

Encouragement

Published by **Barnabas International** • PO Box 11211 • Rockford, IL 61126 • Volume XIV • No. 12 • December 2000

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Good Morning Friend,

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS

Those were the words that God often spoke to individuals and to the people of Israel in the Old Testament. In the closing chapters of Deuteronomy, He spoke them to the people of Israel (in plurality . . . and individually) . . . to Moses and to Joshua. In the opening chapter of Joshua, He said it three times to Joshua (Joshua 1:6,7,9). But this admonition is not only an Old Testament directive.

God has always said it to His people, both corporately and individually, *Be strong*. Yes, CORPORATELY to the people of Israel, to the original twelve disciples, to your church, to your denomination, to your mission . . . *Be strong*. And INDIVIDUALLY, it has always been His encouraging message, as well . . . to Moses, to Joshua, to David, to Peter, to you, to me, and to all of us . . . Be strong.

Earlier today I heard the testimony of an elderly Jewish woman who survived Auschwitz. She, together with her parents and sister were captured by the Nazis during the Second World War. They, together with many other Jews, were hauled by train in cattle cars to Auschwitz. Her parents were destroyed in the brutal ovens. She was found by an American soldier lying on a huge pile of corpses. At first he assumed that she, too, was dead. He noticed, however, a weak movement of her hand. He was amazed to discover that she was alive . . . barely alive, but alive. Miraculously she was nursed back to health. Since then she has spent her life in gratitude, knowing that God's power and love kept her for a purpose known only to God at that time. When she thought she could not make it, God ministered *powerfully* to her. And now He is speaking *powerfully* through her.

Now . . . let's get personal. What about your story and mine? We, too, desperately need to be strong and courageous. The Bible states that His strength is available to us . . .

- for our **MINISTRIES**. Just as with Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, and others. Yes, power for your ministry. Power for you to do what He called you to do.

- for our **AFFLICTIONS**. As with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (in Daniel 3). As with Paul in II Corinthians 12:1-10. As with Joni Eareckson Tada. As with me and my family (at the time of my accident and since).
- in our **TEMPTATIONS**, according to 1 Corinthians 10:13 . . . *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.* Isn't that good news? He promises to provide strength in **every** temptation for us to escape without falling. You and I can't do even this without His provision. There is a way out if that is what you are looking for. Remember this!!
- for our **RENEWAL**, according to Isaiah 40:29-31.
- for **ALL THIS AND A LOT MORE**. We do not need to limp along. We do not need to wobble around mediocrity any longer. God makes His strength available to His people . . . to you and to me.

But again. It is not our power but His. Paul says . . . *Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty strength* (Ephesians 6:10). He repeats this elsewhere . . .

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 1:13).

In all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:37).

Are we then the heroes? The might ones? The conquerors? No. Not at all. There is one Hero . . . one Mighty One . . . one Conqueror. **It is the Lord**. May He be praised as you and I step into God-energized living and serving.

Be encouraged,

Lareau Lindquist