

Be Strong - An Address to Men's Group

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Date: 01 February 2020

[0:00] Be strong. And a strong man, what does a strong man look like? I know as a youngster I used to pray that I'd be like Superman or like Tarzan and I prayed things like that I wanted to be a strong man when I grew up.

And the question is how strong are you? Who is the strongest? You know maybe we should have an arm wrestling competition just to find that out. But what does it mean to be strong? To be strong. God calls us to be strong.

It says in 1 Corinthians 16, 13, watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong. Be strong. So it's saying be men, be strong. Stand fast in the faith. And God separates the men from the boys as it were. Stand fast in the faith. To be strong in the Lord. To be a man of God. This is true strength. True strength.

What does a strong man look like? And they are strong on the inside. On the inside. A man who is steady. He's not wavering. Think of what you look to as a man who is strong. A man who has temperance. A man who doesn't weaken in the face of temptation. He resists evil.

And sometimes the smallest thing can have power over us. I can identify with that. Last night I had this bzzz. And that mozzie had power over me.

[1:26] I saw it in the morning. I had spots all over me from the mozzie last night. Sometimes the smallest thing can have power over us. And that can be sometimes addictions. That can be a small thing. They can have power over us, can't they?

Sometimes things that overwhelm us and have power over us. It's hard for us to overcome. It takes power to resist. Power to overcome. Now like a magnet. We know a magnet has got a power. There's a power in that magnet.

And sometimes it's very powerful. It's a demonstration of power. And sometimes magnets have got power to resist, haven't they? You turn them around the other way, there's a power to resist. And so sometimes having power to resist is power that we need too.

What kind of a man ought we to be? Just want to leave you with a few quick thoughts this morning about what kind of man is a man who is strong.

A strong man. A man of character. A true blue. One who's got integrity. How are we to be strong? I put to you three things this morning.

[2:31] The Bible says to be strong in grace. To be strong in grace. In 2 Timothy 2 verse 1, Paul tells Timothy, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Now grace is a word, we might think it's a woman's name, the word grace. But really God says that men should have grace too. Grace is a good thing. It's a good character trait.

What does grace look like? How do you tell if a man is strong? You put him under pressure. You put the heat on, don't you? Then you can see what comes out of the man.

It's like a teabag. You see what comes out of the teabag. You put the heat on the man and you see whether he's got grace or not. And you'll see if he will stand the test or not.

People test a man and he will show grace. Will he make it? Is he going to get through that test, that suffering, that trial? We all have those moments of life.

[3:32] Will he have the grace to break through the pain barrier and keep on running their race? To keep on going? The man of grace, he will keep his cool.

That is a strong man. A strong man has grace. We are as strong as that which takes what we have the power to overcome. That is as strong as we are.

And the Bible says be strong. It tells us that. We've got a fight on our hands. The Bible says that we're in a fight. You see these Conor McGregor and all that that make him to be a big fine man. Pulverising a man's head into the floor. But really the fight that we're in is not against flesh and blood. It's against spiritual forces. It says be strong and of a good courage. Fear not. Be not afraid of them. For the Lord thy God, he it is that does go with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee. There's a battle on.

[4:29] A battle for all of us. And some of us younger, older, you know, I'm told by older men they still struggle with the flesh. You know, you think maybe an older man doesn't have so much flesh to deal with.

But it's a battle that goes from the cradle to the grave, isn't it? The battle against the flesh. The fighting against sin. Against Satan. Against trials. And God gives us the strength.

God helps us to be strong. Gives us the strength to overcome. One thing about strength is the strength grows. The strongest trees are the trees that have had the storms.

And strength takes exercise. You know, you go into the gym, as it were, to get physical strength. And Paul tells Timothy, in a sense, go into the gym of godliness.

He says exercise yourself unto godliness. And when you exercise yourself as a spiritual man, you'll be a stronger man. You'll be stronger for it. And in life you get to exercise godliness.

[5:25] To be stronger in your faith. Stronger in grace. Now some think the manly thing is how many swear words you know. Or how many curse words you utter.

They think that's the manly man is the man who swears a lot. Who curses. Who uses God's name in vain. And uses all the colourful language under the sun. But the Bible says to be strong in grace. It's actually the opposite. The Bible tells of a man whose words it says were gracious words.

Gracious words. Luke 4 verse 22.

It says the words of Jesus were gracious words. And it says the Lord himself, he is gracious. And in fact the Bible itself is called the word of his grace.

It says of him, our Lord, that he is full of grace and truth. And John 1 verse 14. We know as it talks about the word was God and was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

[6:23] And he was full of grace and truth. He demonstrated grace. Think about Christ as we read the gospels. He demonstrated grace, didn't he? He was grace personified.

Grace with the woman caught in the act of adultery. Grace with the sinful man. The sinful woman. Grace, grace. All of his grace. And he showed grace to the undeserving.

And he shows grace to save. And he still does. He still shows that grace. He still extends that grace. God wants man to be strong. And he gives us the power that we need, which includes being strong in grace.

It translates into our life. That it's the very core of us. That we'll be like Christ. That we'll have power to show grace to others. Grace to others who might offend us. Grace to others who might hurt us. Grace is kind. It's long-suffering. Grace will go the distance. Grace shows forgiveness to those who it's hard to show it to. Isn't it? Grace doesn't hold grudges.

[7:21] Grace will extend forgiveness. And grace helps us to show love. That's powerful, isn't it? That is powerful. Grace is powerful. God gives us the power of grace. The power that we need.

And it says also to be strong in faith. It says to be strong in faith. In Romans 4 verse 20 it tells us about a man called Abraham. He was strong in faith.

In Romans 4 verse 20 it says he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. But was strong in faith. Giving glory to God. You know, something amazing there was in the context of his wife to become pregnant in her latter years.

As they were in their 80s, 90s. Like it was beyond human reckoning. But God said you will bear a son. He said you will be the father of many nations.

And Abraham, it says, he believed God. He was strong in faith. Believe God. That's the bottom line. Believe him. Believe his promises. Like Abraham, he staggered not at the promises of God.

[8:29] He believed the promises of God. You can believe the promises of God. The Bible says that he's not a man that he should lie. You know, I've had some men lie to me. You might have had the same experience. But

this one will not lie.

Amen? God will not lie. He tells us the truth. And he keeps his promises. Amen? He keeps his promises. You've got a book full of them. It's called the Bible. Faith.

Faith is powerful. And God wants you to be strong in faith. Faith makes a stand for something. To be men of conviction. To be like Abraham. Abraham was strong.

Strong in faith. Faith in God. And he gave glory to God, it says. The Bible poses a question. A faithful man, who can find? A faithful man.

A man full of faith. He's a rare breed. Faith is a rare quality today, isn't it? And faith is really the gutsy, manly thing to do. Some would think, someone who trusts in faith, Oh, like Christianity is just a crutch.

[9:30] You know, weak people are the ones who go to church and have a faith in God. But really it's the gutsy, manly thing to do, to be strong in faith. To be like Abraham.

And the smallest faith can grow. You might think, look, I've only got a little bit of faith. But Jesus says a small amount of faith can move mountains. He says your faith can grow like a mustard seed. Grow stronger in faith. Harness your faith. Let it build. Let it grow. Exercise your faith. And where does it start? It starts in the heart. It says man believes in the heart.

He confesses with his mouth. The Lord Jesus. It says, if you shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, and thou shalt be saved. It starts in the heart and you confess it with your mouth.

You make that declaration. Jesus, my Lord, you died for me. And we can know faith. A faith that encompasses all of life. Such that we can have stronger marriages.

[10:28] We can have stronger faith. We can be as stronger as a husband. We can be stronger as a father. Stronger as a son. Stronger as a brother. Stronger as believers.

We can know strength. True strength. Faith is not some weak kind of crutch. Faith is power. Faith is powerful. It's a strength. How can we get stronger in faith?

How can we have power to overcome? The Bible says we're going to be strong by the word of God. 1 John 2.14 It tells in part, it says, you are strong, the word of God abides in you.

As the word of God abides in us, there's a strength there that comes to us. As we take those promises, as we trust Him, as we believe Him, faith will grow.

Now, you might have found the time, I know I'm very bad for this, when you go to the shed and you're going to get your power tool out and it doesn't work. You know, I'm very bad for that.

[11:28] I know if I need a power tool, my dad's always got one charged up, but when I go to my shed, I'll use them so rarely, that the power tool doesn't work. It needs to be recharged. And, you know, sometimes our faith can get like that.

We get a bit low in charge, you know. Our faith gets a bit weak, a bit wavering. Spiritually, we need to get recharged. And that's what this is about this morning. It's about when we get together with other men who are searching for God, who've found Him, who know Him, and we can build our faith, grow our faith, increase our faith, get spiritually recharged.

Like that power tool, we plug it in and it gets the power bang. And God is our ultimate power source, isn't He? Be strong in grace, be strong in faith, and just lastly, be strong in the Lord.

Be strong in the Lord. It says in Ephesians 6, verse 10, it's talking about spiritual battles, it's talking about a spiritual armour, being a man, a warrior for God.

And Ephesians 6, verse 10, it says, Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The good news is, when I am weak, He is strong.

[12:38] Isn't that true? When you're at your weakest point, it's all the more that you can rely on His strength, on His power, on that awesome power, that power of God, that awesome power that holds us to Himself, that holds us strong and steady, that power beyond our own strength, that power of God.

And the Lord resides in the heart by faith. And He's seen in our life. Our strength comes from the Lord, it says. In Psalm 27, David cried, The Lord is my light and my salvation.

Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid? Men here this morning, you can say that too.

You can confess those words of Scripture too. The words of David, The Lord is my strength. Amen? You can know that, personally know that.

The Lord. When you think, as we're talking about strong man, and my little childhood prayer to be a strong man, who is the strongest man? The strongest man?

[13:43] The strongest man who ever lived? The best man? The best of the best? The best of men? The greatest?

The God-man. More than just the best? More than just the greatest? He was the ultimate God-man. God manifest in the flesh.

Friends, if I could just give you one thing that matters more than anything of all that I've said, is to know Him. To know Him, who is life. Life eternal.

To know Him, the only true God. To know the best of men, the greatest man, but more so, the God-man. God manifest in the flesh. Not just the best role model, the one we could aspire to be like, to be like Jesus, but to know Him personally as our Lord.

To know Him, the Lord, Jesus Christ. To know Him as our Lord. The Lord is your strength, it says. And friends, just to close, be strong in grace.

[14:45] It's not a weak thing to be gracious, to have that composure, that self-control, for God to help you have gracious words and the grace to others that you can extend. God's grace.

You can have God's grace. You know His grace to save you and live His grace in your lives that you live. You can be strong in faith like Abraham. He believed the promises.

He staggered not. It wasn't unbelief. Faith took control with Abraham. He believed God and he believed the promises of God. He believed that God doesn't lie. God keeps His promises.

You can be strong in faith. Soul-saving faith. A faith that knows Jesus Christ died and He rose again and I believe with my heart and I confess with my mouth the Lord, the Lord Jesus.

And you can be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The Lord is your strength. When you're feeling weak, when life throws its curveballs, when life is tough and it's hard and it wears you down and the situations of life and the tragedies and heartaches of life and the miseries of life sometimes, that God will be your strength, that God will see you through, that God will be your power, be on your own and that when you are weak, He is strong.

[16:00] 1 Corinthians 16, 13, it says, stand fast in the faith. Quit you like men. In other words, be manly. Act like men. Be strong.

Be strong. Let's pray. Lord, I pray for all the men here today that you would stir our hearts, Lord. Help us, as it were, to not be like that power tool that's running out of charge.

But Lord, we'd plug in to godly fellowship. We'd have some fellowship here now further and Lord, as you help us, we'll have that faith, we'll have that grace, we'll have that trust in you as our strength, our Lord.

We pray if there's any here this morning that have yet to come to know you personally, that they might even now say, Lord, I believe, I believe that you died for my sin.

that you are the one who can save me beyond my own need, beyond my own power because I cannot save myself.

[17:05] I trust in you and I want to be a man of God. We pray that each one would have that heart today and help us to keep growing our faith, make it stronger, Lord.

As weak as we can be, Lord, you are our strength. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. God bless you this morning. Keep fellowshiping and linger if you can and get some time together and encourage you.