

The One Voice You Must Heed in These Extreme Times

Editor's Note: This is part 2 of a series. For part 1, click [here](#).

What you and I need more than opinions from cable news pundits or another YouTube video, is to hear what God is speaking to us, our families, and our churches. I can tell you what God has spoken to me regarding the moment, but ultimately you need to hear from God how you are to live relative to the pandemic, economy, unrest and so forth. Further, believe God for fresh manna each day—the Holy Spirit wants to continually comfort you, speak to you and guide you!

The Lord told Joshua three times to “be strong and of good courage.”

The phrase “be strong” is from the Hebrew *châzaq*, which means: courageous, valiant, manly, strengthened, established, firm, fortified, obstinate, and mighty. It also carries the sense of a command for the preparation of battle (see Josh. 1:6-7, 9; 1 Sam. 30:6; 2 Sam. 10:12; Ps. 27:14; Zech. 10:12; Hag. 2:4).

Yet not only was God giving Joshua instructions on how to be strong (Josh. 1:8-9), but the command to “be strong and courageous” also imparted the strength and courage to obey and realize the promise. God empowered Joshua in His command. Prophetic declaration releases God’s power to do the impossible.

Grace is much more than forgiveness; it empowers you to be who you are not. You are becoming like Christ because of the power of the Holy Spirit, who is the agent of grace. Grace infuses life and power within you to become like Christ, walk in your God-given identity and do the impossible as God leads. By His grace, we overcome!

Joshua was being prepared to lead the people into the promised land. As a nation, they were about to face the giants and walled cities a previous generation feared 40 years prior. They needed to be strong and of good courage and prepared for battle.

Church, it should be obvious that we are in an immense spiritual battle right now. It is time to be strengthened in the Lord, in the power of His might, to be prepared for battle to face the spiritual giants plaguing our world. Prayer and intercession still move mountains—only believe, keep praying and don't lose heart—the battle belongs to the Lord!

David

Another example of the Hebrew word *châzaq* and the concept to “be strong” is found in the book of Samuel, when David and his men were defeated at Ziklag:

“Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God” (1 Sam. 30:6, NKJV).

Prior to this, David had been through a wilderness season. He was chased by Saul for years after defeating Goliath and falling from Saul's favor. At one point, David was so desperate, he pretended madness at Gath, the city of the Philistine king (and of Goliath). Rejected by the Philistines, David flees to the cave of Adullam. God begins to bring those in Israel who were distressed, in debt and discouraged, to David in the cave—about 400 men. God was refining David to lead and was preparing future leaders and warriors for Israel—none of them could see it completely.

David eventually gains permission from the Philistine king to live in Ziklag, a town in the Philistine territory. David finally had rest from Saul, but God wasn't finished preparing him or his mighty men. After being rejected by the Philistines

to go to battle with them against Saul and the army of Israel, David and his men return to Ziklag to discover that the Amalekites have taken their wives, children and property with them. It's perhaps the lowest point David faced in his wilderness years. His trusted men, so grieved, turn on David and are ready to stone him.

In times of crisis, be careful not to accuse your leaders or others—God may have allowed the situation! He is the master potter and uses every setback and situation for His greater good in our lives and for His purposes.

What did David do? He inquired of the Lord, “So David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?’ And He answered him, ‘Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all’” (1 Sam. 30:8).

David strengthened himself or literally “made himself strong” in God. He knew that to overcome obstacles he had to strengthen himself in the Lord. David drew on God’s empowering grace through prayer, worship and hearing God’s voice to be strong.

David and his men acted on God’s word, defeated the Amalekites and recovered all. Right after this incident, Saul dies in battle, and David is made king over the tribe of Judah. Seven years later, David would be made king over all the tribes of Israel.

In times of crisis, it is critical to hear God’s word and direction. His perspective changes our thinking and our attitude, and strengthens us!

I’ll pick up next week looking at Paul and his admonition to Timothy to be strong in the Lord. Take time this week to wait upon God to hear a fresh word from Him. These are extreme times; all of us have been challenged and tested.

What is God saying to you right now? How are you to respond?
What areas of your heart is God refining? How can you engage
in this spiritual battle we are in? Be strong and courageous,
church, Jesus has triumphed, and He is leading us to victory!
{eoa}