

The Christian life is the promise life.

"As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature" (2 Peter 1:3-4 NLT).

THE PROMISE LIFE

STRENGTH

ISAIAH 40:28-31

Over the past three Sundays, we have looked at the promises of *Renewal, Peace and Guidance*, and today, we will consider one of the most essential promises of all: *Strength*.

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:28-31 NKJV).

Look at the condition of those mentioned in this passage: weak, no might, faint, weary, falling or stumbling.

All of us are marked by short comings, weaknesses and failures in our Christian life. God knows.

Do you need strength today? Many of us have stress, but there are few who claim strength.

Stress is a major issue in most of our lives. Stress leads to many mix-ups, misunderstandings and mistakes. Stress can be found in both family and business—job difficulties, no work. Stress has many manifestations. It can lead to emotional tension, discouragement, depression and despair.

What is *stress*? It is the distance between the demands of your life on one side and your capacity to meet such demands on the other.

We experience many pressures: assignments, responsibilities, opportunities of life, work, family and even church. The progression? Extension, push, flare up, burn out. Some people live in the desperate gap between what they ought to do, what they want to do and what they can do. "Can do" people sometimes fall short of what they can realistically do. Are you living in the tense and tiring land of in-between?

Stress is not a sin. It only becomes sin when you don't handle stress by bringing it to the One who brings strength. It is a sin to not address stress with God's strength.

Our Scripture passage today is one of the most positive and powerful promises in the Bible.

How Can I Find Strength in My Stresses?

• Admit It: "I can't, but He can."

The challenge given to us from Isaiah is this: change your perspective and get eyes on a different Source.

God knows your condition.

"As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Psalm 103:13-14 NKJV).

God wants you to acknowledge your weakness so you may embrace His strength.

He can because...

He Creates

I love the beauty of South Florida and the proximity to the ocean. Note these texts:

"Who has measured the **waters** in the hollow of His **hand**" (Isaiah 40:12 NKJV, *bold added for emphasis*).

"It is He who sits above the **circle of the earth**" (Isaiah 40:22 NKJV, *bold added for emphasis*).

"Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things [stars, etc.], who brings out their host by **number**; He calls them all by **name**, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; not one is missing" (Isaiah 40:26 NKJV, *bold added for emphasis*).

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the **ends of the earth**, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28 NKJV, *bold added for emphasis*).

Every detail. Precision. Parameters. All from God! AWESOME!

He Controls

"Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him... Behold, the nations

are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing... He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, when He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble" (Isaiah 40:10, 15, 23-24 NKJV).

God is engaged even in the struggles of today.

He Cares

God is not too great to care; He cares too much to remain distant.

God's strength and resource is unlimited and unbounded. When you fail to see and believe, you can falter, stumble and struggle.

• Affirm It: "I get stressed, but He gives strength."

Stress takes its toll on your life for a number of reasons and through a variety of means:

> Demands of Life

Read John 4. Jesus was wearied.

There are numerous pictures of Jesus dealing with physical weakness and fatigue in Scripture. Fatigue can increase your stress.

If this is true of Jesus, what about you? You are not the Energizer Bunny that keeps going, going, going.

In the demands of life, you can face stress through fatigue.

> Disobedience of Sin

Sin brings weakness. Just as a disease can strike down a body, sin can strike down a life.

Sin is damaging to body, soul and spirit.

Samson of the Old Testament was gifted of God. He was given gifts to glorify God. Samson destroyed a lion, carried city gates on his back and destroyed a Philistine army with the jaw bone of a donkey. What was his strength? Hair? No. His hair was a symbol of his devotion to God... but Samson broke a promise.

Samson's story is one of the saddest accounts in Scripture. It involves guilt, fear and injury. You can't ignore God's law, violate His way, and then succeed. In the disobedience of sin, you can face stress through failure.

> Disturbance of People

Do you have people within your circle of friends and acquaintances who are either very encouraging or very draining?

Very encouraging people seem to "fill our tanks with oxygen". How great to be blessed through the hands of those who strengthen us!

Thank you for exhibiting the great warmheartedness my family and I have come to know and love over the past three and a half years!

• Accept It: "He can and He will."

Renew = Exchange
God has a policy of strength!

Have you completed all your post-Christmas exchanges? Through each exchange, did you exchange what is right, good and adequate in place of that which is wrong, unnecessary or broken?

What will God do in your weakness and weariness?

For those who wait and believe, God promises...

Elevation

An eagle soars in adversity—more than 100 mph in swift winds. An eagle's performance is increased under such conditions.

Acceleration

When the intensity of life picks up, you can quickly experience weariness and consider quitting. But when you fear losing pace, God helps you to keep going.

Continuation

"They shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).

Strong. Steady. Step-by-step. Walk with God!

"Let hope rejoice in a promise which does not go off into the air, but which leaves us upon solid earth." —George Adam Smith

Are you pressed today? God is the One who renews strength!

This edited message was preached from the pulpit of Boca Raton Community Church, Boca Raton, Florida, on January 27, 2002, by David H. McKinley.

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