

Be Strong In The Lord

Ephesians 6:10

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”

We are involved in what I believe could be the most important study we have ever done as a church as a whole, and the title is “Deliverance from Demonic Oppression.” If the Church is to be the life changing, victorious Church God intended her to be we must realize the conquering power God has given us over Satan and his demonic forces!

In our study of deliverance we have seen the origin and operation of Satan and his demonic cohorts. We have seen that there is a war going on around us between the ministering spirits of God and the spirits of darkness, and they are fighting over our lives.

Demon spirits are frenzied and running loose in these last days, and they are out to destroy the children of the living God, our families, our homes and our nation. Why? Because they to are aware we are living in the “last days” before the Return of Christ for His Church!

America is rolling in luxury, reveling in pleasure and rotting in sin. Passions run amok like rider less horses. Lust is exalted as lord. Sin is treated as sovereignty and Satan is worshipped as a saint. From perverted politicians who promote godless legislation to the street punk with an assault rifle, to the so-called solid citizen who shakes his fist at the commandments of a holy God ... America is possessed!

This onslaught of evil is too sinister and too subtle to be the work of human origin. It is the carefully calculated conspiracy of demonic entities.

We have also seen how Satan uses "open doors" to get into our personal lives and then into our families. We have seen the importance of intercessory prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit.

In this study we will look at Paul's admonition to "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. " That tells you to do something; that's a command.

In the military, when a command is given, you obey it whether or not you think or believe you can. There is no negotiating with the individual in authority who gave you the command. You just obey it.

The Bible commands us to "be strong in the Lord." But to "be strong in the Lord" takes more than the Lord doing His part. It takes us making a commitment to obey this command.

First of all, if we are to be strong in the Lord and maintain our strength in Him as we're commanded, we must first learn to be steadfast. What does, "steadfast" mean? "Steadfast" means: "loyal, unwavering, not changing, firm of purpose, firmly still, unchangeable, and established." Those are pretty descriptive words!!

Let's take; for example, the word "loyal." There are a lot of people who are loyal as long as everything is going good. But to be steadfast means you're loyal even when things aren't happening the way you've planned them.

Through my years as Pastor, I have learned there are lots of people who praise God as long as they can dance and shout. They say, "Oh, yeah, we're loyal." But let the least bit of adversity come, and you can't find them. If they had been a part of the Apostle Paul's traveling company, I'm afraid their loyalty would have ended before they ever got started.

The Apostle Paul, however, was steadfast in his loyalty. In the face of every obstacle he encountered, he was still loyal to the message of faith in God's Word. Paul incurred tremendous adversity. He was left for dead, physically beaten several times, and put in jail many times. And yet he was still loyal. Not one time did he ever waver pursuing the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!

We can talk about love all we want, but talking and doing are

two different things. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." Most Christians have no problem loving the Lord with everything that is within them. But Jesus also said to "...love your neighbor as yourself." Until we learn to fulfill this commandment of God, we cannot expect to have the *move of God* and the *power of God demonstrated* in our *lives, in our church, or in our nation!* Listen to be very, very carefully right here – How can we ever have peace and unity in our nation as long as there is so much *resentment, anger, and bigotry* in the Church of the living Lord?

Once more, please allow me to remind you that *people are not our enemies!* Actually, what we need to do is just begin to deal with the unseen enemy *Satan*. For instance, if someone is giving you a hard time at work, don't deal with that individual. Instead, deal with the *unseen enemy* who is causing the problem!

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us "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." **The Word of God says here that we don't deal with "flesh and blood," or in other words, with *people*.** We need to realize what we are standing in faith against. Then instead of *getting out of love* and *talking about this person and that person*, we can use our energy to deal with the *unseen enemy, Satan*. He's the one who is working behind the scenes and causing the problem in the first place.

Listen to Paul's warning to the church in I Timothy 4:1, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons." Because Satan has blinded the mind of some preachers and laymen alike, and he has been able to bring some very *twisted teaching* into the church.

We don't call sin "sin" any longer. Now we call it "a problem" and send the person to a psychologist.

A murderer is no longer a heinous criminal. He is just a "victim of society," born on the wrong side of the tracks. He was deprived of the right socioeconomic opportunities. He is the real victim.

Adultery is no longer considered sin in Hollywood ... or in 90 percent of the church world. Movies and television never show any of the disastrous consequences. The audience never gets even a hint that AIDS exists.

Teenage sexual activity will result in nearly 1,000,000 pregnancies annually, leading to 406,000 abortions, 134,000 miscarriages and 490,000 live births. About 3,000,000 teens will contract a sexually transmitted disease ("The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators," Vol. 2, March 1993, p. 12).

Half the marriages in this nation end in divorce. Even in the church the divorce rate is keeping pace with the rest of America.

Alcoholism is no longer considered a sin. Instead, the alcoholic has a "disease" we spend millions of dollars in advertising each year to propagate. We put a *state funded liquor store* on one corner and a *rehab center* on the other!

The President of the United States promised us a cabinet that "looks like America." Twentyfive percent of Americans claim to be evangelical Christians (False Premises: The Assumptions that Hinder Ministry," Glendale: Ministry Currents," Vol. 2, No. 4, Oct-Dec., 1992, p.2). But how many have been put in highlevel government positions? Absolutely none.

Doctrines of humanism and modernistic theology erode the very fiber of the Word of God. Churches have sold out to

accommodate the world's decaying values. They no longer believe in the blood. They no longer believe in the Cross. They no longer believe in the virgin birth.

I am not talking about philosophies. I am not talking about ideas, tendencies or sociological trends. I am talking about what the Bible calls "demon spirits," dispatched from the realm of the supernatural to afflict the lives God so lovingly designed and created.

Everything I've mentioned ties together with being strong in the Lord, and it is important that we get all of these areas in order in our lives. Ladies and gentlemen, there is a devil on the loose!

Teen suicide is the third leading cause of death among adolescents (William Bennett, "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators," Vol.2, March 1993, p. 12). Between 1960 and 1990 the rate of teen suicide increased 400 percent.

When our children living in our homes and attending our churches are tormented in their minds and driven to take their lives, there is a devil on the loose.

When the public school systems ban the Bible and use tax dollars to pass out condoms, there is a devil on the loose.

When 28 percent of all babies in America are born to single mothers, there is a devil on the loose.

We do not need another social program. We do not need another government policy. We do not need another selfhelp psychology book.

We need to recognize there is a devil on the loose!

We need to have a strong commitment to obey the Word of God. We need to be steadfast Christians who hold steady and endure

hardship. We need to know how to operate in faith based on love. And we need to learn how to deal with the unseen enemy with the Word in prayer, using the name of Jesus as our authority.

Listen to this challenge found in Colossians 1:23, “Continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard.” **Child of God, hear me well today - You are who the Word of God says you are!** You can do what the Word of God says you can do! And you can have what the Word of God says you can have! **Believe it!** **Speak it!** **Live it!**

If you are not saved, why not today?

Please stand for prayer.

Father,

Your Word is true. Give me the courage to look past my circumstances and understand who my real enemy really is. I can because I am more than a conqueror through Christ who loves me! In Jesus' name. Amen.