

March 19, 2023

Strengthen Yourself

by Ken Weliever

Last Sunday in our Bible class, we tackled the topic of depression and how to handle it from the perspective of the Psalmist. Specifically, Psalm 42 and 43.

In these Psalms the author is distressed, discouraged and dismayed over unfulfilled plans, unsatisfied feelings, and unanswered questions.

Have you ever experienced those feelings?

What can you do when you're down? Where do you go to find encouragement? To whom do you turn for strength to go forward?

Before we answer those questions, consider this passage from 1 Samuel 30.

The setting is a time in David's life when he's running from the crazed King Saul who's trying to kill him. To escape, David and his band of soldiers hide for awhile in the land of the Philistines, who are enemies of Israel. Of course, the Philistines are suspicious of David. To complicate matters, the Amalekites raid David and his men, capturing their wives and children.

The Bible records how distraught they were with this emotional description. "Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep" (1 Sam. 30:4).

so devastating and traumatic that you cried until you couldn't cry anymore? That's the scene on this occasion.

As bad as this was, it gets worse. The Bible records they were ready to stone David to death. They blamed him for their defeat. And were tempted to kill him.

The Bible says "David was greatly distressed." You think?

David, who killed Goliath, hailed as a hero, and already anointed as Saul's successor to the throne, is now facing a dark and depressing chapter in his life. He's away from home. Living in enemy territory. Being chased by a mentally deranged King. Made the scapegoat for the current distress. And now faces the threat of his men's mutiny.

What could he do? Where could he turn? Who could help?

The Bible says, "*David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.*"

While we may find strength from the mutual encouragement of our brethren, from the preacher's sermon, or a pastor's visit, there are times when we must strengthen ourselves. People can pray for us, encourage us, and care for us, but the time comes when we must reach deep down inside our souls and pull ourselves out the depths of despair.

Strengthen yourself. But how? How

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Our Gospel Meeting with Bubba Garner - April 2-5

Gospel Meeting at Cedar Park, March 26-29

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

Have you ever experienced a hurt

did David strengthen himself? The Bible doesn't specifically tell us. But it does say that he "strengthened himself in the Lord." That's the key. "In the Lord."

Back to Psalms 42 and 43. What did the Psalmist do and where did he turn as he, too, "shed tears day and night"?

He turned to the Lord. He quit looking inward, and began to look upward. He stopped asking, "why?" and said, "who?" He ceased from questioning, to seeking refuge in God's promises, provisions, and protection. He realized that God cared. That God is faithful, even when we doubt. That God forgives. And that God will be our refuge in time of trouble.

There's an old adage, that may sound trite, but it's true. "I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future." So, in Psalm 43 the author could say "God will give me the victory." And he could affirm "You are the God of my strength."

What are you facing that is discouraging and depressing? Marital discord? Family strife? Financial setbacks? Health issues? Loss of love? The death of a loved one? Church problems?

Whatever it is, let me encourage you to strengthen yourself in the Lord. Fervently pray about your problems. Read scripture. Especially the Psalms. Don't neglect worshiping with your church family, although it may be difficult. And don't blame God. He's not the source of your problems. He's not the enemy.

"But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life" (Jude 20).

Don't ever quit. Strengthen yourself in the Lord.

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Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system. He is having some tests run for his lungs.

Dinah Williams continues to have mobility issues and will be having cataracts removed soon.

Don Simmons is still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times. **Alene** is having hip issues.

Randall Vanaman is having difficulties with his feet.

Doug Adair is preparing to have surgery on his back

Lisa Mullen (Darrell's sister) is under treatment for cervical cancer that has spread. They put in a feeding tube and she is a little stronger.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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