

Faint, Yet Pursuing

- Patricia Dailey -

Founding Pastor, Bethel Revival Center

Judges 8:4,5

And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them. And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

Gideon had been raised up to defeat the Midianites. He'd had about 32,000 in his army: but the Lord whittled them down until they were just 300 men left.

His army was no longer big, yet they did have a mighty God behind them. They had just what they needed in God.

Gideon had already taken two of the Midianite princes, and was after two others. And we see here that by this time he and his men were faint. Yes, they were faint — yet they were pursuing.

Now, this was a natural warfare, but we want to think about fighting the spiritual battles that we face. We can become faint — and yet, we can continue to pursue on. It's by the grace of God that we continue pursuing.

Strength in Times of Weakness

Proverbs 24:5,6 & 10

A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength. For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety. If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

Our strength is not measured by the good times, but is measured by the bad times. When we face the battles and trials of this life, then we will see just how strong we really are.

Many times we think we are going to be overtaken by the problems and the pressures that come our way: but the Lord has promised not to put upon us more than we can bear.

I Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Sometimes we think we can't possibly bear any more. Things can get pretty heavy. At times we think we'll be swept away by the trial: but thanks be to God, He is always there to give what we need to go on.

Faith believes God even when the circumstances deny His promises. No matter what it looks like, no matter what it feels like, we can still stand by faith, believing the Lord.

We need to be drawing strength from God when going through bad times, when going through times where we feel we can't go on any further. Know that the Word of the Lord is true, and when we go to the Scriptures we can draw strength from them.

Isaiah 40:29

He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.

Here's a promise that the Lord will give strength when we need it. And we do need to be strengthened when facing these battles.

Now, everybody has their own battles and they have to rise up and fight them themselves. Nobody else can fight their battle for them — nobody, other than the Lord.

Yes, the Lord is there to bring us out into victory: but, as far as humans are concerned, there's no human who can fight our battles for us. We have to rise up ourselves and fight those battles in the power of the Lord.

Wait on the Lord

So we see in Isaiah 40 where the Lord increases our strength: and we do need our strength increased when facing hard times.

Isaiah 40:30,31

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

This is something we have to do, but we don't always take the time to do. If we would just take the time to wait upon the Lord, He has said that He will renew our strength. When trials and problems come our way, and sorrows and grief, we need to look to the Lord for strength — for He has promised to give power to the faint.

These are beautiful promises to anyone who is facing trials and battles.

Now, when those trials and battles are over, don't think you will never face another one — for as long as you live, you'll have trial after trial after trial. At times, you'll feel like a load has been dropped right on you: but thanks be to God, there's One who cares.

I Peter 5:7

Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.

I thank God that He cares for us, that He understands what we're going through. We can cry out to God for help when there's nobody else to turn to.

Lord, I need your help. I need You, Lord. I need Your strength.

Certainly, if we will wait on the Lord, getting right in there and seeking the Lord — the answer is going to come. Victory will come. Help will come.

Believe me, brother and sister, God's Word is true. Right in the midst of the battle, we can be skipping around with joy in our hearts. We don't have to be long-faced about our troubles.

Yes, there are some things in life that hurt. We're bound to be hurt at times. But, one thing we must learn: and that is to keep our eyes on Jesus, and not on the circumstances.

It's very difficult if we take our eyes off of Jesus and put them on the circumstances of this life. It won't be long before we find ourselves sinking in despair; sinking into despondency, depression. This is where a lot of people get very discouraged over the battles and trials they face in this life.

If they would only take God's Word and wait on the Lord, they'd find the Lord would give them just what they needed to continue on until the victory comes.

Sometimes the way seems long and it becomes very wearisome. Those are the hardest spiritual battles one can face: when the battle is so long and you wonder, *when will it ever end?*

Don't question why. Know that God knows why and it's all in His hands. He knows what He's doing. Let Him have His way.

Psalms 121:1-3

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

The Lord is not sleeping. He's very much aware of what's going on in our lives, and He's very much concerned. He will not allow our foot to be moved. He will keep our feet walking on with Jesus, as long as we keep our eyes on Him and keep our faith in His Word.

Sometimes in our spiritual battles it's like it never rains but it pours. It seems like it pours day after day after day, with no let up. It seems like the battle gets pretty strong.

See II Chronicles 20

This chapter is a good lesson for us in learning how to face the spiritual battles that come our

way. This battle is about to take place — and we see what Jehoshaphat does when he hears that these armies are on their way to fight.

II Chronicles 20:3

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

When Afraid, Seek the Lord

Yes, Jehoshaphat feared: and, sometimes, God's people will fear because of the circumstances they find themselves in. I'm not going to say we won't experience fear sometimes: but we don't have to. We need to put our faith in God, knowing that all things work together for good to them that love Him, and are called according to His purpose — Romans 8:28.

We should just take Him at His Word, knowing that some good will come out of all that we are facing. We may not understand, we may not see any good that could come out of the battle, but we do know that God has promised to work good out of it.

He knows the good that He wants to bring out of it. He knows what the reason is. We might not understand now. But when we come out of it and look back, we'll see what the Lord has done.

And here we see that Jehoshaphat not only feared but he set himself to seek the Lord. He did the right thing, and that's what we should do. We should set ourselves to seek the Lord. Seek Him for help, seek Him for what we need. If we need added grace, need strength, need help, need encouragement — whatever it might be — if we seek the Lord, we will find that which we need.

Jehoshaphat not only set himself to seek the Lord but he also proclaimed a fast in all of Judah. That's nice; he got the people to gather together and to fast and seek the Lord.

II Chronicles 20:4-6, 12

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord.

And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand Thee?

O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: *but our eyes are upon Thee.*

So many times there are things we face where we don't know what to do. There are things that happen to us where we absolutely don't know what to do.

I'm sure you all have had such experiences where you really didn't know what you needed to do.

And, when we don't know what to do, we should call on God, looking to Him. We should get the answer from God, looking to the hills from whence comes our help — knowing that our help comes from the Lord.

Put on the Whole Armour of God

It's also important that we have all the armor of God on in order to fight the adversary of our soul.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

When we are in a spiritual warfare, Satan will come along with his lies. He will try to get us to do something which God would be displeased with.

So waiting on God is something that is very important to all of us. Yes, waiting on the Lord is so important. We should be praying always, and not faint. We should be in the place of not giving up.

It doesn't matter how many times we've prayed about something. Some feel you should just pray once. But I'll tell you, if you haven't got the victory yet — hang on, keep praying, keep standing on the Word of God. God's Word is true, and He will keep His promises.

It's so important that when we don't know what to do we can open our Bible and find just that which we need to encourage ourselves in the Lord.

How many times has God shown you from His Word exactly what to do in a given circumstance, in a given trial or battle, and how to do it?

Our Eyes Are upon Thee

How important it is to keep our eyes on the Lord. It's so easy to get our eyes off the Lord. Yes, it's so very easy. And when we do, then the circumstances, the spiritual warfare, the battles and trials we face, are magnified. And then we find that fear steps in. This is what we have to be careful about, that we don't allow fear to grip hold of us.

We want to keep our faith in tact, keeping our faith in the promises of God, keep our eyes upon the Lord.

Did God fail Jehoshaphat? When you read further in this chapter you find they had a great victory. They won that battle. God fought the battle right before their eyes.

Don't think that God isn't willing to fight the battle for us. God will fight our battles. He will help us through our battles. I thank God that He does not leave us in times of spiritual warfare.

I thank God that He's right there with us, just like He was with the three Hebrew boys when they were thrown into the fiery furnace. They went in and they came out: but while they were in there, Jesus was in that furnace with them.

He does not forsake us. Sometimes we might feel like we've been forsaken or forgotten by God. We might feel that God does not care: but that's not according to the Scriptures — because He does care — see I Peter 5:7.

Keep your eyes on Jesus in facing the battles. Don't open yourself to listen to the voice of the adversary when he tries to discourage you, tries to get you to do something contrary to God's Word.

Isaiah 41:10

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.

He doesn't want us to fear. He wants us to trust. He says that perfect love casts out fear — see I John 4:18. This is a beautiful promise for us to hold on to.

So, don't be discouraged or be afraid — but keep your faith in the Lord, knowing that He said He would never leave us nor forsake us. He's right there with us. No matter what we might be going through, He is there.

We can draw so much strength from God's Word.

Get Rooted in God and His Word

He will give us the strength to pursue to the end. And we certainly need that strength in this day and hour that we're living in.

Things are going to get rougher and rougher and rougher. Things are going to get darker and darker and darker. And we're going to have to be rooted and grounded in the Word of God if we're going to stand. We're going to have to have a faith in God and in His promises. This is what will keep us in the hour of temptation.

II Corinthians 12:7-9

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

God does give us grace in the time of trouble, in the time of spiritual warfare. God gives us grace to help us go through all these trying times that we might face.

And when you come through, know there will be another waiting. If you're living for the Lord — loving Him and serving Him with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength — you'll find you will have spiritual battles. You can go all the way to California and find them there — and then come all the way back home, and they'll be there also. You just can't run away from battles in this life.

Sometimes, in times of great stress, pain, grief, we feel very weak: but know that in our weakness, His strength is made perfect.

And I believe that though we might be tested and tried, though we might have to go through something, God is not slack concerning His promises. He will fulfill every promise, when we put our faith in them.

Mix Faith with God's Promises

I don't care what it looks like, what it feels like: I believe God is a God of His Word and His promises are true. In order for those promises to be fulfilled, though, we have to mix faith with them.

Matthew 14:22-24

And straightway Jesus constrained His disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

And, don't we get tossed by all the waves that beat against us? Sometimes it feels like they are sweeping right over us.

Matthew 14:25-29

And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

You see, when Peter kept his eyes on Jesus he had faith that he could walk on the water: but, when he began to look at the storm, that's where fear really came in.

Matthew 14:30,31

But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

When Peter saw the wind boisterous he was afraid. He began to sink, and in his fear he cried out, *Lord, save me!*

This is what happens when you take your eyes off Jesus. Despondency and depression come in, and you begin to get overwhelmed.

You need to keep your eyes on Jesus, keeping your faith in tact. Believe that Jesus is the answer to all your problems, to all of your troubles, to all of your trials, to all of your sickness and disease, to all of your griefs and sorrows. Yes, know that He is the answer.

Matthew 14:32

And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

So we can see that Peter had faith to step out onto the water and walk towards Jesus. He was doing well, as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. He had faith: but when he began to look around at the storm and saw the effects of the boisterous wind, he began to sink.

We can't allow doubt to enter our heart — doubting the promises, doubting that the Lord cares: doubt, doubt, doubt. There is no room in our life for doubt. It's either faith or doubt.

As long as we keep our eyes on Jesus, keep our faith in His Word, continue to wait on Him, He will see us through.

Pray One for Another

Now, not only did Jehoshaphat set himself to seek the Lord — but the people of Israel gathered together to seek the Lord. They gathered to fast and pray.

And isn't it nice to know when you're going through a battle that there are those who are standing with you in prayer, seeking God with you for the victory? It's an encouragement in the storm to know that others are concerned.

When someone is going through a hard time, they would be surprised to know whom God is using to really pray and intercede on their behalf — someone whom God laid a burden on their heart to pray for you. Maybe it's someone near at hand or someone on the other side of the world.

Wherever — God can lay a burden on someone's heart to pray and intercede when another is facing a hard time, facing a hard battle.

I Corinthians 12:25,26

That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

God would want us to have enough love and concern for one another to hold each other up in prayer. That's love.

Trust in the Lord Forever

So, let's thank God that He has promised to strengthen us. We don't have to fear, we don't have to be discouraged, we don't have to wonder because of what it might look like: God has promised to strengthen us, and He is a God of His Word.

Isaiah 26:4

Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength