

Strength

Philippians 4:13 KJV

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

The letter to the Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul. At this particular time, Paul was in prison in Rome. Paul had been in prison at least two times before but this time is the last time before his execution by the Romans. Paul had been through quite a few trials and tribulations during his ministry. In second Corinthians 11:24-28 it says,

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Wow! Paul had experienced a lot as he was fulfilling God's purpose for his life! Even though we may not have experienced trials and tribulations of this particular magnitude, we must remember what Jesus said in John 16:33, *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation [Greek. Thlipsis - pressure, afflicted, anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble]: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

Jesus lets us know that as his disciples we are going to encounter tribulation in our life. But, the good news is that he has overcome or conquered the world for us! No matter what may come our way as we are doing what God has purposed for us to do to bring him glory, honor, and praise, we must remember that we are victorious, because Christ has given us the strength we need to complete the mission! Paul was letting the Philippians know that he appreciated their care for him, because they had supported him financially more than once for the ministry! He also let them know that he wasn't speaking in respect of want because he stated, *"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Philippians 4:11-13.

No matter what situation he found himself in, Paul knew that he was not alone and that he would get through it because of what he had experienced in his life! WHAT HE HAD EXPERIENCED! Saints, we are going to experience things that are not always pleasant as we walk with Jesus! We're going to have our ups, we're going to have our downs! At times, we're going to have plenty, and there will be times when we're in need!

These experiences help us to learn that we can withstand whatever comes our way, because our God gives us the strength to endure it! That power of God that was giving strength to Paul, is the same power (dunamis), that gives us the ability to stand strong in the faith and to share that faith with others, no matter what may come our way! What's happening in the world today is a significant example! COVID-19, social unrest, racial injustice, unemployment, marital strife, and the drama in the government! Oh my! Lord, we are so glad you are with us to help us!!

An example of how God builds strength and endurance, is in 2nd Corinthians 12:7-10. We see that Paul, who has been given so many revelations by God, was given a thorn in the flesh. Paul sought the Lord three times to take it away, but the Lord said, "**My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.**" In conclusion, verse 10 says, "*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.*" May you all be strengthened in Jesus' name!!

Written By: Elder Jean McIntosh