

Ready, Set, Wait... (Week 2) “A New Strength”

Welcome – one house, many rooms

Honor Matt (home recovering from a minor planned surgery) - (celebrated 25 years of marriage)

Ready, Set, Wait...

- **ILL: Olympics Track & Field (line up in anticipation) – false start!**
- **NYC – so excited to see the “sights” - Stop light with Will, Drew, Matt (wait, wait, wait...)**
 - Growing up in Auburn, Indiana (few stop lights in the whole town) – more of a suggestion
 - NYC – thankful for that voice (I thought it was safe to move forward)

We are not in a slow, spiritually neutral environment. The enemy is out to prowl around like a roaring lion to devour us. We don't need to be afraid, but we need to know that God has a protection for us...and it's not just to GO (run to what's next), PUSH (open the door ourselves)...but to WAIT...

Isaiah 40:31 NKJV “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.”

Church - there are benefits when we wait on the Lord.

- Waiting has great purpose and incredible benefits. Want to key in on one of those benefits today... “Renewed Strength”

Title of Message: A New Strength

PRAY

It's a NEW Year – and I believe that some of us have already encountered an enemy who is trying to take us out...

- Thought life
- Addiction
- Marriage / Relationships
- New Covid spike – fear, sickness, discouragement...
- We are tired, weary, WEAK...

The people of Israel in the Old Testament could relate – the first 39 chapters, there was some comfort, but there was a strong tone of judgment & warning...but in Isaiah 40 the tone shifts to comfort and blessing & remembering the FULL GLORY OF GOD!

Isaiah 40:27-31 “Why do you say, O Jacob, And speak, O Israel: “My way is hidden from the LORD, And my just claim is passed over by my God”? ²⁸ 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."*

Remind you that we serve a gracious, loving, Heavenly Father who wants to give you NEW strength today!

- Because of Jesus and the finished work on the cross – we ARE a new creation!
- But we need to WAIT on the Lord and He WILL renew our strength.

Truths about Renewed Strength:

1. The enemy doesn't want us to receive God's strength.

- The enemy is real & He doesn't want us to receive our strength from. He doesn't want us to WAIT on the Lord...
- **1 Peter 5:8** *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."*
- He wants us to remain "strong" in ourselves. In our past. In the way our parents did it. In the way the culture is leading us to live.
- **ILL: I feel strong when I'm successful. When others notice me. When I've accomplished something. When I have that thing (car, house, spouse).**
- **The enemy doesn't even need us to sin, he just tries to get us to be complacent & self-reliant**
- **That's strength won't last. It fades. "Even the youths faint and are weary" "young men fall"**

God wants to give us a NEW STRENGTH - Talking about truths of Renewed Strength...

2. Fasting is a secret source of Power.

- Fasting is not a diet plan. It's a source of power that is laid out for ever believer throughout scriptures.
 - **Feeling weak in an area? Believing for breakthrough?**
 - **HE IS THE ANSWER!**
- **Why we are Calling us to 21 days of prayer and fasting – personally & corporately! Aug 10-30**

Matthew 6 – Jesus is preaching, sermon on the mount (Be-attitudes, murder, adultery, loving our enemies – then he talks about 3 spiritual disciplines and the motives that we should have)

- *"So when you give to the needy..." vs. 2*
- *"And when you pray..." vs. 5 (The Lord's Prayer)*
- *"When you fast..." vs. 16*
- **These 3 distinct actions are assumed for Christ followers.**
- It's a pattern that Jesus lays out and He makes it clear that fasting is just as normal as giving and praying.
- He wanted to touch on the motives of the heart (Don't be doing it to get attention of everyone else you can look into that on your own this week)...but the point I want to make is the assumed spiritual disciplines:
 - When you give, when you pray, WHEN you fast...

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- If you missed last Sunday, get caught up online today (prepare & make your plan)

It's a secret source, not because Jesus made it a secret, but it's a secret source of power that the enemy can't fight against.

- When we fast & pray it changes things in the heavenly realm! Personally & Corporately!

We are the army of God! The enemy is real, but our God and His weapons are greater!

Ephesians 6:11 "Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." vs. 11

- So that when hell comes against you, you can stand firm!
- Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Righteousness, Shoes of Peace, Shield of Faith, Helmet of Salvation, Sword of the Spirit – Word of God...

Ephesians 6:18 "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

Be alert for yourself & for ALL of the Lord's people – because we are an army TOGETHER!

- Soldiers stay fit & disciplined: healthy, alert and ready (b/c the enemy prowls around)
- When we fast and pray, we fit more into the armor of God
- We sharpen our blade, which is the Word of God
- We can fight quicker and more efficiently!!!

The enemy Thanks you are weak or when you fast.

- He will try and convince you that you are dying without food or God is against you because he is asking you to separate from something... But you are not dying & He isn't against you!
- God is preparing to breathe life into your situation and to open a door to his promises.

The enemy doesn't want us to receive strength, but fasting is a secret source of power!!!

3. The Weaker we are the Stronger we get.

This concept is the opposite of how the world thinks: The stronger I am the stronger I get...but because of Jesus and our surrender to His ways, God often calls us to live opposing thoughts to the world's view.

Apostle Paul: We see in 2 Cor 12 that he had been tormented by the enemy. He pleads with God, to take away this "thorn in his flesh" – this thing, this circumstance, this situation...

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 "But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

When we admit our weaknesses, our shortcomings, the difficulties we face...that's the beginning of our NEW strength.

ILL: Many of you have asked – so yes, I have lost 35 pounds. 2020 hardest year of my ministry life. God's grace was sufficient. But I also soothed with food A LOT!

- **40 Days of Prayer...My 7-day water only (dealt with lies & God broke a stronghold)**
- **His strength sustains, my strength wains...**
 - **God showed me, don't attack the body first...**
 - **Start with spirit, soul & the body will follow!**

The weaker we get, the stronger we get because we invite Jesus into our weak areas & His power can rest on us!

- **Generational curses – it's a weak area, God I need your power. Your strength.**
- **Addictions - it's a weakness. I'm broken & in need. His grace is sufficient – He has a NEW strength for you.**
- **Hardships – I didn't cause it, but I feel victim to it. You may be weak, but He is victorious...**

One of our goals as Christ followers is to become more like Him. To pursue holiness and freedom in every area of our lives.

- **Making the connection between our daily disciplines (with food, with our inputs – like our phone, tv, etc) and our desire to pursue holiness is crucial.**
- **Holiness doesn't just deal with our spiritual life; it very much deals with our physical life as well. We are body, soul & spirit...it's all connected.**
- **It is good for us, as God's people to be put in a place of longing (weakness) so we feel a slight desperation...only then can we be empty enough and open enough to discover the holiness we were made for.**

The weaker we are, the stronger we get!!

God wants to give us a NEW STRENGTH - Talking about truths of Renewed Strength...

4. To wait well, we need patience & trust.

It's January of 2022. I don't know about you, but 3 years ago I would have never guessed that right now would be what it looks like.

- **Things that I thought would look different. People that I thought would be different.**
- **BUT also – there are things that I prayed for that God has completely changed, transformed, answered.**

To wait requires

- **Patience** (to know that God loves you) – 1 Cor. 13 – love is “patient” – to God one day is as 1,000 years – so just be patient & receive His love while you wait.
 - **ILL: NYC – don't just be focused on where you're going, look around at who you're waiting with before you go!**

- **Get to meet new people in my small group this year. Get to serve with other brothers and sisters. I get to pray during this season with others who are waiting too (what a GIFT)**
- **Trust** (to believe that God has a good plan for you)

Romans 8:28 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Waiting on that miracle – waiting on that breakthrough – waiting on that loved one or friend to come to know Jesus – waiting on that reconciliation – stay in love with Jesus – remember you are called and have great purpose – you can TRUST that God is WORKING everything for good for YOU!

CHALLENGE:

So, as we enter into these 21 days of prayer... Where are you in need of breakthrough? Finances, Physical healing, addictions to be broken off, freedom from strongholds, healing in mental health...

Who are you believing for breakthrough for (loved ones who don't know Jesus / broken relationships)?

Where are you weak? Weary? In need of strength?

Are you willing to fast and pray and wait...

SALVATION

INVITE EVERYONE TO STAND AT ALL LOCATIONS

We are going to worship to "Wait on You" but before we do, let me pray a prayer of strength over us!

PRAYER & COMMITMENT – we will WAIT & we trust that you will RENEW our strength!