

Be Strong

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[0 : 00] Please be seated. And go to Joshua if you've got your Bibles.! Joshua, just to really pick the one verse there.!

And Joshua chapter 1, we're going to verse 9. Today we're living in days of, I put to you, a weak kind of Christianity.

There's a weak, insipid, anemic, weak kind of Christianity that prevails weak as water. Many Christians are alike to that.

Weak as water. And really the message tonight is be strong. Be strong. God told Joshua, arise, go over this Jordan.

And verse 9 we see Joshua 1, he says this to Joshua. Have not I commanded thee, be strong.

[1 : 22] And of a good courage. Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest.

Here is Joshua, about to cross over the river Jordan. And God says, verse 5, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

You face the Jordan. Enemies lie ahead. But the never failing God assures you that he is with you. There's people facing some things. I know people facing an operation tomorrow potentially. We face who knows what.

It's going to come to us Monday morning. But the good news for you that believe, God says, I will be with thee.

[2 : 33] So what will we do? What about you? What will you do? Enemies face you. Over that Jordan, it's a hostile territory.

It's the enemy territory. It would be easy to retreat, wouldn't it? It would be easy to say, no, that's too hard. I'm not willing to risk.

Something could go wrong. That can happen when a pastor says, would you do something? Oh, that means I might stumble and mess it up.

Oh, I might lose. Oh, yeah. Might get stuck for words. And it would be easy to say, no, no thanks. Not just now.

Will you retreat or will you advance? Will you go forward in your Christian walk with God? And it's taking those steps of faith, isn't it?

[3 : 36] When I know there was an older man in our church who's since passed away, but he really never did really much public speaking or any such thing. And I asked him to bring a message one day.

And he kind of almost had to take a breath. He was like it was something he'd never done before. But once he did that first message, it became more, I can do this with God's strength.

And that can be just doing the first step, isn't it? Sometimes the first step is the hardest step. And God says, be strong. Be strong. And the world calls sin pride.

They're prideful about their sin now. But we have gay pride. There's something that they're proud of, as if there's something good in it. And gender activists, they call them brave when they come out and reveal who they manufacture themselves to be.

They call them courageous. We're not talking about that today. There's really no courage or bravery in such a thing, really. It's a very sad thing. Grievous thing.

[4 : 45] But for we that are Christians, there's actually a call for us that's resounding across the ages. The same call to Joshua, be strong. God's looking for strong men, strong women.

You can be strong because you have the same God that Joshua had. The world condemns the Bible-believing Christian. Oh, you're one of them. It's like we're the anathema.

We're the lepers of society today. But they praise the sinful. It's very sad, isn't it? And sick, this world. And the world, friends, the world is not a friend of the child of God.

No, when you stand for God, you're going to be provoking wrath and enemies. But when you face opposition from the world, it would be easy to take the easier path and just to retreat and go backwards, to be weak.

But I'm urging you today to think about this. It really, it boils down to two words, doesn't it? Be strong. Before God.

[5 : 49] Two syllables. An easy one to think about, isn't it? God says, be strong. So let's listen and hear about what that means. What does that mean to be strong? How can I be strong?

God urge Joshua to trust in his promises. We see that in verses 7 through 8. And the context here is the charge here to Joshua.

Verse 7 through 8, it says this. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses, my servant, commanded thee.

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper with us however thou goest. God's saying to Joshua, go straight ahead.

Straight on. Not to the right or to the left. And he says, this book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

[6 : 53] For then shalt thou make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success. Of course, he's not talking about success as the world would conceive of it, but of spiritual blessings which are much more important.

And the Lord told Joshua to take serious heed of this to the word. And he says, don't deviate. He says, go straight ahead. He says, not to the right, not to the left. And he says that I will prosper you. I will give you success. Let this word not depart out of thy mouth. Keep reciting it. Keep repeating it. Reciting it. And meditating on it. Let it dwell in you. Let it reside in you. And he's saying, be very courageous. And spiritual blessings will be the result.

And it's the same formula for you and me, brother and sister tonight. The same formula for that life that is truly successful. It's founded on the word.

[7 : 58] The word. And the world would say, be weak. But God says, be strong. The world would say, be weak. Just go with the flow. Go with the crowd.

Follow the multitude. God says, go the narrow way. And some thoughts further on this theme. We go to Timothy. Go to the books of 2 Timothy.

In the back of your Bible there, the letters to Timothy from Paul. We see 2 Timothy, this kind of same theme of strength. This call to strength.

This call to be strong. 2 Timothy 2. And it's interesting, these words to Timothy that we can take to heart as well.

They're to you and me, as well as to Timothy. 2 Timothy 2, verse 1 through 4, it says, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 03] And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that woth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. Now, Paul's saying hardness lies ahead for you.

There'll be some preachers these days that would say, become a Christian and it's all plain sailing and everything's laid on and you just confess it and possess it, you know, blab it and grab it and, you know, just name it and claim it as to, you know, the prosperity and the wealth and the success and the perfect health and such things that some would say that is the Christian's right.

God says endure hardness. God says battles. God says warfare. And God says to you, be strong. Be strong. Friends, we've got to endure hardness. That's not to say God will still give us some grace and thankfully there's some times of less hardness, but there's a sense where as a Christian we need to dig deep and to be strong.

[10 : 38] And notice how we are to be strong. In what? In the grace. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The world will say, please yourself.

And it boils down to really, who do you want to please? We can please ourselves. We can be so self-centred that we only care about ourselves.

The world would say just please yourself. Pamper yourself. Spore yourself. Just invest everything in yourself. Be very selfish.

The world will say please yourself. The word says please him. Please him. Him. Him who has called you, it says. Who has chosen you.

It says that there. We see as it says, verse 3. Please him who has chosen you to be a soldier.

Hardness lies ahead for you.

[11 : 43] Who will you please? He says be of good courage. Testing times call for courage. When the heat is on, what will you do?

Think of what could happen. If the heat was turned up a notch or two, it was starting to get harder and harder to be a Christian in the land of Australia. What will you do?

You're going to be weak. When the heat is on, what will you do? Proverbs 28.1, it says, The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

When a lion faces an enemy, they don't really scarp, do they? They roar. They stand.

And think of this world that we're living in that is anti-Christ, anti-Christian. More subtle than prominent, but it's subtle.

[12 : 48] There's an anti-Christian bias in the media, in the world that we live, anti-Christ. And it's time for us to stop namby-pandyng around as the church of God.

To be strong. There's too many fakes. There's too many fakes today. And when the heat gets turned on, they run. But we should be not afraid.

We need to be like Joshua was called to be. Be not afraid. It's time to stop playing church. To start to be fair dinkum as a Christian.

That, yeah, I'm going to be solid. I'm going to be strong. It's time to stop whinging. Do not be dismayed, it says. You can all get dismayed.

Look around us and we can see lots to be dismayed about. And for me, I look in the mirror and I get dismayed. You know, there's that sense where you know that there's a lack there.

[13 : 51] You could do better. You could do better. The devil is on the attack. And he would play on that. Our inherent weakness and our inherent inclination to throw in the towel, to pack our bags, to get discouraged.

When the devil is on the attack, we should be like a lion. And, I mean, he's called a roaring lion, of course, we know too. The sense where we should be bold and not back down, not back off.

Because, friends, this gospel, this message that we are messengers of is too important. Lives are in danger. Think of what we're endeavouring to do as a church with this program to help people break addictions, for example.

People are battling temptations all around us. And in our own number two, we know the psalm that are struggling with the world.

The inclination that is in me, that I've got to fight. And some are falling. They're not fighting. And now more than ever, we must rise.

[15 : 11] As Joshua was exhorted to do, be strong. This is the time for us to stand and fight. Think about, as we could reflect as a kind of analogy, the Battle of Britain.

You know, this was their finest hour. And it looked like they were up against it. The odds were against them. You know, Hitler had taken all of Europe. And here's Great Britain, just the last bastion.

And just a little ditch of water between the Nazi monolith, you know, this mega power that had just wiped out all of Europe.

And Churchill says, this is your finest hour. The sense where, in a way, even if things look really difficult for us, and when you think about the church worldwide and in Australia, you know, think of how many churches are there in the city of Adelaide that you could count on as being decent and as being strong churches.

It's not many. And amongst such churches are the strong Christians there. There's a lack. And strong preachers, I need to be stronger.

[16 : 25] I could do better, much better. And now more than ever is the time we should rise up and say, yes, I want to be stronger for God. It's time to stand and fight. What are you standing for?

Friends, there's much backsliding going on. As I talked this morning, there's more people out of church than in church, the people that count this as their church. There's more people out of this meeting than are in this meeting.

And it's time for truth. It's time for no sugar coating. You know, some people, you just want to grab them by the shoulders and shake them out of their apathy. And as I was mulling over and

mentioned earlier, what should I be preaching about?

Maybe I need to be preaching harder. Not to condemn, but that sense of these times are too desperate for us to be pussyfooting around because the time is short.

This is the last hour. And you think, what should I be preaching about? And I talked about the preaching of the cross, the message of reconciliation, the gospel.

[17:30] These are hard truths. When you see families under attack, there's some grievous things. There's hurting people in our own circle.

And people are disappointed in church too. Something that they find lacking. Or maybe, when we're honest though, maybe the problem with the church is me.

Sometimes that is the truth. That actually the church is weak because individually, if we're honest enough, we could say, I could be stronger.

And if I was stronger, the church would be stronger. And we see that it is a time to rise up for the challenge. When we see many foolish people playing around with the world. They've got a Christian profession, but it's shallow.

And it doesn't translate into the other six days of the week. Friends, let's face it. Many are ashamed of Jesus. Yet they're not ashamed to identify with sin.

[18:34] You know, I see it's almost like it's quite shocking for me. And I know there's different views about social media and Facebook and such things. It kind of gives you a window into what people dwell on.

And what they talk about. And what they want to brag about and show off. And sometimes it's very fleshly. Honestly, it's very fleshly.

There's vulgarity. There's crudeness. There's innuendos. There's the worldly ways. You know, some pridefully show off these worldly ways. Now, I sometimes send a little message and say that's really not good.

It's like in one minute they're praising God and the next minute they're cursing. They're using curse words. It's like they're pride about their worldly ways for everyone to see. Shouldn't we rather stand up for Jesus?

That that should be a platform for us to reach out. That we're not ashamed of the gospel. We're not ashamed of our Lord Jesus. There's many half-hearted Christians.

[19:40] Unstable. We see many foolish people playing around with worldly lusts, with sin.

Friends, when will we wake up? Time is too short for us to do such. And there's a poem that really puts it very well, I think.

It's called The Fellowship of the Unashamed. You might have heard this before. Can we stand in the fellowship of the unashamed? Let me read it to you. It says, someone has penned it.

I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have the Holy Spirit's power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made.

I'm a disciple of his. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed. My present made sense. My future is secure.

I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colourless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, chink giving, and dwarf goals.

[20:41] I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, flautists, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first tops, recognised, praised, regarded, or rewarded.

I now live by faith. I lean in his presence. Walk by patience. I'm uplifted by prayer. And I labour with his power. My face is set.

My gate is fast. My goal is heaven. My road is narrow. My way rough. My companions few. My guide reliable. My mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, turned back, deluded, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifices. Hesitate in the presence of the enemy. Pander at the pool of popularity. Or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ.

[21:43] I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go till he comes. Give till I drop. Preach till all know. And work till all, till he stops me.

And when he comes for his own, he will have no problem recognising me. My banner will be clear. Now it's said the author of this work was a Rwandan man.

In 1980, he was forced by his tribe to either renounce Christ or face certain death. And he refused to renounce Christ. He was killed on the spot.

That night before he was killed, he wrote this commitment. The fellowship of the unashamed, which they found in his room. Whether that's truthful or not, that's what is said about that poem.

But the words are very telling, aren't they? We should be in the fellowship of the unashamed. In other words, I'm not ashamed that I am his and he is mine. I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

[22 : 47] I'm not afraid to be like those three Hebrew children that lived in that hostile environment where the whole populace was bowing down.

But these three stood firm. They stood up. Will we be ashamed or will we buckle the knees as the world around us and just go with whatever the world wants to move us to?

Or are we going to be strong? God doesn't want for us to fit in or blend into the world, but to stand up, to stand out. And we must resolve for that for the right.

Notice Paul's charge to Timothy. We're going to go to chapter 4. Just some further remarks here on that string that Paul called Timothy to. He says this from verse 1.

He says, Now here's Paul telling young Timothy, I guess Timothy, somewhat of a new preacher, a new minister.

[24 : 30] And he's saying this is what you should intend to do with your life. And he says, verse 5, Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions.

Do the work of an evangelist. Make full proof of thy ministry. Here's Paul. And he's saying to Timothy, get ready for afflictions. It doesn't sound like the prosperity gospel, does it?

He's not saying get ready for lots of wealth and health and every other blessing. He's saying get ready for afflictions. That's what he's saying.

Get ready to suffer hardship. And what would Timothy have reckoned here? It would be easier for him to be weak, to back off. Afflictions. That doesn't sound like a nice word.

That doesn't sound like something pleasant. He would perhaps have been more inclined humanly to cave in, to blend in. But friends, we have need of endurance, of patience, of perseverance.

[25 : 33] And Paul says that the message that he caused Timothy to give is reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. These are strong words too. This talks about warning.

And if we care enough, we'll warn people. Won't we? Shouldn't we? Or don't we? When we see someone going the wrong way, we want to tell them, turn around.

And it's almost like that when we, I know on the doorsteps as we're witnessing, there's that sense where you almost, you don't want to be rude, but they're blind.

There's a blindness there. Get the scales off your eyes and open your eyes. See the truth. See the truth. You're going to hell. And our motive is love.

Because we don't want them to go there. And the strong words are necessary because it's necessary to be strong. And many are nominal too. All too easily distracted.

[26 : 38] Where their Christian profession is superficial. It's skin deep. And they want an easy, comfortable word. But we have to give the whole truth. And that includes the hard things.

Think of Paul as he preached in, we won't turn there necessarily, but Acts 20, he says, verse 27, as he leads to it, he says, I'm pure from the blood of all men.

I've not shunned to declare the whole, all the counsel of God. I've not shunned to declare all the counsel of God. Paul didn't hold back. He pulled out all the stops. He let rip. And we must not hold back too.

Friends, there's need for us to be strong in our outreach. Be strong in our exhorting. Paul urges Timothy to not be ashamed.

We see that in verse 8 of chapter 1. 2 Timothy 1 verse 8. Again, Paul's exhorting to young Timothy. He says this, be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.

[27 : 44] Here's that word again. Oh, afflictions. Paul's saying to Timothy, the ministry means afflictions. Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

This was no smooth message. Paul's saying here, be a partaker of this, the afflictions of the gospel. Now, we all like the comforts of the gospel. What about the afflictions of the gospel?

In other words, as a Christian, you could face severe penalty. Be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel.

According to the power of God. And friends, Paul says here, partakers of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God. We don't trust in solar power. Or wind power. Or green power. We trust in God power, don't we? The God power. That's what we need. The power of God. And that's what enables you to be strong.

[28 : 44] It's God power. And we have way too careless Christianity these days where many would shy away from caution, from rebuke, from warning.

It'd be much easier to avoid the afflictions of the gospel. But Paul says of himself, I am not ashamed of the gospel, as we know, Romans 1. We read in 2 Timothy 1 verse 12, as Paul exhorts Timothy further, he says, For the which cause I also suffer these things, nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Joshua was told, Be strong, and of a good courage, and be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. How can we be strong, and of a good courage?

Our courage comes from him. And from closeness to him, as we see in Acts 4, it says, They perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, but they saw the boldness of Peter and John.

They took knowledge of them, that they'd been with Jesus. Jesus, people will see that you are bold. That doesn't mean you have to be some crazy, some kind of, like you've lost a few marbles or something.

[30 : 03] You can be rational and reasonable and intelligent and still be a bold Christian. And people will see that you are bold.

There'll be no hiding it. They saw, they perceived, they marveled, they took knowledge of them, they've been with Jesus. We see the whole church.

We go to Acts 4, Acts 4.31. The place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. We've got a message that we want to boldly deliver.

This is a message that evokes a boldness in us because it's life-changing. It's eternal. It's precious. It's changed our lives, and we want to share that. We see in Acts 9 where Barnabas introduced Paul. He said, you know, here was Paul who had been Saul, the Christian killer, effectively, who had taken the belongings of those who had stoned Stephen to the death.

[31 : 17] He was a partaker in the death of Stephen. He was an accomplice in the murder of Stephen. And the church was scared of Paul. Who is this guy? Maybe he's spying on us, or he's just a bit of a double, like an agent, like he's up to no good.

He's trying to catch us as he would drag people away, as he had done, to prison to their death, to torture. And in Acts 9, Barnabas says of Paul, he says, no, there's something happened to Paul because it says he preached boldly in the name of Jesus.

That's Acts 9.27. And then it says, verse 29, Acts 9.29, he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you're saved, you have a message you cannot but deliver.

There's a boldness that he gives to you. Notice of Paul. It says they were going about to kill him. This is Acts 9.29. It says, he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.

He disputed against the Grecians, but they went about to slay him. Here's Paul, a new Christian. He's already in trouble. They're going about to kill him. But he spoke boldly.

[32 : 33] It would have been easier for Paul to say, well, I'll just be politically correct now, and I'll just, you know, tone it down. I'll shrink back and cower. But no, he stood for Jesus.

And friends, that's the same message for you and me. And that can be, don't be ashamed of the gospel. Don't be ashamed of your Christian testimony. As Joshua was commanded, be strong and of a good courage.

Be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. Now more than ever is a time for boldness, not for cowardice, not for limp-wristed, not for weak-kneed Christians, but for fed-income Christians, not for superficial Christians, but for those that would say, I'm weak, but thou art strong.

And I'm not meaning to manufacture something that is of your own intent. It's really, humanly speaking, I know for myself I'm very weak and inadequate.

And it's only as we lean upon him, it's only as we trust in him, that he can use our frail efforts for his glory.

[33 : 44] There's time for boldness in prayer too. As we read in Hebrews 4, it talks about come boldly to the throne of grace. Hebrews 10, there's boldness to enter into the holies.

Friends, there's time for boldness in these days. Hebrews 13, that I may boldly say, the Lord is my helper. Just some thoughts to kind of wrap this up here.

As a youngster at school, back in, we came to Australia when I was eight, then we went back to live when I was 15, year 11, O-levels or the like.

And I was back in England for my year 11 equivalent. And they used to have a choir, well, they used to have a school assembly and they used to sing hymns in the school assembly.

And this was a public school, a government-run school. But in those days, they still sang Christian hymns. I'm sure they don't do that anymore.

[34 : 41] That'd be quite inappropriate. But, you know, and one of the hymns, and I had a Christian, as a Christian, I had a classmate, a Muslim chap, and he was a very decent fellow and a good friend, as friends go.

And I went to his house one day and they were doing their bowing and all their ritualistic prayer and such. And I guess I was a bit of a, kind of a little bit of a quiet Christian maybe.

Quieter than I am now. But there's a sense where I was a bit quiet in my faith. And then one day, it was coming to the school assembly time and they were singing, Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross.

They're singing that in the school assembly. And I was next door, standing right next to my Muslim friend in the school assembly. I thought, no, I'm going to let it rip because I believe these words are true.

I believe what I'm singing and I believe this is the truth. And I was kind of singing, not to be kind of showing off, but because this meant something to me. Stand up for Jesus really meant something to me.

[35 : 53] And I was just looking about the history of this song, Stand Up for Jesus. And it goes back to a time when there was an Anglican minister and his final words were, Tell them to stand up for Jesus.

Here he was, he was 29. This minister, Dudley Ting, is his name. And he was on his deathbed. He was surrounded by sorrowing friends and fellow ministers. And there was this great citywide revival, these evangelistic meetings in Philadelphia.

And he was one of the most bold and uncompromising preachers in these kind of evangelistic meetings. And as well as pastoring his own church, this fellow, Pastor Ting, was holding noonday services and the YMCA, and they were coming to hear this dynamic young preacher.

And on Tuesday, March the 30th, 1858, over 5,000 men came to gather for the mass meeting. And Ting preached from Exodus 10, verse 11, Go now ye that are men and serve the Lord.

And over 1,000 of the men at this meeting committed their lives to Christ. Over 1,000 people stood for Christ and got saved. And at one point in the sermon, the young preacher shouted this, I must tell my master's errand.

[37 : 17] I would rather that this right arm were amputated at the trunk than I should come short of my duty to you in delivering God's message. He said he'd rather have his arm chopped off than not tell them of the Saviour.

And the following week, he was in the country and he was watching an operation of a corn threshing machine in a barn. And the young pastor accidentally caught his loose sleeve in the cogs of this corn threshing machine.

And his arm was lacerated severely with the main artery severed. His right arm and the median nerve injured. And as a result of the shock and the great loss of blood, Pastor Ting died four days later.

And on the following Sunday, Ting's close friend, a fellow worker, another pastor of the Presbyterian Church, George Duffield, prepared a sermon, a funeral sermon for his departed friend. And he used this text, Ephesians 6, 14, Stand ye therefore, having your loins girded about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness.

[38 : 24] Pastor Duffield closed his sermon by reading a poem that he had just finished writing. And he told people how he'd been inspired by the dying words of his friend.

And soon these challenging words found their way into our hymn books. And it's on that theme of put on the whole armour of God against the forces of wickedness.

And lift high his royal banner. And it is that same song. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross. Lift high his royal banner. It must not suffer loss.

From victory unto victory his army shall he lead till every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed. Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey.

Forth to the mighty conflict. In this his glorious day. Ye that are brave, now serve him. Against unnumbered foes, let courage rise with danger and strength to strength oppose.

[39 : 22] Stand up, stand up for Jesus. Stand in his strength alone. The arm of flesh will fail you. You dare not trust your own. Put on the gospel armour. With peace put on with prayer.

Where duty calls all danger, he never wants him there. Stand up, stand up for Jesus. The strife will not be long. This day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.

To him that overcometh a crown of life shall be. He with the king of glory shall reign eternally.

Friends, be strong. Simply that.

And in his strength alone. As we think of, as it reads in Ephesians 6, how it tells you to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

There's no strength of our own manufacturing. We can earnestly contort ourselves and stretch ourselves to be strong, but it's got to be his strengthening, doesn't it?

[40 : 32] We can't be any stronger than us weak human vessels, but if his strength is residing in us, that's what matters. And his strength is made perfect in weakness.

That means you and me, doesn't it? It sure does. Let's pray. Praise you, Lord. We thank you, dear Lord God, that we can be strong.

In a world where many would be weakening, we can be strong. We can be a strong church. We can be strong Christians. Lord, strengthen us with your spirit power, with that God power, as it were, Lord, that power of God, your power, Lord God.

And, Lord, we pray each one might know the saving power of the gospel. And, Lord, that we, weak as we are, we can be stronger Christians. Lord, you do strengthen those that would seek after you. Help us, Lord, to say, I'm going to stand for Jesus as a soldier of the cross. Lord, strengthen us, we pray. And, Lord, strengthen our testimony such that we will not be afraid, we will not be dismayed, we will not shy away when afflictions beset our path such that it's hard work and such as it's hardness that we must endure, even the afflictions of the gospel, that we won't be bending or breaking, but we will stand strong.

[42 : 07] Pray if there's any here present yet to trust you, they might say, yes, I'm going to stand, even though it's going to be hard, I'm going to stand. In Jesus' name.