



# Certainty and Stability

**Ephesians 6:10 NIV**

**Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.**

## **How Should We Respond to These Strange Times?**

I have lived a long time and I have never seen anything like what we are facing now. We have just entered in California the first week of shelter in place restrictions that limit our movement and ability to meet together. My generation and yours has never experienced a pandemic...not like this, and frankly we have no idea what to expect. It has created a world-wide standstill as schools and businesses are closed in anticipation of a potential sweeping rush of illness and death. We are washing our hands more than ever, keeping our distance from one another and hunkering down as we do our part to prevent the spread of Covid-19. These are difficult and life altering times and it would be good for us to consider a bigger picture, one that takes into account a way of living above the uncertainty and hardship we face.

The Bible speaks of something that seems a bit archaic, the armor of God. We don't go around lugging shields and swords about and certainly don't have a metal suit of armor to wear, but that does not mean that what we see the Scripture says about how to protect ourselves when great trials and uncertain times hit us is old fashioned. It is precisely what we need now more than ever. The passage in Ephesians 6, often labeled "the armor of God", is just as relevant now as it was when God first gave it to us. The very first line is crucial for you to consider. **"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."** (Ephesians 6:10 NIV)

There are three key words in this short verse. The first is translated "be strong" and is the Greek word "endunamouthe". It means summon up your vigor, to put forth energy. The root of this verb is the same term as we get our English word dynamite. Now, this is a command, not a suggestion. The Bible insists that you must gather your strength, give it your best effort. What is interesting about the command is that the word is used in a way that indicates this is a joint effort, not just you, but you and...Someone else is involved in this, the Lord. You have a strength that comes from outside you, you have power that is more than just you. It is the mightiness found in Christ. Summon up that strength. Utilize that power.

A second key term is "kratei" and it means power, force, strength. What is fascinating here is that the verb form of this noun means to "be superior to anyone", to have more power than all others. Our third important word is "iscuos" and can be rendered strength and might, but also ability or the skills to do something. Both kratei and iscuos are God's; they come from Him. The Lord is not expecting you to depend on your own strength, to get by on only your ability to figure out everything. He is offering you supernatural ability, power, strength. The Bible isn't commanding you to just get your head together; it is pushing for you to muster up the strength and ability God has as you go through this storm. He has the power and the wits to bring you

through this and it is unmatched. No one has His strength or ability; it would be absurd not to grab it, to use it and not just rely on yourself.

Not many of us have faced the sort of bleak future Jesus did. His family didn't believe in Him. He was homeless and poor. Those who should have appreciated Him and even loved Him hated Christ. He knew the ones following Him would be terrified to admit they knew Him. Worst of all, Jesus realized He would suffer a terrible and horrible death. He would be beaten and flogged and hung naked on a cross. It was a most dreadful future before Him. Yet Jesus never lived fearfully or despondently. He was vibrant and full of life and despite facing a most horrific time ahead, He was strong psychologically and thoroughly healthy within. He brought joy wherever He went. That unbreakable, unflappable and peaceful spirit He offers you!

There are two examples that illustrate how Jesus carried Himself during difficult times. The first was early in His public ministry. He and His mother were invited to the famous wedding at Cana when the groom ran out of wine for the guests. Jesus' mother asked Him to do something about the embarrassing circumstance and Jesus did. He had the wine servers fill six large 30 gallon stone containers with water and then He calmly turned the water to the loveliest wine any had ever tasted. He did this to bring joy to His mother, the groom and probably even the bride. Jesus loved people and was able to help them when they looked to Him to see them through what they faced. Do you think the Lord can do the same for you? Does He still have the power to help you with this difficult time?

The second example is mentioned several times in the Bible. There was a great crowd of people who had come to be taught by Jesus and after a long day outside, it was time to leave. The problem was that everyone was hungry, and Jesus did not want to send them away without something to eat. A young boy donated five loaves of bread and two small fish. Jesus took them and multiplied the bread and fish out thousands of times over so that everyone had more than enough to eat. Why did Jesus do that for the great crowd? As the disciple reminded Jesus, all those people could have just gone home and found something to eat there. Our Lord wanted to make them happy though and show them He could take care of them. Is it possible you might need that kind of help? May you have to be able to make your resources last over a longer period of time than you are prepared to face? Can He do that for you too?

There is great strength available to you in Christ. His ability to take you through even the most difficult of circumstances is waiting for you to access. It just takes a little bit of faith to believe the power of God to help you and help those you love is ready for you to have. This crisis may get worse. People you know may get very sick. You might even get sick and some in your neighborhood may pass away. Finances could get tight and even desperate for some, perhaps for many. The impact of this might last years. We cannot say what to expect, but we can be certain that if you turn to Christ even now, His strength will come to you and His ability to take you through this will be ready for you to receive. The world needs people who have supernatural power, who have the ability of Christ to see them through times like this and you will have that miraculous work of God in you if you let Him by faith fill you with it. As Jesus told the Apostle Paul when he too was going through a tough time, "My strength is good enough for you. It is just what you need."