

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG265 – Live by His Strength

Welcome to the podcast today. I want to talk to us about our strength and where our strength comes from. The last podcast that I did, called *The Bread We Know Not Of*, was from Isaiah the fortieth chapter, verses 28-31. I will read that quickly as a reminder of kind of the topic we are on. It says,

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

In this last podcast, I was talking about our waiting on the Lord, and do we really know how to wait on the Lord in a way that taps us in, or plugs us in, to this idea of the new strength which is talked about in verse 31. It is about this strength that we have; and I know it is an issue for us. As we grow older, the tendency that we have is to lose our strength, lose our vigor; all of these things begin to dissipate slowly over time and go away. I think part of it is because, number one, that is what we are conditioned to see; it is what we are conditioned to believe, and it is what we have observed all of our life. In a sense we have been programmed to really believe in death. I think there is something that as Christians, as believers, we need to break out of, because I think the Word of God provides something different for us than what happens just in a natural way with humanity as it goes along its path, but is devoid, in a sense, of God.

You can say, “I thought we were talking about believers.” We are talking about believers, but we also are talking about the strength that comes from God. We can be Christians and we can have Christ dwelling within us, but that does not impact our mortal bodies and our physical bodies the way you might think. And so, I think we are conditioned, even as Christians, in that we watch other Christians, and we have watched Christians throughout our lives, who just grow old like everybody else and pass away. I think this is another way in which we as believers are too much like the world, when I believe that the reality of becoming Christian is that there is a new life where old things have passed away, new things have come, and we should be different than the world surrounding us.

Romans 12:2 says, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”; and I think that we are very conditioned to the world. One of the ways we are conditioned to the world, even as Christians, is that we are conditioned to believe it is okay – and I use that word “believe” because it is almost a faith – we get sick, we die, our bodies grow old like everybody else; and I think that we have a faith for that, a faith for life to end that way, to go through life that way. And like the Lord said, what you have faith for, then let that be (Matthew 9:29). So, according to our faith, let it be. Unfortunately, there are a lot of ways we have faith for things that we should not, and we believe in things that we should not, and therefore we have the consequence of that kind of faith.

I want to read out of Romans the eighth chapter, starting at verse 10. It says, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness." Here we see that you can believe in Christ, you can believe in His death on the cross, you can believe in His resurrection, you can believe that He dwells within you, and yet at the same time realize that though Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin. Christ dwelling in you does not necessarily deal with the reality of the mortal body. But it does not mean that God has not made that provision. As we go on and read verse 11, it says, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

When we first receive Christ into our lives, we are being reconnected to the Father, we are being reconciled to the Father, and our spirit then is coming alive to the Father. In other words, we have the ability to plug back in to God; whereas before Christ was in us, we were not plugged in to God, which means that all that God is was not available to us. And one of the things that is a reality about that is if you are not plugged in to God, you will die. Your mortal body will wind down and it will get sick, all kinds of things can happen because you are not plugged in to Him. As we were reading in Isaiah, if we are plugged in to God, then we get the reality that God does not grow weary. His strength does not go away, His vigor is not something that drains out of Him, He does not get tired. And so, it says when we wait upon the Lord, when we plug in to God, we get a new strength. We are not living just from a mortal standpoint anymore, but there is something of a new strength that comes into us. We are not strengthened anymore by what we eat and what we do; now we are strengthened by being reconnected with God and being able to draw all that He is into our bodies as well as our spirit, and to live that kind of life.

In Galatians 5 it says that "If we live by the Spirit, then we walk by the Spirit." See, being in Christ and Christ being in us opens up the possibility and the ability for a whole new life. But just because Christ is in you, it does not mean that everything is going to go well with your physical body; it does not happen that way. Yet there is a provision: Now that you are connected with the Father, it says that "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus..." which is the Father, the Father raised Christ from the dead; "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." So when we have the Father, then we receive the Spirit of Him. God is Spirit, and when He dwells in us, now we have something that literally impacts our mortal body; and I believe that this is the thing that we are looking for. This is what we need to have faith for, that if Christ is in me, I can begin to wait upon the Lord; I can begin to connect with God in such a way that His attributes come into my life, and all that He is is drawn into me, including that which will affect my flesh with life.

Galatians 5:22-25 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." So, once we are connected to the Spirit, then all that is available in God is available to us; and with God, nothing is impossible, and everything opens up. Christ came to reconcile us to the Father, to reconnect us to the Father. But we know that just because I confess Christ and have a belief in a salvation experience, it does not mean that I am actively doing what Isaiah 40 said, which is to wait upon Him, to learn how to connect with Him, to engage in the Spirit that is in me.

Christ talked about the fact that if we are not born again into the Spirit, we do not see the Kingdom of God. Everybody uses that term "born again" for an initial salvation experience, but I believe it is

speaking to more than that. It is speaking to this issue that Romans 8 connects with, that Christ is in you, but the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead must dwell in you and give life to your mortal body. This is part of maturing in God, growing in Him, moving on in the relationship and in the purpose for which He saved us. And as we move on with this, we see that there is a strength.

Psalm 118:14 says, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation." So He is my salvation, but He also can be my strength. He can be my song, my worship can come through Him. All of these things, these gifts of the Spirit, all that is available in God is available when we learn how to reach in, plug in, draw from it, get connected to it, and have it be the strength and the power that is in our life.

Christ told the disciples to go and wait in Jerusalem because when they were baptized in the Spirit, they would be endued with power from on high. See, there is something that comes into us that is life and strength and health and all of these things; but we have to appropriate them, and we have to walk in them, and we have to live in them, otherwise they do not happen. I think that we need to get out of that blindness, out of the passivity or whatever it is where we do not really go after the appropriation of all that He has made for us in a provision. One of the things that is interesting to me is the fact that we read in the Old Testament how long people lived; and I believe the ancients lived because they knew how to draw from God. They were connected with God, and they lived by a strength that came into them from God. It was something that we could call supernatural. We can call it supernatural because God is supernatural. It is God and His power, His strength, His ability. Like it says, He does not grow weary, He does not lose His strength, He does not lose His youth, He does not lose that vigor and that vitality that we have in our youth. God retains that and it is there always, and therefore it is there for us always.

I know we have examples in the Scripture where people actually comment on this. In Joshua it talks about Caleb, and how Caleb lived in a strength; and for all of these men and women of God who really knew how to connect with God Himself, it was seen as unusual, maybe even in their days. Let me just read a little bit out of Joshua. I will start at chapter 14, verse 7. It says, "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart." This guy had faith in his heart. He believed God in what He said about clearing the land. The importance of this verse is the fact that Caleb is identifying himself as having been forty years old. Now we are going to jump down to verses 10-12. It says, "Now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day...."

We see that Caleb was eighty-five years old. Now I know there are people around us that live to be eighty-five years old, but how many of those people honestly can stand and say, "My strength and my ability at eighty-five is the same as it was when I was forty"?

"I have not lost any vigor. I have not lost any strength, any ability in my body. My body is as strong today as it was when I was forty years old."

And what is Caleb asking for here? He is telling Joshua, "Look, give me the promise of God." Well, what was the promise? The promise was that he was going to be given a certain property within Israel. In verse 12 it says, "Now then, give me this hill country about which the Lord spoke on that day, for you

heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps the Lord will be with me, and I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken.” So here he is, he is eighty-five years old, and if you are questioning what he is really saying about his strength, he is ready to go up and tackle the Nephilim offspring, the Anakim that were in Hebron; which, by the way, if we want to talk about a little politics here, go back to the fact that Hebron was given by Joshua to Caleb – it has been an Israelite city since that time. So Caleb and his sons went up. He was eighty-five years old. It was serious; his strength, his ability for war, was as it was then. He did not lose a step over all of those years.

I think that Caleb is not the only example that we see about this. In fact, one great example I think is the example of Moses himself. And so, let’s read out of Deuteronomy the thirty-fourth chapter, and I will start with verses 4-6.

“Then the Lord said to him, ‘This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.’” This is God speaking to Moses. We know that Moses was disobedient at a time, and so God told him, “You cannot go in to the land.” So God is taking him to show him the land, and then he is going to die.

Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not go over there.” So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor; but no man knows his burial place to this day.

Now listen to verse 7: “Although Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his vigor abated.” I think this is what we should see as believers and we should really understand. Moses obviously was plugged in to God. He had seen God, spoken with God; he knew how to draw the energy that was God, the force, the strength, the life that was in God. God is alive forever, He never dies. There is no death, there is no sickness, there is no lack of vitality in God. And Moses and others like Caleb walked in this; and we see others in the Scriptures who knew how to wait on the Lord, how to draw this energy on a daily basis. They did not do it once or twice, they lived this way, as the Scripture was saying: “If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit.” They literally did. They lived by the Spirit. And what is that referring to? Just like Romans 8 says, “If the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you, He will give life to your mortal bodies.” So these people’s mortal bodies were infused with the life of God and the strength of God, and it never dwindled, it never abated. These guys did not grow old.

I wish we could see this, because we are so conditioned by the world around us, even though it says not to be. And where does it come from? It comes directly from our mind. We have observed this, we have lived in it. When we were babies, we watched our parents grow old, our grandparents grow old. We watched people die. It imprinted upon us, it taught our subconscious mind, that “This is what you do as a human. You grow old, you get sick, you lose your strength, you lose your health”; and you certainly lose the vitality, because like I said, who can say, “Yeah, I’m eighty-five years old, but I have the same strength and life that I had when I was forty”? We are conditioned to something else. And I do not think that is the way that these guys lived. When we marvel over some of the ages that these people grew to, they grew and they lived because of the fact that they had the strength that was coming directly into them by God. It was the Spirit of God dwelling in them that was giving them this strength and this life.

Here is Moses; he is one hundred twenty years old when he dies. This is the kind of death I think that everyone of faith should have. When God was finished with him and the course that he was on, and He brought him to the place where He said He was going to bring him to, where he would see the land but

could not go into it, then God removed that strength and he died. He removed His Spirit out of that flesh and he died. It was instant death. But before that moment, it says that “his eyes were not dim, nor his vigor abated.” He did not grow old. He did not go through a process that we are conditioned to go through and conditioned to observe in our life.

I think that we honestly should go back to Isaiah 40 about waiting on the Lord and realize that if we learn to wait on the Lord.... We do have Christ, we have Christ in us; and because we have Christ in us, we can have the Spirit of Him who raised Christ from the dead also dwelling in us. And because that Spirit, the Spirit, is dwelling in us, life should be infused into our mortal bodies, and we should not just live some life like we see around us. Our minds should not be conditioned to be like the world in the way that life begins and ends. We should see something different: “Behold, all things have been made new” – and that should be our experience. I think we should believe for it.

I know people will have a really difficult time with this, and that is fine – go ahead and have a time with it. But read through the Scriptures and wrestle with them yourself, and grapple with God like Jacob at the river until something happens and He really touches you. I believe there is a life that we can have and that we should have. We should be living by the Spirit. We should be walking by the Spirit. And I believe that is possible. I believe it is available. And I believe that we should know exactly how to do this. I think Moses did, I think Caleb did, others in the Scriptures that we read about did; and we should be able to do it.

You say, “Why didn’t the apostles live forever?” Well, if you recall, most of them were killed in persecution, and so they were martyred. It would be interesting to see how old some of them would have become if they had not been martyred. That is why I am going back to the example of Caleb and Moses, because we can see their lives. With Moses we can see his death, and I think that that should be our example.

I bless you with this word. I believe that we can reach in to the Lord and learn to walk in His ways.

Amen.