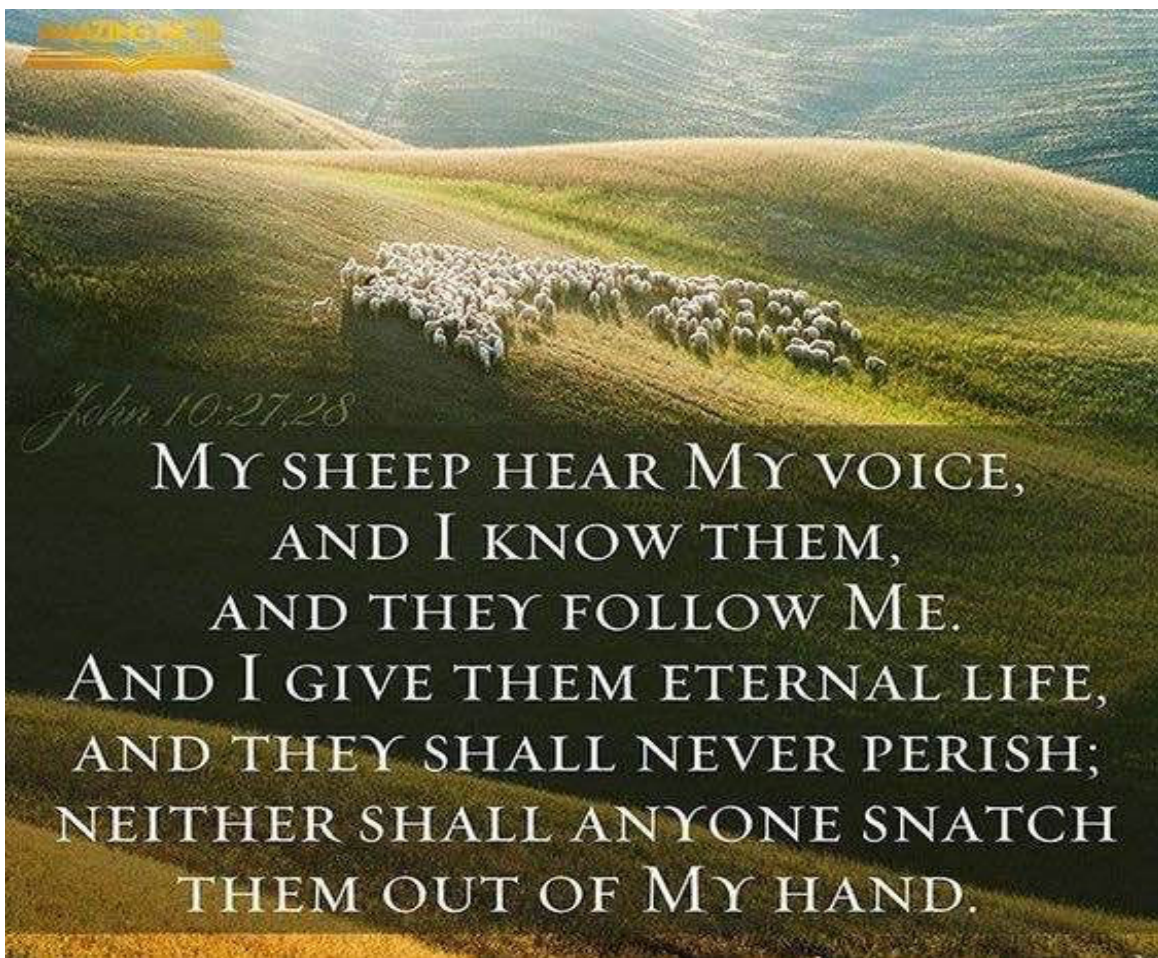


"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	21
Sunday AM Worship	35
Sunday PM Worship	23
Wed. Bible Study	19
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Minister:

Tim Canup
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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:.... 10:00am
AM Worship:..11:00am
PM Worship:....6:00pm
2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am
"Back to the Bible"
AM 580 WSKS
93.5 FM

**We Extend A
Warm & Cordial
Welcome
To All Our
Visitors!**

Strong In the Lord

by Bobby K. Thompson

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Ephesians 6:10). This admonition is found near the conclusion of Paul's beautiful epistle to the Ephesians. Verse 10 is followed by principles that enumerate the armor of the Christian that are necessary in his being strong in the Lord. It appears that man has a natural desire to be strong. Perhaps it goes without saying that no one desires to be weak. Though men almost universally have a desire for strength, the objective in strength often varies. With some it is a quest for physical strength (1 Timothy 4:8). With others, it may be a longing for financial strength and they sell their soul in pursuit of it. (Mark 8:36-38). Still with others, there is the craving for intellectual strength and recognition. (Ecclesiastes 12:12). These do not constitute the true objective of strength. The greatest strength is to be strong in the Lord. This is the very thing that so many ignore and for which they have little regard. Several admonitions in the New Testament are noted regarding this subject: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (1 Corinthians 16:13). Again, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2:1).

WE ASK A FEW QUESTIONS.

1. Why should one be strong in the Lord?
a. To meet our enemies. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8). There must be strength to resist the devil. (James 4:7).

[Continued Inside]

b. To preach the gospel and contend for the faith. Paul wrote: "...I am set for a defense of the gospel." (Philippians 1:17). To be set for a defense requires a great deal of strength. This explains why some do not contend for the faith. Weakness prevails in them rather than strength in the Lord to do what true disciples should be doing.

c. To live acceptably and overcome. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5:4). The world is overcoming us or we are overcoming the world! To overcome the world requires faith that involves being strong in the Lord.

2. What is required in developing strength? All strengths have basically the same requirements for development. Spiritual strength is no exception. Growth is required. (1 Peter 2:2; 3:18). This growth is made possible by food (Matthew 4:4); exercise (2 Timothy 4:8); cleanliness (2 Corinthians 7:1); proper surroundings (1 Corinthians 15:33); time (Hebrews 5:11-14) and the armor previously mentioned in (Ephesians 6:14-18). These principles cannot be ignored if an individual expects to be strong in the Lord. Be concerned enough to read these Scriptures and meditate upon their significance.

3. When is one strong in the Lord?

a. When the Lord's Will is supreme in one's life. He has obeyed the gospel and in so doing has put on the Lord. (Galatians 3:26-27). Throughout his activities, he recognizes that the Lord's ways and thoughts are higher than his as the heavens are higher than the earth. (Isaiah 55:8-9). He prays to God "not my will, but thine be done" and consistently patterns his life after the beautiful sentiment. He doesn't have to know "the why" of everything that God authorizes, but is content to do what God says and believes that He says what He means and means what He says.

b. When one is weak. Paul wrote the paradox: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10). This seems contradictory, but that is the feature of a paradoxical statement. Weak in the eyes of the world are the commandments of God. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" (1 Corinthians 1:27). Men consider men weak when they manifest a need and dependence upon God. By worldly standards, religion is effeminate. Good for the wife and kids, but not for the worldly strong. In view of such a concept, Paul relates: "for when I am weak (by man's standard in doing what God authorizes) then am I strong (before God and the spiritually minded people in that the world has been defied with its strength).

The arrogant and proud will never be strong in the Lord. When one is so strong that he can't see himself a sinner, that one is weak before God and he is a great distance from being strong in the Lord. We must never withhold from God if we hope to be strong in the Lord. The Macedonians had the right conception of strength: "...first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." (2 Corinthians 8:5). What about you? Are you ready to pay the price to be strong in the Lord?

Study the Bible With Purpose

Greg Weston

God has revealed himself to us, has described the great salvation he wants all to have, and has given us the path to follow so we can have the abundant life in his Son Jesus as well as its culmination in heaven. It is important, then, that we study the Bible with purpose. This purpose is to understand God's revelation and to obey it.

"Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim 2:14-18).

Diligence, work, and rightly dividing are key words of this admonition to Timothy. All require action on the part of the disciple of Jesus. The actions focus on the word of truth, the Bible. The actions prevent the disciple's wandering into the destructive paths of humanity. This instruction does not tell us to consult commentaries for hours. It tells us to spend time studying the will of God. Paul knew that Timothy could, and that all disciples can, understand the will of God. ~~We do need to understand who is writing, who is receiving it, and the circumstances of the writing.~~ It is also helpful to understand historical and cultural settings of the document. With this knowledge we can understand divine truths, but also how they fit within the first century Mediterranean world. Knowing the background of circumcision, understanding the source of meats in the Corinthian marketplace, and being familiar with the household servants who aided their masters in hospitality are great aids in understanding Acts 15, 1 Corinthians 8 and 10, and John 13. But even here we must be careful that we do not lose the emphasis of divine teaching by a focus on the setting in which it was delivered.

Study the Bible with purpose. Make this a daily habit. This book is the only volume which directs us in the path to eternity. Others can be enjoyable and helpful in certain areas. But if they replace the Bible as our authority in life we will depart from God. If we spend much time in other readings, and less in the inspired text, our views of the Bible and life right paths can be compromised. God has spoken. Are you listening?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- May 28 – Prayer Service
- June 2 – Visit from Ron & GiGi Brown, light meal at 5:00 pm, presentation at 6:00 pm
- June 4 – Men's Business Meeting & Ladies' Bible Class after Evening Worship
- June 11 – Preach & Eat & 1:30 Worship Service
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell