

## **“The Christian’s Greatest Resource”**

### **Ephesians 6:10**

#### *Introduction:*

1. The Bible was not written for the Christian to sit and read in an armchair and then do nothing. Instead, God gave it to us to help us in our lives. Both the doctrinal and the practical sections were written to help us live. In a general sense the doctrinal sections help us relate to God and the practical sections help us please God in our relationships with other people.

2. In a way the Bible is the Christian’s “battle manual”, because we, whether we like it or not, are part of a war. All followers of Jesus Christ must confront enemies who totally hate us, and we are called to engage the enemy. For this reason, the deacons and I thought it would be wise for us to consider this spiritual warfare and how we ought to conduct ourselves in the war.

#### *Exposition:*

I. The form of this verse

A. The Holy Spirit presents a duty that we must obey.

*Comment:* Military commands are not options; neither is God’s word!

1. “Be strong” is in the imperative mood. You must be strong.

2. This commands flows from the teaching of Eph 4:1,17.

B. The Holy Spirit directs us to precise activity: “be strong in the Lord”.

1. We must not seek strength in our natural abilities.

2. We must not seek strength in our spiritual growth.

3. We must not seek strength in our spiritual gifts.

4. We must only seek strength from the Lord. Compare Jn 15:5. How do we receive strength? Since we are united to Christ through faith, we also receive strength from the Lord Jesus through faith.

II. The confident expectation that the Holy Spirit presents. We can be strong in the Lord!

A. To help us realize the benefit God offers to us, let us think about three factors that demand strength from the Lord.

1. A strong enemy opposes us (6:12).

2. The standard for successful obedience is high (Rm 13:8-10,14).
3. We have a traitor within (1 Pt 2:11).

*Song:* “In my heart there is a traitor...” [PDI]

B. However, God promises his strength to encourage us. Knowing the difficulties will only magnify our appreciation for the help we receive.

1. The Lord’s strength is sufficient to live on (Heb 11:13; Ex 6:3).
2. The Lord’s strength is a remedy in the face of fear (Is 8:11ff; 43:2).
3. The Lord’s strength will refresh us (Rm 8:31-32).

*Comment:* “He that was willing to expend his Son’s blood to *gain* them, will not deny his power to *keep* them.” [Gurnall] Press this hope home upon your soul until your doubts and fears in this matter are settled.

4. The Lord’s strength will be our joy (Neh 8:10).

III. The power that God pledges to help us—“his almighty power”

A. Here is the vitality of our hope! When we seek to obey God, his omnipotence comes to our aid. The power he promises is **awesome!** Eph 1:19-20

1. By God’s power Christ was raised to life.
2. By God’s power we were raised to life (Eph 2:5). You and I are living

witnesses to the reality of the Almighty God!

B. However, we must guide our thoughts about this promise to conform to the Scriptures. We can err in two directions, but let us avoid both.

1. Do not limit God’s power in your thoughts. “We are not... to limit and restrain it in our narrow and shallow thoughts, and to think in this, or in that, the power of God may help or secure us; but to believe that he is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think.” [Flavel, *Works*, Vol. 3, p. 345] Compare 3:20.

2. Do not bog yourself down with incomplete evaluations. “All things seem to be working contrary to my hope in Christ!”

*Illustration:* Remember the silly comments that some news reporters made at the start of the recent war in Iraq. “The war isn’t going well.”

*Example:* Every believer will struggle with incomplete evaluations, as Abraham did (Rm 4:18-22).

C. Rest and rejoice in God's power.

1. Act this way in the struggle with remaining sin. We may feel like a whole marine division is coming against us and is about to overrun our position. We may feel powerless against the attack. But do we believe in the power of God (Gen 18:14)? "Though sin be too hard for thee, yet not for him... Set his power to work, by faith and prayer." [Watson]

2. Recall that God is greater in the face of strong temptation. 1 Jn 4:4

3. As we strive to serve God, determine to go forward in his strength (Ac 18:9-11). How many people does God have in Newtown Square? Do you want to give up or go find them? "Oh pastor, we can't do it!" But God can. "We can't solve this family problem!" But God can. "I can't defeat this sin I'm struggling with!" But God can.

*Quote:* "Assure thyself when thou art at the greatest pinch [that] strength shall come."

*Example:* Remember Elijah beside the dried up brook (1 Ki 17:7-24). When the water dried up, God made a way. But it didn't look like it at first, for the widow had very little food. But God supplied. Whew! But then the widow's son dies anyway. What is God doing? Never had anyone been raised from the dead. But God gave life from the dead.

*Apply:* How much strength do you need? How much strength does this church need? God's almighty power is sufficient. Therefore, let us rely on the Lord!