

Stronger Empowering your future – part 4

Luke 22:31-32 ³¹ “And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, **strengthen your brethren.**”

Today’s central Scripture:

Isaiah 37:3 - ³ And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: “This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is **no strength** to bring them forth.

Hezekiah was the 12th king of Judah. He was a godly king, a great reformer, a builder and a man of great faith.

2 Kings 18:5-7 - ⁵ *He trusted* in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. ⁷ The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.

Hezekiah is central to our message and his name means **Jehovah is strength**.

He was a man of courage and strength and stood against the king of Assyria... but that is where things got complicated for him. The Assyrian king invaded Judah and at the time of Isaiah 37, he was fast closing in on Hezekiah. The collapse of the kingdom seemed imminent. The Assyrian king tells Hezekiah that not even God can help him.

It is at this point that Hezekiah says,

*“This day is a day of trouble and rebuke and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but there is **no strength** to bring them forth”.*

No strength! Yet the name Hezekiah means “**Jehovah is strength**”!

For a moment, he forgot the strength of Jehovah and focused on his weakness. He compared his state to that of a pregnant woman who, at the crucial time of giving birth, has lost all the energy needed for that moment.

This picture of discouragement is found twice in the book of Isaiah:

Isaiah 26:18 - *We have been with child, we have been in pain; We have, as it were, brought forth wind; We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen.*

- Strength is needed to accomplish deliverance,
- Strength is needed to give birth to dreams,
- Strength is needed to bring forth your future,
- Strength is needed to stand in the day of trouble, in the evil day, and having done all to stand, stand.

To many of us, there will be times like this, when the enemy comes to intimidate and say, 'not even God can help you'. Times of discouragement come to rob us of the strength to pull through. That is why God wants you know that *Jehovah is strength!*

The greatest problem of Hezekiah was not the presence of enemies but the absence of strength!

*“the children have come to birth, but there is **no strength** to bring them forth”.*

Proverbs 24:10 - *“If you faint in the day of adversity, then your strength is small”*

1. Find strength in the promises of God

Our opening verse says: *3 And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: ‘This day is a day of trouble ...’”*

“Thus says Hezekiah” - **not thus says the Lord.** We need to see what the Lord says about every situation

Let us see what the Lord says:

Isaiah 66:9 - *Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the Lord. “Shall I who cause delivery, shut up the womb?” says your God.*

Great strength comes from the focusing on what God says - on His promises.

Find the '*thus says the Lord*' for your situation. You don't even need to go to a prophet, just open your Bible.

Isaiah 37:6-7 - *6 And Isaiah said to them, “Thus you shall say to your master, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7 Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumour and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.””*

2. Find strength in trust

Hezekiah said, *“This day is a day of trouble”*. As we saw last week, Paul also had his day of trouble:

2 **Corinthian 1:8** - *8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our **trouble** which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not **trust** in ourselves but in God who raises the dead.*

We find strength in trust!

Isaiah 40:31 New Living Translation *But those who **trust** in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.*

3. Find strength in prayer

Isaiah 37:14-17 - *14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and **Hezekiah went up to the house of the Lord** and spread it before the Lord. 15 **Then Hezekiah prayed to the Lord**, saying: 16 “O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, you are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 Incline Your ear, O Lord, and hear; open Your eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God.*

Psalms 138:3 – *“In the day I cried out, you answered me and made me bold with **strength** in my soul”*

In Acts 4:23-33 after Peter prayed with the church, the Bible says that they

- Were filled with the Holy Spirit
- They had great boldness,
- Great power and great grace was upon them (all those are expressions of strength).

Isaiah 37:21-23 - *21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘**Because you have prayed to Me** against Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22 this is the word which the Lord has spoken concerning him: “The virgin, the daughter of Zion, has despised you, laughed you to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head behind your back! 23 “Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? against the Holy One of Israel.*

Conclusion

I believe that the greatest lesson we can learn from Hezekiah’s story is that indeed **Jehovah is strength.**

When we draw upon His strength, we bring forth deliverance, dreams, plans and promises. Nothing we carry from God will be aborted.

Right through the book of Isaiah, God reveals Himself in this way: **A strong God, providing strength to the weak!**

Isaiah 12:2 – *the Lord is my strength and song*

Isaiah 25:4 - *For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.*

Isaiah 35:3-4 - *Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.
4 Say to those who are fearful-hearted, “be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God; He will come and save you.”*

Isaiah 40:28-31 - *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. 29 He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, 31 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 58:11 - *The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

Jehovah is Strength!