Lord? What a privilege. What a privilege. What a blessing. He goes on in Isaiah 41, verse 10.

Another verse you're probably familiar with. But he said, Fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you.

I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. These are promises, beloved. These are promises. I will strengthen you. I will strengthen you. Fear not. I'm with you.

Be not dismayed. I'm your God. I will strengthen you. And we need an increase of faith. We need to believe that that's true. Not just in the noonday sun, but in the pouring rain.

Right? Not just when everything's going great. But when things are not going great, we need to believe, hey, I'm not going to be shaken. I have access to the source of strength. The one who increases might.

[10 : 30] The one who gives strength. 1 Peter 5, 6-11. He says, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Be sober-minded. Be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him. Firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

To him be the dominion forever and ever. That's a promise. These are promises. Are we standing on these promises? Are we accessing these promises? Are we feeding on these promises?

We should be. These are good promises. These are good words. Colossians 1, 28-29 says, Him we proclaim, warning everyone, and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

[11 : 44] For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Okay? What a concept right there. There's an energy that comes from Christ.

Another way you can say it is a strength, right? Strength or an energy that comes from Christ that we are to powerfully walk in. And you may say, well, I'm running out of energy.

I'm running out of strength. Good. Good. Maybe God designed it that way. You know, maybe God, maybe you're praying to get out of the thing God's been trying to get you into.

Good. It's like, God, I'm just so weak. Yes. That's what I want you to do. When you're weak, I'm strong. I want you to rely on my energy.

I want you to rely on my strength. You keep trying to get into your own strength. Your strength doesn't last. Your strength isn't enough. Paul got this, right? He would say, when I'm weak, I'm strong.

[12 : 47] Paul said, I'm struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. We need to be a people that are good at struggling with all his energy that powerfully works within us. That has to be our strength.

That has to be our source of energy. Okay? So strength comes from God. You see that? Not that you didn't know that. I know you knew that. But, you know, it's just good to be reminded of these promises.

Okay? Next, strength is through God. Okay? It's from God and it's through God. Now we'll get to our text of the name of the sermon, right? Strengthen yourself in the Lord your God.

1 Samuel 30, 1-6. This is a little snippet from David. Okay? They just, the story preceding this, he's hanging out with the Philistines.

Remember, this is the one, remember he defeated Goliath and he's hanging around with them. And then the Philistines are going to war against Israel. And then someone in there is like, hold on, hold on, hold on. These guys, these guys are Israelites.

[13 : 47] We're not going to go. They could turn on us. We're not going to go with these guys. I need to get these guys out of here. And so David and his mighty men are dejected and leave because they were supposed to fight.

And when they get back, tragedy hits, right? They get back to the camp where the women and the children were supposed to be and all their stuff. A city called Ziklag.

So 1 Samuel 31, 30 verse 1. Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negev and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire.

And taking captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. Whoa! That's a big deal, right? They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way.

And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. That's a bad day. You think you had a bad day? You probably didn't come home with your house burnt down and your wife and kids gone.

[14 : 48] Right? That's a bad day. So it's a good... I like that the bad day that David is setting this principle in was probably worse than most of our bad days.

Okay? They found it burned with fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. Verse 4. Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep.

So clearly it's a bad day. They're weeping until they got no more strength to weep. All right? Makes sense. Verse 5. David's two wives also had been taken captive. Hinnom of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

Verse 6. And David was greatly distressed. Of course he is. He's in charge. It's like, how would you like to be responsible for this breach? Right?

David's distressed. I bet he was stressed. I'd be stressed if I was David. And not only that, what was going on? We got a revolt going on.

[15 : 49] So it just went from bad to worse. So not only are my wives taken, my kids taken, and all my fellow soldiers, their wives and kids taken. Now everybody wants to stone me.

Now this is a bad day. Right? So he's stressed because the people spoke of stoning him. He's starting to hear, hey, this David guy, not so great.

Let's stone him. And David's probably doubly thinking, after all that I did for them, remember this crew that's hanging out with them? They were the people nobody wanted. Do you remember that little detail? No. They were the rejects.

Right? You know, David's out here on the island of misfit toys, you know, just taking all the people with who nobody wanted. The rejected, the people in debt. Like this list of other people that are with him.

It's not. And he's taking care of them. He's leading them. He turned them into a group of mighty men. And now they want to stone him. So he's probably feeling pretty low.

[16 : 49] Right? Because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. Okay? Again, makes sense. And then you have this phenomenal little statement.

But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. It doesn't say, but David blamed all his men for not protecting.

It doesn't say, David, blame God. It doesn't say, David, blame the Philistines for kicking him out. It doesn't say, he blamed Saul for getting him in this position in the first place.

Right? He's not blaming. He's not playing the victim. You know? He's not blaming everybody else and saying, hey, after all I've done for you. None of that. None of that.

Where does he go? Well, he looks inside and he realizes, running on E right now. I need to strengthen myself in the Lord. I'm greatly distressed.

[17 : 51] Stress levels are high. Maybe his chest maybe felt a little tight right there. You know? You ever feel that? When you got a lot going on in your stress and you're just like, oh, I have a hard time breathing right now.

It's a lot going on. Right? I'm sure David's feeling some serious stress going on. And it says, but David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

What a statement. What a statement. Do you know how to do this? Do you know how to strengthen yourself in the Lord your God? No, no, no. That's other people's job.

Well, yeah. People should do that, right? Hopefully they are. But what if they don't? I mean, they weren't doing it here. They weren't doing it for David. They wanted to stone him.

Okay? And so it's like he couldn't go to his brothers. Couldn't go to, you know, he couldn't say, hey, I'm, oh, I'm just going to go to church. You know?

[18 : 50] It's like, no, the people at church want to stone me. Essentially, right? It says, but David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. And I wonder how often we take advantage of that reality.

I wonder how often we do that. You have a bad day. Get some bad news. You make a mistake. Feeling kind of low.

Feeling disappointed. Kind of hoping things in life would have been different. Maybe hoping things in Christ's church would be different. Hoping things, I don't know, wherever might be different. We tend to get disappointed in life because life is disappointing.

Is it not? We live in a broken body, in a broken world, in broken systems. And just when you think, oh, this is going to be the thing. This president, this job, this, you know, house, this new gadget, whatever it is.

It's just like, oh, I'm disappointed. You ever feel disappointed? You ever feel really disappointed? You ever feel stressed in your disappointment? Where do you go?

[19 : 55] We have the Lord. We can strengthen ourselves in the Lord. And David did that. And he strengthened himself in the Lord. And it caused a whole group of people to get back on track.

And they went and they sought the Lord. God spoke to them. And they ended up finding where everybody was. And not one person was harmed. They got everything back. Isn't that amazing? But if David wouldn't have strengthened himself in the Lord, that might not have happened.

They might have stoned him. And then they might have scattered. And I mean, it could have been really bad. Which makes you think, what's the power of even one person just strengthening himself in the Lord?

And in a small church like this, what's the power of one person strengthening himself in the Lord? What's the power of multiple people strengthening themselves in the Lord? What's the power of all of us acquiring this skill and exercising it regularly to strengthen ourselves in the Lord?

We need this. We need this. It's important. We all need this. And don't say, don't in your mind say, oh, I know who needs it.

[21 : 03] No, no, no. Listen, you need it. I need it. Don't think about the other person who needs it. Don't think about, you know, it's like, oh, I'm not going to look over there. But I'm thinking, I know who needs this, right?

No, you need it. We all need it. We have to strengthen ourselves in the Lord. And this is church. Even if you had a big church that had a bunch of life, you still need to strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Okay? But sometimes God exposes us and brings us to the surface like, hey, how's your reservoir? How's that inner place of living water, that inner place of peace, of resource in God?

How is that? How is that? David strengthened himself in the Lord and his God. Okay? You have similar language in Philippians chapter 4. And no, this isn't about playing really good basketball.

1 Corinthians 4, 12 and 13, right? I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty in hunger, abundance in need.

[22 : 13] I can do all things through Christ, through him who strengthens me. Okay? And I know our culture has said, yeah, that means I can win basketball championships through him who strengthens me.

I know what it means to be brought low in my multi-million dollar house and lose a basketball game. But the Lord will bring me high. No, that's not what he's talking about. I mean, come on.

Paul was brought low, like real low. Like, you know, three times he got the 40 lashes minus one. That's low. Okay? Losing a basketball game.

Yeah, I'm sure it hurts, but it ain't low. Okay? He said, Paul's like, I know how to be brought low. And I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've learned the secret facing plenty and hunger, abundance in need.

Okay? Some of us know how to face plenty, and we know how to face abundance. But let me ask you the question. Do you know the secret of facing need and hunger?

[23 : 13] Have you figured out that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you? Have you found strength in him? Do you regularly find yourself resourced by Christ?

Or that's your source. He's your battery. He's your go-to. Or are you kind of, you have this like pseudo strength. I put it in quotes because it's not a real strength.

But you kind of feel strong, but it's not real. It doesn't last. And it's disappointing. We need the real strength. The kind of hope that doesn't disappoint.

Comes from God. Comes in God. Okay? Through God. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. When you believe that, it changes things. David believed that.

And how do we know he believed it? Because he said it? No. We know he believed it because he lived it out. It changed the whole trajectory of that group of people. Things could have took a really bad turn for a lot of people right at that time.

[24 : 15] But David strengthened himself in the Lord. He believed that he could do all things through him who strengthens him. Okay? Psalm 84 has a similar kind of language.

Such a great psalm. Let's look at this. Psalm 84. Starting in verse 1. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Verse 4. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, and whose heart are the highways to Zion.

What a cool picture, huh? Blessed are those whose strength is in you. If your strength is in him, you're blessed. You're blessed. If your strength is in him, you're blessed.

[25 : 15] Why? Because you've got something that nobody can take away from you. Now, you find your strength in other things. That can be taken from you. Well, if my strength is in my health, what if your health goes away?

Not so strong. If your strength is in your friends being strong, what if your friends aren't strong? If your strength, you know what I'm saying. You can go down the list. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, and whose heart are the highways to Zion.

As they go through the valley of Baca, Baca, if you look at the footnote, means weeping. As they go through the valley of Baca or weeping, they make it a place of springs. The early rain also covers it with pools.

And then I love this phrase. I prayed this this morning as we were praying. It says, they go from strength to strength. Right?

That's not the norm, though, for most people, right? It's strength to weakness to strength to weakness. Maybe to more weakness. And then to strength.

[26 : 15] And then it's more like this, right? Would you say that's more? If we're going to be honest, right? That's more kind of how our life goes. But then you read this verse, and it's like, hold on.

That's different. He says here, the people he's referring to, the one whose strength is in God, they go from strength to strength. Let me ask you, do you sometimes have this kind of subtle, maybe not spoken, but deep down expectation that if you're in a strong place, the weakness is coming?

Like you're going to, you're going to, the weariness is coming. You're kind of like waiting for the other shoe to drop kind of thing. Okay, call it what it is. That's unbelief. The Bible says right here, they, who's they?

The people that dwell in his house. The people who are resourced in God. They find their reservoir, their inner filling with God. The ones whose strength is in God.

What do they go from? They go from strength to strength. Strength to strength. Do you have faith for that? Maybe some of us have become so used to not going from strength to strength.

[27 : 30] We read that and we're like, yeah. I mean, it sounds cool. Be cool to put on the fridge, you know, maybe post on social media. But what about living it?

Who, who in here, this is a rhetoric that you don't need to raise your hand. Who in here is going from strength to strength? Who's going from strength to strength? That doesn't mean you're going from great circumstances to great circumstances.

You hear me? No one gets the luxury of that. I mean, Jesus said in this word, you're going to have trouble. So you don't get to have that. I mean, you get little streaks here and there.

But the truth is, you know, that's the one we don't like to talk about. But Jesus said you will have trouble. So you're going to go from trouble to trouble. But in trouble to trouble, can you go from strength to strength?

When you go through trouble, are you weak or are you strong? When you go through a lack of friendship, are you weak or are you strong? When you go through lack of finances, are you weak or are you strong?

[28 : 32] When you go through difficulties in establishing a church like we're trying to do, are you going from strength to strength? What are you in the midst of that, right?

It's a great question. They go from strength to strength. Each one appears before God in Zion. O Lord, God of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O God of Jacob. Behold our shield, O God.

Look on the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. Why?

Verse 11. For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord God bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. It's a good word. Nehemiah 8 verse 10 says it this way. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

[29 : 32] Which is essentially what the psalmist was just talking about, right? He's saying about, like, there's no place I'd rather be than in the courts of the Lord. Why? Because that's where I get joy. And your joy is your strength.

If you're one who doesn't find yourself going from strength to strength, maybe there's a good chance you're not going from joy to joy. Because joy is your strength. Do you struggle with joy? Do you struggle with contentment?

Are you one whose natural inclination is the glass half empty kind of thing and always looking at what's wrong or what's not there? Or are you joyful?

Now, being joyful doesn't mean you can't see things that are wrong and that need to be helped. Of course you can. But do those things sink you? It gets you into a sense of where you're not content.

Where you need to go from new to new, novelty to novelty, because you're not content with the same old, same old. Something's always got to be new for you. And you're not just steady.

[30 : 34] Strength is strength. Strength. The joy of the Lord is my strength. A lot of times when people are feeling really weak, they're like, man, I'm weak. I don't have strength.

Ask the question, where's my joy? Do I have joy? And is my joy in the fact that work's going well, my friends like me, church is this or that, or is it the joy of the Lord?

Because all those other things, you can't wait. The other shoe will drop. Like, they're not going to satisfy. You can trust that you're going to have trouble. But the joy of the Lord is your strength because the joy of the Lord is constant.

The joy of the Lord is your strength because the joy of the Lord is unchanging. The joy of the Lord is your strength because it is not based on shifting shadows and changing circumstances. It's based on an unchanging Lord who's the same yesterday, today, and forever.

You can find joy in Him. And to find joy in Him means to enjoy Him. Do you enjoy the Lord? Do you regularly taste and see that He's good? It's a great question.

[31 : 40] 2 Timothy 2.1 says, Be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Hebrews 13.9 says, That's why we pray for grace.

God, my heart, I need to be strengthened by grace. I know I'm weak. I know I tend to go to other things to find my joy and my strength. No, I want to go from strength to strength.

I want the joy of the Lord in my strength. I want to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might, which is what Ephesians 6.10 says. Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might.

Be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. He is mighty. And His strength is for you. He gives it to us.

1 Chronicles 16.11 says, Seek the Lord and His strength. Seek His presence continually. Don't just seek the Lord. Don't just seek His presence. Seek His strength.

[32 : 42] You hear that in that verse? You know, sometimes I think we just go to the Lord in kind of a generic, kind of rote kind of way. Like, yeah, I got to spend time with Jesus.

I have to seek His presence, right? Are you seeking His strength? Why should you seek His strength? Because you need His strength. You need it. You're not going to make it without it.

This church isn't going to make it without it. Trust me. It won't last. Won't last. Someone's got to dig deep, dig those reservoirs and say, I got a deep well in God.

I got a deep well in God. I strengthen myself in the Lord. It's a regular discipline of mine. Hopefully so we can strengthen other people, right? So, I just want to talk about one little practical on how you strengthen yourself in the Lord.

And that's strengthening, strength training through the Word. Okay? When you talk about getting stronger, you talk about strength training, right? Well, let's look at Psalm 119.

[33 : 45] It's that Psalm that's all about the Word of God. Psalm 119, 25 to 32. Psalmist says, My soul clings to the dust. Give me life.

How? According to your Word. When I told them my ways, you answered me. Teach me your statutes. Make me understand the way of your precepts. And I will meditate on your wondrous works.

Verse 28. My soul melts away for sorrow. Strengthen me according to your Word. You hear that? My soul melts away from sorrow.

Strengthen me. How? According to your Word. According to your Word. Put false ways far from me and graciously teach me your law. I've chosen the way of faithfulness. I set your rules before me.

I cling to your testimonies, O Lord. Let me not be put to shame. I will run in the way of your commandments when you enlarge my heart. Listen to that language. Isn't that awesome language?

[34 : 45] God, enlarge my heart when I read your Word. Enlarge my heart to receive more strength. My soul melts away for sorrow. Strengthen me according to your Word.

Excuse me. According to your Word, right? Are you getting strengthened by the Word of God? Just precious promises.

There's a lot of good promises in there. There's a lot of truths about who He is and what He does. What He's done for you. What He is doing. What He will do. And when you feed on these things, you get strong.

You get strong. 2 Timothy 3.16 says, All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for training. What kind of training? Well, according to Psalm 119, strength training.

This is like, this is your weights. This is your weights right here. You've got to lift this book to get strong. You've got to open its pages to build strength in God. You've got to do the work.

[35 : 44] And just like normal strength training with weights, some days you don't want to do it. But the people who want to get strong, are the people who are strong, like physically strong, are they people who only lift weights when they want to and when they feel like it?

No. No way. The guys who are strong physically are people who work out. They train even when they don't feel like it.

What about you? Your spiritual training. Physical training is of some value, but spiritual training has value for this life and the life to come, it's that. Okay? How are you at spiritual training through the Word of God?

Let's be more specific. How are you doing right now? So I don't want you relying on that season where you were really good at it. How about like right now? How are we doing? How's my spiritual strength training regimen going?

And here's a more specific, and I need to drill down one more time. Ready? How about on the days when you don't want to? How about on the days when you don't feel like it? Those are the important ones, right? Are you showing up?

[36 : 52] Are you digging deep? Are you locking in? How many more cliches can I say about it? Right? How are you doing that?

Okay? We got to do that. And again, not because Josh is scolding us. Got to get in the Word. Got to get strong. No. Because that's where our joy is.

That's where our strength is. You need it just like you need food. And yeah, sometimes you're going to read the Bible and you're thinking, I don't know. I don't feel much stronger.

But that's where faith is. Right? Well, but it says I'll go from strength to strength. But it says your Word. I'm strengthened according to your Word.

So I'm going to keep going. And it's no different with physical training. Okay? I've lifted weights before. I know that there's times you look in the mirror and you're like, I ain't seen any gains here.

[37 : 51] For some reason, I look more flabby. I don't know what the deal is. Right? It takes time. And then all of a sudden, you kind of look in the mirror one day and you're like, oh, can you notice it?

Right? But you had many days where you didn't notice any difference. It's this, listen, newflash. This is true. It's the same way with the Lord and your spiritual training. And this is good to remember.

That multiple days of just reading the Word out of routine, out of a value, right, that this is the right thing to do, all of a sudden you find yourself in a hard position.

You find yourself in some trouble. And this strength is there that you didn't know was there. Where did it come from? You've been strengthening yourself in the Lord. On those days when it didn't feel like it, you've been strengthening yourself in the Lord on those days when there wasn't trouble.

And then on the day when there was, you had a reservoir in God that you could pull from. Does that make sense? You're able to go there and say, all right, I know how to do this.

[38 : 53] I've been practicing. I've been training. I've been training all along for this day. You know, when we watch sports athletes, we're in awe by what they do on the day of the meet or the game or the match, whatever it is.

It's not about, yeah, you got to perform in the game. But you think that that all happened because of that? It's what they did when you're not looking. It's what they, the reason that guy who scored the points or did the deed, the reason he was so good at that is not just because he could pull together then.

It's because of all the work he put in when no one was watching. And you can't have this kind of superstar spirituality where we're just lazy and we think that when trouble comes, we're going to be fine.

We got to learn this reality to strengthen ourselves in the Lord. And the more we do it, the more we believe in it. When you get a, when you get a, I was going to say Rolodex, but probably nobody even knows what that means.

Let me guys tell you about it. When you get like a, like a, like a, like a book of business, so to speak, of like all these testimonies that God has done, right?

[40 : 06] It's like, well, this, I strengthened my, I went through this and I strengthened myself in the Lord and it was awesome. And I went through this trouble and I was strengthened in the Lord. I, I, I, I dug deep into this reservoir of God's strength and he came to me.

And when you have those testimonies, you begin to grow more and more confident in your troubles. And that's what David did, right? David ended up being a person who did that.

But was that the first time he did that? I happen to remember that he was a young boy and there was a bear. And then I remember he was a young boy and there was a lion. And then I remember he was a young boy and there was a giant.

And so, you know, he's got a good bear, lion, giant, burnt city. Wife, his wives are gone and kids are gone.

It's like, well, I beat the, I found strength in the Lord to beat the bear. I found strength in the Lord to beat the lion. I found strength in the Lord to beat the giant. Okay. City's burnt down. Kids are gone.

[41 : 05] Wives gone. This one's pretty bad. Oh, and they want to stone me. Okay. Okay. Okay. I'm going to have to strengthen myself in the Lord, but I've done it before. Do you see what I'm saying? When you get that track record like David had, it becomes, I want to say easier.

Sometimes it's not, but it just becomes more believable. Does that make sense? It's more believable. Might not be easier. Still might be hard, but it's more believable because you've seen God do wonders.

You've seen his strength come through when you were weak and you learn how to embrace it. Okay. And so that's an important thing. Strength training through the word.

Another point I wanted to make is think about the apostolic role to strengthen. Okay. I believe that. So, you know, the Bible talks in Ephesians 4, 11 about these five different gifts that are given to the church where the people themselves are the gifts to the church.

Apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists. Okay. So these are five gifts that God gives to the church and they're for different purposes. If you're expecting from one of those gifts to be one of the other ones or to be something that it's not, you're going to be disappointed.

[42 : 19] Okay. And so I want to help you get right expectation of even my role in your life. Right. As someone I believe is supposed to be that particular gift to this church in the apostolic department.

Okay. And that is to remember, I'm not your pastor. I'm not your pastor. And so I'm here to strengthen you.

I'm here to strengthen your faith and strengthen you to strengthen one another. That's part of my role as an apostle. And so if you expect me to be a pastor, you're going to be probably let down because that's not my role.

It's like, man. I mean, over the years, I've heard many different times. Okay. Maybe you guys, maybe some of you have even said this before. It's fine. But I've heard many people say, it's like, man, he's just always coaching.

And he's just always like, you know, got to constantly be exhorting. Like, well, yeah, I have a gift of exhortation. And that's what I do. Right. It's like, why can't you be more pastoral?

[43 : 21] I don't know, because I'm not. But there are people who are. Praise God. And that's the good thing. Like, you got to get out of the person who they are. Right. And so look to the right people to give you what they're giving.

And if you look to the person to give you what they can't give, you're going to miss what they're giving you. And you might miss looking somewhere else for the people who are gifted the other ways.

Or you might miss it right in front of you because maybe you're that person. Right. Maybe you're that person who's actually supposed to be doing that. And so no one person is the whole deal.

That's why the fivefold giftings, they're important because we need all those things, but no one person can be those things. We need apostles and we need prophets and we need pastors and we need teachers.

Okay. There's what I mean, I'm teaching you, but there's a lot better teachers than me for sure. Okay. I am way more of an exhorter. Okay. There's evangelists. We need all these.

[44 : 20] These are really important. But when we're talking about strengthening, one of my jobs as an apostle is to strengthen the church. You see this, the apostles in Acts 14, when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God.

That's one of my jobs is to strengthen and increase, to help strengthen your faith, increase your faith. I know that's part of my job description. That's what I'm trying to do. You guys have different job descriptions.

Some of you might have the same job description, but what's your job description? What areas are you supposed to contribute and help in this church? And then let's do those things, right?

Acts 16, verse 5, it says, The churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. This is what apostles do. They strengthen people in faith. Romans 1, 11 to 12 says, I, Paul, long to see you, or I, speaking of Paul, long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you.

I don't believe he's talking about a spiritual gift in like, you know, what you'd see in 1 Corinthians 14, because he then specifically says, that is that we might be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

[45 : 43] So he's saying, I can't wait to get to you to encourage you in your faith and you to encourage me in mine. That was his job. He's going around strengthening these churches. Okay? But then what's going to happen is, is when I'm not around, we have to strengthen each other.

Right? Look, even what Jesus said to Peter in Luke 22, said, I prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Strengthen your brothers.

Okay? Are we looking to strengthen one another? Now, clearly, if people don't strengthen you, you don't have an excuse. You got to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Right? But are we looking to strengthen each other?

Strengthen our brothers. 1 Samuel 23, such a great verse going back to David again, full circle. Sam brought this verse up to me. We were talking yesterday about my sermon.

1 Samuel 23, 15 says, David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And then Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh and strengthened his hand in God.

[46 : 53] Isn't that a great phrase? It says, Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God. Do you know how to strengthen someone else's hand in God? Where you go to them and say, Hey, I know you're down.

I know you're bummed. Maybe I know you're struggling to be content or you're just overwhelmed with weakness, weariness. I want to strengthen your hand. But it didn't stop there.

It doesn't say he strengthened his hand. It's still in who? In God. He strengthened his hand in God. He came to him and said, Hey, he was helping him find his strength in God.

That's what a good brother does. That's what a good sister does. So even when you're strengthening your brothers, you're basically just helping them do what this whole sermon was about. You're helping them find strength in God as well.

Right? To strengthen someone is to say, Hey, let me help encourage you and to build your faith that God is your strength and that you can be strengthened in him. Go to him. I want to strengthen your hand in God.

[47 : 54] I'm going to speak to you of who he is. I want to speak to you of his faithfulness. I want to speak to you of his might and his strength and his willingness to give you strength because you need it. But are you a friend like that?

Do you have friends like that? What if we as a church were friends like that? Where like Jonathan, we strengthened each other's hands in God. Such a cool thing.

I close with 2 Timothy 4, 16 to 17. Paul says that my first offense, No one came to me, or no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me.

May it not be charged against them. Then he says, But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me. And strengthened me.

But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me. You might say, Man, I just don't have people strengthening me. Well, that's a problem. We want people to strengthen each other, right? But sometimes it doesn't work that way.

[48 : 50] But what you can always do, you can know that the Lord stands by you and strengthens you. Even if all deserts you, the Lord will stand by you and strengthen you. Amen? Amen.

Let's stand. Thank you.