

The Secret of the Overcoming Strength

by Brian Long

The secret to our strength is the Spirit of the living God, and we must depend on Him to overcome and be set apart to God.

Duration: 56:22

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 8:36, 1 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Overcoming"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the secret to the strength and power of believers in countries like Iran and Korea who are experiencing miraculous moves of God. The secret is the Holy Spirit. The speaker emphasizes the importance of realizing when we are not walking in the strength and power of God and how to get back to that place of drawing upon His strength. The sermon also highlights the story of Samson as an example of how even when we fall and experience bondage, there is still hope for restoration and a future with God.

Transcript

Let's turn to Judges tonight, chapter 16, Judges chapter 16, and I want to speak to you on the subject of the secret of the overcomer's strength, however you want to title it. The overcomer's secret to strength. The secret of our strength.

Those who overcome. It's so vital that we understand what the secret of our strength is, and we're going to begin reading, let's just begin reading in verse 1, Judges chapter 16. Now Samson went to Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her.

When the Gazites were told, Samson has come here, they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, in the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him. And Samson lay low till midnight.

Then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron. Afterward, it happened that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorok, whose name was Delilah. And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, entice him and find out where his great strength lies.

In other words, find out what this secret to his strength is, and by what means we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him, and every one of us will give you eleven hundred pieces of silver. So Delilah said to Samson, please tell me where your great strength lies, and with what you may be bound to afflict you. Please tell me the secret of your strength.

Let's pray, brothers and sisters. Father, I believe you have a message here for us tonight. You've called us to overcome.

It is your will, Lord God, to raise up a mighty army here, a people who are fully dependent upon you, Lord Jesus, a people who will do exploits, who will know their God, and do exploits for your glory. We know, Lord God, from reading the book of Acts, there is a place, there is a way to walk in the fullness of your Holy Spirit, in the power of Almighty God, so that the world has to ask, what is the secret of your strength? Lord, I pray that you would reveal that to us tonight. I stand here in great need, Lord, of your grace and power, of your wisdom, of your mercy, and I ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, we ask you to anoint all of our ears to hear your voice, to equip us tonight, Lord God, to be overcomers. We look to you, Lord Jesus, tonight. We do not look to any man.

We look to you. You are our sufficiency. You are our all in all.

You are the one we need tonight. It's you that we need to hear from. It's you, Lord God, that we need a touch from.

It's you, Lord, that we look to. And so help us tonight in Jesus' name. Amen.

What was the secret to Samson Street? That was the question. That was what the enemy wanted to know because he wanted to cut off that source. That's what Delilah wanted to know because Delilah loved money.

And she was willing... 1,100 pieces of silver? That was a lot of money in those days. She was willing for the sake of that money to do whatever it took to find out what is the secret to this man's strength. Why did the enemy want to know? So he could cut off that source of Samson Street and bind him and make him powerless and do away with him because Samson was called by God to deliver the people of Israel.

He was called by God to deliver the nation of Israel. And Samson, just to give you a little bit of history, was born to a couple who could not have children. Manoah and his wife were not able to have children.

They prayed and sought the Lord and the Lord gave them a son. And they named him Samson. And God sent an angel to visit this couple before Samson was born and gave them specific instructions.

When this baby was born, Samson, he was to be set apart completely to God. He was a Nazarite. He was to take on this Nazarite vow.

And what was a Nazarite vow? A Nazarite vow was somebody who was to be set completely apart unto God. They were never to cut their hair as a sign of being set apart to God. They were never to drink any wine or any kind of alcohol.

They were never to eat any kind of food that was considered by God to be unclean. They were to be set apart as holy unto the Lord. And that was Samson.

He was a Nazarite. He was set apart unto God. Manoah and his wife not only received instruction about setting their son apart for God, but they also called upon God for specific instructions on how to raise him.

And we could all learn from that, couldn't we, parents? To call out to God as to know how to raise our children. But this man did incredible things for the glory of God. Here's a man who the Spirit of the Lord would come mightily upon him as he and his mom and dad were going to visit a place and a lion would come out to attack them.

And Samson would attack the lion. And he would kill the lion with his own bare hand. He would tear him apart.

Here's a man who the Spirit of the Lord would come upon and he caught 300 foxes. Tied the foxes' tails together, set them on fire and turned them loose so that all the grain of the Philistines would be burned. He did this because the Philistines were enemies of God.

And here is a man who would take the jawbone of a donkey and kill a thousand men. What was the secret to his strength? That's what the question is. That's what they're asking.

And I want to challenge you with something tonight. And take this picture out of your minds. All of us have seen pictures painted of Samson.

We've seen movies made where Samson is portrayed as this giant of a man. This mountain of a man. You know, eight, nine, ten foot tall.

Has arms like tree trunks. Has a chest like the Rocky Mountains and legs like the redwood forest trees. Think about this, brothers and sisters.

If Samson was such a man full of muscle, a giant of a man that you had to look up to, why would this woman, Delilah, look up and say, tell me, what is the secret of your strength? Would it be obvious? He's a man of muscle. He's a man of great stature. He stands head and shoulders above all the rest.

I want to challenge you with something tonight. How do you and I not know that Samson was a little man? Could he have been a skinny man? Could he have been a man that didn't have hardly any biceps at all? I submit to you he probably was. He probably was a small man.

He probably was a man that was not impressive to look at. Because the secret of his strength was not in flesh. The secret of his strength was not in muscle.

The secret of his strength was in nothing that was of the natural. What was the secret of his strength? The secret of his strength was the Spirit of the living God. The Holy Spirit would fall upon this man and he would do things that were naturally totally impossible.

This man was called by God. He had a destiny that was being given to him by God. He was empowered with the Spirit of God and that was the secret of his strength.

In the very same way, because I believe Samson is a type of the New Testament believer who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Samson is a type of the New Testament church that is walking in the power of God. What's the secret? What's the secret to our strength? The secret to our strength was the same secret to his.

The Spirit of the living God. What does the Scripture say? Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord. That is the secret of our strength.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit of the living God to fall upon us. If you've been reading the book of Acts like we've committed to do as the body of Christ, something you find in there was a church that was walking in the power of God.

A church that the world had to take notice of and ask the question, what is the secret? What is the secret to your strength? Was it that these men were educated? No. The Scripture said that they were uneducated fishermen. Was it that they had a lot of money? No.

They said to the lame man who was begging at the gate called Beautiful Silver and Gold, have I none? What was the secret to their strength? The secret to their strength was the Spirit of the living God. I was talking with Cassie just before the service began tonight. As many of you know, she works at Voice of the Martyrs.

She's getting to hear every week and read these testimonies of the church in Iran and Korea and different parts of the world. She was sharing with me how these people, they really believe God. And they're seeing God move miraculously.

They're seeing the power of God. Isn't that what she was sharing with me earlier? Why is that? Why are they seeing the power of God like that? Can I tell you why? They know the secret to their strength. The secret to their strength is His Spirit.

And I pray that the Holy Spirit would brand that upon our hearts tonight. The secret of my strength is His Spirit. Is the world asking you, asking me, what is the secret to your strength? What is the secret to you loving your enemies the way you do? What is the secret? How is it that you are loving one another the way you are? What is the secret to that? What is the secret to your power to overcome sin and to walk in freedom and to be delivered from every kind of addiction? What is the secret? If they're not asking us that, why not? That's the challenge to my own heart tonight.

Why aren't they asking that? What is the secret to your strength? Well, Delilah's trying to find it out. Let's just walk through this and see what happens because the secret to Samson's strength was the Spirit of God. And just like Samson, we have an enemy who wants to cut that source off.

And this is how he does it. Verse 6, Delilah said to Samson, Please tell me where your great strength lies and with what you may be bound to afflict you. And Samson said to her, If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man.

So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. Now men were lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson.

But he broke the bowstrings and the strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not yet known. He didn't give it to her yet, did he? It wasn't to be tied with seven fresh bowstrings.

That didn't bind him at all. So just like the enemy does, he comes back again and again and again. Verse 10 Then Delilah said to Samson, Look, you have mocked me and told me lies.

Now please tell me what you may be bound with. So Samson said to her, If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak and be like any other man. Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson.

And men were lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms, like a thread. Delilah said to Samson, Until now you have mocked me and told me lies.

Tell me what you may be bound with. And he said to her, If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom. So she wove it tightly with the batten of the loom and said to him, The Philistines are upon you, Samson.

But he awoke from his sleep and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom. Then she said to him, How can you say I love you when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times and have not told me where your great strength lies. Now Samson is playing the fool, isn't he? He's playing the fool.

He's not yet telling her the secret of his strength, but he's flirting with her. What is the whole enemy's goal here to cut off our strength? To get a man's heart. To get his dependence off of God and onto himself.

To get his heart. Just confide in me. And he's using a woman to do it.

Just confide in me. Just tell me the secret of your strength. Surrender to me a little bit.

Samson's not yet doing it, but he's flirting with the idea. And this is the danger, brothers and sisters. Samson is doing what so many try to do today as Christians.

And that is to see how close to the edge can I get without falling off? How close to the railroad tracks can I get without the train hitting me? Flirting with sin. Flirting with the idea. Because what happens for a man or a woman who's called to be set apart unto God when they depart from God, to be set apart to God is to be holy.

That's the definition of holiness. Sanctification to be set apart to God. If the enemy can pull us away from that, pull us away from our devotion to God and get our devotion, our loyalty in some other area, then the secret of our strength is seven.

There's one thing that breaks our fellowship with God. It's sin. If the secret of our strength is the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is a person, the Holy Spirit can be grieved.

And what grieves the Spirit of God or quenches the Spirit of God? Sin. Samson is flirting with the idea. And Delilah is having a pity party here saying, your heart's not with me.

If you really loved me, you would tell me. Verse 16, it came to pass when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him so that his soul was vexed to death. That's the enemy's tactic.

To bring temptation after temptation after temptation. Nag, nag, nag. And as long as you're flirting with him, that's all he needs.

Because every time you flirt with the devil, you flirt with sin, you're becoming a little bit weaker. That's all he needs is just flirt with the idea. Just come close to the edge.

Pretty soon you'll fall off. His soul was vexed to death that he told her all his heart. He surrendered.

He surrendered in the wrong place. And he said to her, no razor has ever come upon my head for I have been a Nazarite to God. The secret was not in his hair.

The secret was his heart. The secret was that his heart was fully devoted to God. He was a Nazarite to God, set apart to God.

The symbol of that was long hair. You cut off my hair, it's a symbol of you cutting off my heart. You're cutting off my devotion to God.

I've been set apart. I've been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me and I shall become weak and be like any other man.

When Delilah saw that, that he had told her all of his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines saying, come up once more, for he has told me all his heart. We would think that Samson would learn by now, wouldn't we? I mean, she called in the enemy three times now. I used to know a pastor out in the Pan Isle of Oklahoma and he used to always say this.

He said, sin makes you stupid. And he's right. Sin makes you stupid.

It blinds us. It desensitizes us. And he's doing things that are absolutely foolish.

What he's saying is, yes, I want to stay walking in the power of God, but I want Delilah too. And the moment he gave Delilah his heart completely, he no longer was separated unto God. And that's when his strength left him.

So, she calls in the Philistines. Verse 19, Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Samson took a nap in the devil's lap.

He laid his head upon Delilah's lap. Delilah's being animated by the devil himself. And it says, Then she began to torment him and his strength left him.

And she said, The Philistines are upon you, Samson. So he awoke from his sleep and said, I will go out as before at other times and shake myself free. But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him.

Tragedy of tragedies. For the Spirit of the Lord to depart from a man. You remember David's heart cry in Psalm 51? In that prayer of repentance and confession to God after he committed adultery with Bathsheba? He cried out to God, Do not take Your presence from me.

Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. You can hear the cry of this man's heart. God, do anything.

Do anything You have to do. But whatever You do, don't leave me. Don't let Your presence leave me.

Don't depart from me. Don't take Your Holy Spirit from me. That was the cry of David's heart.

God departed from Samson and Samson didn't even know it. Can it happen to a church? The glory of God departs. And the people not even know it.

We continue on as we always have and not know that the Spirit of the Lord has departed. What a tragedy. Well, he was awakened to this in verse 21.

The Philistines took him and put out his eyes and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters and he became a grinder in the prison. And that's exactly what the devil wants to do today.

What does he do? The first thing he wants to do is put out our eyes. Blind us. The enemy comes in to blind.

Then he comes to bind. Then he comes to put us in prison. Then he comes to laugh over our head.

The same thing he did to Samson. Gouged out his eyes. Bound him.

How many are in bondage today? With bronze fetters, he says. And he became a grinder in the prison. He becomes a prison.

A prison of sin. But this is what I want to get to tonight. The secret of our strength is the power of the Holy Spirit.

We must know that. And I think all of us do by now. Take the Holy Spirit away from me and I am weak and powerless as any other man.

Take the Spirit of God away from us, the presence of the Lord away from us, and we are as weak and powerless as the world. But with the Holy Spirit, with the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of God, set apart to God, the world will have to take notice and say to the church, please tell me the secret. Why are you not afraid when we all are afraid? Why are you not so anxious when we are all anxious? Why are you not hating them when we all hate? What is the secret? The only thing that can take that away is when we are no longer set apart to God depending upon Him.

But all of us have experienced times when there's been a break in fellowship, when we've grieved the Spirit of God. And you know it. You may not know it immediately, but you will know it when you've grieved the Spirit of God and you're no longer... you're blind.

You're not seeing things clearly. Next thing you know, you're bound, you're in bondage to some kind of sin and then you end up in prison. What happens then? The good news tonight is that when you belong to God, even though the power of God departed from Samson, God had not given up on Samson.

There was still hope for this failure. God always has a future for a failure. The good news is found in verse 22.

It says, However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven. His hair started to grow again. Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their God, and to rejoice.

And they said, Our God has delivered into our hands Samson, our enemy. When the people saw him, they praised their God, for they said, Our God has delivered into our hands our enemy, the destroyer of our land and the one who multiplied our dead. So it happened when their hearts were merry that they said, Call for Samson that he may perform for us.

It's tragic. Not only now does this man have his eyes gouged out as he's bound, not only is he in prison, but now all the enemies of God want to laugh at him, want to make sport of him. Bring him on out here so we can laugh at him.

And they bring him out into this temple. And there's 3,000 people gathered on the balcony of this temple, not to mention the thousands who were underneath it. And they're all laughing at Samson, blaspheming his God.

What a tragedy. They called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars.

Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, Let me fill the pillars. Here's what the Lord has shown me tonight, brothers and sisters. Once we realize that we're not walking in the strength and power of God, and the world is not asking us, What is the secret of your strength? Once we realize there is more, there is victory, there is a life of overcoming here, there is the power of God.

That's what I'm reading about in Acts. Once we come to realize that, how do we get back to that place of drawing upon the strength and the power of God again? How are we restored once we've fallen? The Bible says, Though a righteous man may fall seven times, he gets up. Micah says, Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy, for though I have fallen, I will arise.

How do we get up again? How do we get to walking again in the power of God, in the power of His Holy Spirit? I want to give you a few things that the Lord has put on my heart tonight. And here's the first one. The first one, the first secret to our strength being restored is humility.

And I see it in this. Here is this mighty, mighty man of God who had done incredible things for the glory of God, but now the strength, the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him. He knew it.

He knew the secret of his strength was not in and of himself. And this mighty man of God has to have a little child take him by the hand and lead him. There's a verse in Isaiah that says, And a little child shall lead them.

What did Jesus say? Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? The one who humbles himself as this little child. That's the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The beginning of it all is you and I to humble ourselves before God and recognize there is no strength and power within myself.

The secret of my strength was not in my hair. The secret of my strength was not in my muscle. It was in nothing that I had to offer in and of myself.

The secret of my strength was in God and God alone. The Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone. Now how do I get back? I humble myself before God.

I come back to that place of utter dependence. To the place where even a little child has to take me by the hand. And I have to ask that little child, Son, lead me to those pillars.

Show me the pillars. Humility. Here's something else the Lord, I believe, showed me.

After the boy took him by the hand and led him, Samson said, Let me fill the pillars which support the temple. And my mind immediately ran to 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy chapter 3. 1 Timothy chapter 3 and verse 15.

Paul says, But if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. Here in the New Testament, the pillar and ground of the truth is what? The church of Jesus Christ. Lead me to the pillar.

Here's what the Lord, I believe, is saying to us tonight. If you have fallen, or if you suddenly are made aware, Lord, why do I not have the strength to overcome this impatience, this anxiety, whatever it is? What do I do? Humble yourself before God, just like He did so the little lad could lead Him. Secondly, show me the pillar.

What the Holy Spirit is saying to me is my need for the body of Christ. I need the church. I need the pillar and ground of the truth.

How many of you on a Wednesday you've had a very busy day, you feel absolutely depleted, you've been working hard, you've been maybe having to face a lot of things in this world, and you come in here on Wednesday night depleted. You don't feel as if one who the world would take notice and say, tell me the secret of your strength. Because you're coming in Wednesday night exhausted and depleted.

And you come and you rub shoulders with the pillar, the church, the body of Christ. And you're encouraged by this brother. And you're encouraged by that sister.

And you join your voice with all the other brothers and sisters in Christ in one accord. And you begin to praise the Lord together. And you are strengthened by the power of God.

Have you ever experienced that? I experienced that many, many times. You come tonight. Amen.

You come together with the body of Christ and you're strengthened. Why? Because you felt the pillar. You came back to the body of Christ.

What it speaks to me is that we need one another. We need one another. This is why there's such power in walking in the light when you're struggling in any area and you can confide in another brother or sister and say, please, pray for me.

I'm struggling in this area. And you begin to pray for one another. You brought that into the light.

Now you're praying for one another. What happens? The strength of Almighty God is unleashed. The power of the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And you begin to walk in victory. You felt the pillar. You came together with the body of Christ.

He says, let me feel the pillars which support the temple so that I can lean on them. Sometimes you've got to lean on your brother. You've got to lean on your sister.

Verse 27 says, now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines were there. About 3,000 men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.

Mind you, they're laughing at him. They're mocking his God. They're blaspheming the name of the Lord.

And here I believe is one of the greatest secrets to our strength. Verse 28. Then Samson called to the Lord.

He prayed. He called to the Lord saying, O Lord God, remember me, I pray. Strengthen me, I pray.

Just this once, O God, that I may with one blow take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes. Here is the secret to our strength. It's not prayer in and of itself.

Prayer in and of itself is not the power. Prayer, though, is the means that connects us with the power of God. Prayer is like our umbilical cord.

Prayer that is connected to God. Prayer is like our lifeline. Prayer is our channel that connects us to God.

Somebody asked Sunday night, when you were out at the Baptist church and you said that prayer is the greatest work we can do. What do you mean by that? Prayer is not prayer in and of itself. It's the dependence that prayer represents.

It's coming to a place of utter dependence saying, God, I can't even see anymore. And I realize now the strength didn't lie in me. The anointing didn't lie in me.

I didn't muster anything up. Everything that I have, Lord, that is good is from You. And God, I'm facing something now that I can't overcome in my own strength.

Lord, strengthen me just this once more. He called out to God. And God, when God's people pray, God works.

This is the secret to our strength. Again, if you're reading the book of Acts, how many times have you seen now in the book of Acts where they face a problem? A mountain of a problem. They face persecution.

They face prison. Peter is kept in prison. He's going to lose his head.

They face major problems. And they have this call to preach the Gospel to the whole world to make disciples of all nations. How are they going to do it? With every problem they face, prayer was their first response, not their last resort.

This is the secret to our strength. As a church, to stay small in our own sight, to stay dependent upon God, to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but lean upon one another. This pillar that's called the church, the pillar of truth, to lean upon one another.

And brothers and sisters, above all, to pray, to call upon God, to pray for one another. And what happens when we pray? We can never lose sight of this when we pray, God comes. When we pray, God pours out His presence.

God pours out His Spirit. God strengthens us once again. And that's exactly what happened to Samson.

I wonder if Samson had ever prayed since he got his hair cut. There's no reference that he did. Could it have been he got his hair cut and he felt so defeated and so ashamed? And how many of us have felt like that at times? Now you're so ashamed because of what you've done.

You don't even know if you should come into the presence of God anymore. But it's the presence of God that's coming to the throne of grace. That's your secret.

It's coming to God and crying out to Him. That's the secret of God empowering you once again. And there is no failure that's completely final for you unless it's a faith failure.

If you no longer believe, then there's no message for you. Because Jesus said, according to your faith be it unto you. The only failure that's final is a faith failure.

And that's why Jesus said to Peter, I've prayed for you, Peter. Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you like wheat. But I've prayed for you that your faith fail not.

And as long as you will come again, get up again, get up again, and put your faith in Me. Don't stop believing that I love you. Don't stop believing that I have everything you need to overcome.

Don't stop believing that I will forgive you again, that I will raise you up again, that I will strengthen you once more. The only failure that's final is a faith failure. You must believe.

You must lift your eyes again and fix them upon the One who is trustworthy. You don't even look to yourself for faith. You can't find faith in yourself.

You can't find faith in faith. You find faith in God who is faithful. You want to have great faith? Look to the One who is absolutely faithful and who's not given up on sin.

And here's one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Bible that God always has a future for a failure, a hope for a failure. But I can't help but wonder because the Bible says you have not because you ask not. What if Samson would have gone further? What if he would have gone beyond just saying God strengthen me just this once more? What if he would have gone beyond that and said God, give me my eyesight back.

And Lord, I know I've gotten completely off track, but take down this house of mockery over my head. Destroy this enemy with one final blow. And Lord, put me back on track.

And let me fulfill the destiny that You've called me to. You have not because you ask not. Can we believe God? Do we dare to believe God for something more than just one more outpouring of His strength? Could we do it, brothers and sisters? Could we ask God to do with us, little church, something that is exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or even imagine and believe Him for that? You know what the secret to our strength, to tapping into our strength through the Spirit of God is? Prayer, but prayer that is prayed in faith.

James said very clearly, he who doubts is like a double-minded man. He said, let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord. Without faith, it's impossible to please God.

And sometimes it's hard, it is extremely hard to believe if your eyes are upon yourself. Can you imagine being Samson? And suddenly you have your spiritual eyesight open thinking, how could I have been such a fool? I told her that seven fresh bowstrings and she tried that to destroy me. How come I didn't see this woman couldn't care less about me? She was out to destroy me.

How could I not see that? And to imagine the shame he was feeling because of the occasion that he had given for the enemies of God to blaspheme. Surely it must have been hard for him to come back into the presence of God and call upon God one more time. But he did.

And you and I must call upon God one more time, but even go beyond Samson and ask for more than just one more outpouring of strength. Give me eyes again, Lord, to see what You see. No, I haven't been witnessing to the lost or having the compassion for the lost like You have, Lord, but like You want me to have.

I'm not fulfilling this great commission and calling that You've given me, but Lord, give me Your eyes to see them. Take me beyond all my failures, all my pasts, and strengthen me once again. And God will always answer that prayer.

Always. He answered Samson. Samson, it says in verse 29, took hold of the two middle pillars.

Now we're not talking about the church now. We're talking now about these pillars that held up this house of mockery over his head. And he's saying, let me feel those pillars.

Put my hands on those pillars. Whatever is supporting this house of mockery and this blasphemy of God, let me find it. You know what it is? These pillars are pillars of unbelief.

They are lies. The only way this house stands over your head to keep you in bondage and to keep you from being an overcomer, the only thing that holds it up are lies. Lies from the pit of hell.

Unbelief. Take away the lies. Take away the unbelief, and that house of mockery falls, and the enemy is destroyed with one blow.

Jesus said, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Show me these pillars. Show me these pillars.

He says, he took, in verse 29, he took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. And he pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the Lord's and all the people who were in it.

So the dead that he killed in his death were more than he killed in his life. There's a principle there for us under the New Covenant. Lord, let me die.

But it's not physically. It's not suicide. No.

Let me, as we were talking about Sunday morning, let me die to this selfishness in me. This self-seeking. This seeking my own.

Let me die to that. Let me die to this impatience. Let me die to this anxiety.

Let me die to this anger. Let me die to everything that is not of You. Lord, strengthen me again and take down the enemy even if I have to die for it to be done.

And you will have to. You have to die to self. You have to die to your flesh.

Let me die that kind of death. Take up my cross, the cross, and die with Christ. Why? So that I may live with Him.

And so that I may live in the power of His resurrection. That was the prayer of the Apostle Paul. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.

So the dead that He killed at His death were more than He had killed in His life. And His brothers in all His Father's household came down and took Him and brought Him up and buried Him between Zorah and Eshpal in the tomb of His father Manoah. He had judged Israel 20 years.

Now, we can look at Samson and only see a failure, but I believe God sees something more because God recorded this man in the Hall of Faith chapter, Hebrews chapter 11, with all those other great men and women of God. God didn't just see a failure. God saw someone who got up one more time and really an overcomer.

An overcomer who would call upon the Lord one more time and in His death do more damage to the powers of darkness and to the enemy than He ever even did in His lifetime. That's victory. That's victory.

I believe the Lord is leading us tonight, and this is what I want to close with. If you turn with me to Ephesians chapter 3, it's not only look at Samson's life as a history lesson, but to do as he did. And this is the only way we can be overcomers and walk in the power of God.

It is, again, to humble ourselves before God and to pray in faith. And this is the prayer that I would like us to pray tonight, brothers and sisters, together. Ephesians chapter 3. First of all, let's just look at the prayer.

Let's just read it together. In Ephesians 3, follow with me in verse 14. The Apostle Paul says, For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.

There it is. Look at that verse again. This is the secret to our strength.

To be strengthened with might, that is power, through His Spirit in the inner man. Strengthen me once again, God, with the power of Your Holy Spirit in my inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and the length and depth and height, to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Hallelujah! That's the will of God.

To be filled with the fullness of God. To be strengthened by the power of His Spirit. Now he says, verse 20, to Him who is able to do exceedingly, abundantly above all that we could ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever.

Amen and amen. That should be our prayer tonight. And I want to challenge you with that.

Even tonight, we don't always have an invitation. We hardly ever have an invitation on Wednesday night. But tonight, can we come together? If you see tonight, hey, I'm not walking in the fullness of God.

I'm not living in the fullness of God. Why can't tonight, I humble myself before God and call upon Him in prayer to fill me afresh with the power of His Holy Spirit to strengthen me once again that I may die to self and live fully alive in Christ. God wants to do that with His church.

He wants to take us far beyond ourselves. He's done that, but not near to the degree that He wants to. And it's going to start with us simply humbling ourselves before God and calling upon Him in prayer like this.

So would you stand with me? And Stan, would you lead us in that song, I Need Thee? I need thee, oh I need thee. That's our prayer tonight. I want to invite you brothers and sisters just to join with me.

I want to make this prayer personal and then we're just going to have a time where we call upon the Lord privately if you'd like to come to the altar and pray right where you are. And it may be for someone tonight

who even like Samson, you've fallen, you've failed, you've been set apart by God, you know God has a destiny, a calling upon your life, but you've failed miserably. What do you do tonight? Once more, you humble yourself.

You lean upon a brother or sister. Maybe tonight you need to ask a brother or sister next to you, pray for me. I need strength tonight.

I need strength. One of the secrets of our strength is to recognize first that we're weak. One young lady said to me this week, why does God expect me to be strong through all of this? I said, God doesn't expect you to be strong.

She said, He doesn't? I said, no. She said, that's what I've been told all my life is to suck it up and get over it. I said, God never said that.

He never says that anywhere in His Word. What God says is bring me your weakness. It's like a ton of bricks came off of her.

Bring me your weakness. Bring me your pain. Bring me your tears.

Bring me your failure. Come to the place of finally seeing you can't do this on your own because the secret of your strength is not in you. It's in me.

It's in the power of the Holy Spirit. Father, tonight I ask that You would grant us according to the riches of Your glory to be strengthened with Your power. Strengthened with Your power through Your Spirit, O God, in our innermost being.

I'm praying this for myself, and I'm praying this, Father, for every single one of my brothers and sisters in Christ tonight. We pray that You, Lord Jesus, would dwell in our hearts through faith. That we would be rooted and grounded in Your love.

That You would grant us the ability to comprehend or just grasp or just be gripped by the width and the length and the depth and the height of Your love, O God. That we might know this love of Christ which surpasses knowledge. Lord, we ask You tonight to fill us with all the fullness of God.

We see that the only thing that stands in the way of many of us tonight is unbelief. Knock down these pillars of unbelief, O God. Take down every pillar, every lie that this house of mockery and of the enemy that seeks to rejoice over our heads when we've stumbled or failed or fallen.

That that would come down tonight with one mighty death blow that comes from Your hand. God, we ask You to fill us once again with all the fullness of God. We ask You, Lord, to do in and through us what is exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ever ask or imagine.

I know, Lord, You will take us as a church and in our individual lives and relationship with You to places that we never would have dreamed possible. To places that we never thought spiritually in our walk with You. In places of ministry, in gifts, in talents, in fruit, in a compassion and love for the lost.

We're asking You, Lord God, to give us what is exceedingly, abundantly above all we could ask or imagine. All by the power of Your Holy Spirit who works in us. And Father, we ask it all for Your glory that to You, Lord Jesus, would be all the glory, all the honor, all the praise in the church by You, Christ Jesus, to all generations forever and ever.

Amen. Hallelujah. Let's just respond to the Lord tonight as He leads us.

Father, we do come to You tonight and we don't come, Lord, in strength. We come in weakness. We don't come offering up empty promises, Lord, like maybe we've done in the past.

We come to You, Lord, just as we are and we come so mindful that, Lord God, apart from You, we can do nothing. But with You and in You, Lord Jesus, we can do all things that You've called us to. We thank You that You are stretching us.

Many of us, Lord, You are stretching and I want to give You thanks for it tonight. Thank You, Lord. Some of us still trying to find our way.

But, Lord, we come to You tonight as little children. We come to You, Lord, in total, absolute, utter dependence upon You. We lift our eyes, Lord Jesus, and we fix them upon You.

Our living hope. Our Lord. Our resurrection in life.

The very One who loves us. Who loved us so much that You died for us. The One who promised us You will never leave us.

You will never forsake us. How we thank You for that tonight, Lord. My heart is burning, Lord God, for You to encourage someone tonight, even if it's one person, Lord God, that feels like an absolute, utter failure.

That tonight, Lord God, You would lift their eyes. You would encourage their heart. And You would give them strength.

Strength tonight, Lord God. Breathe Your very life into them. Strengthen them with power by Your Spirit in their innermost being.

Take them beyond themselves. Take them where they can never go. Make them what they can never become.

Give them wisdom they never possessed, Lord. Enlarge their hearts. Give them victory, Lord God, over the bondage that has gripped them.

I pray, Lord God, for my brothers and sisters, for all of us tonight, Lord. Touch our eyes again that we may see. That we may see the lost as You see them.

That we may see one another as You see us, Lord Jesus. That we may see You, Lord, in our brother and our sister. We pray, Lord God, that You would make us a living testimony everywhere we go this week.

That we would see that our mission field is standing right in front of us. And my God, I'm asking You for an outpouring and an infilling of Your Holy Spirit. We ask You for a fresh baptism of Your Spirit, O God, in that daily filling of Your Spirit and of Your strength, so that everyone would have to take notice and say, please tell me, what is the secret of Your strength? And that we would be ready, Lord Jesus, to point them to You, to tell them of You, to proclaim You, Lord, to this lost world.

We don't want to have our head in the sand, Lord. We're reading the book of Acts and we see how grateful we are for all that You've done here, but we see that we've not arrived. We hear You calling us deeper.

We hear You calling us deeper, Lord God. We know that You're the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. You're the one who healed the sick.

You're the one who made the blind to see. You're the one who set prisoners free, captives free. You're the one who can break every single addiction.

Regardless of what I've seen in the past, regardless of how many that we've seen go back, regardless of how many times we ourselves have fallen over and over again, it doesn't change the truth that You're the living God and when You set the sinner free, Lord Jesus, they are free indeed. We praise You that You are who You say You are. And that once again, You will have a church on the earth, a pure and spotless bride, a great and exceeding mighty army that is not impressive in and of ourselves, and we're not here to impress anyone, that is not big and muscular like some paint Samson to be, but a people who are dependent upon their God.

And Lord, I remember this verse. Your Word in Daniel said in these last days, the people who know their God will do exploits. We want to know You, Father, more than we do.

We want to know the power of Your resurrection, Lord Jesus. Would You grant us this communion with the Holy Spirit? Would You grant us such communion that we can whisper on our bed at night and know You hear us? That we can hear Your voice, Your still small voice, speaking to us, saying, this is the way, walk in it. Go this way, don't go there.

Say yes to this, say no to that. Would You grant us such a communion with You? Would You make us a people who know their God and do exploits in these last days? I'm asking You, Father, to use us, Lord, to lay hands on the sick and to see them recovered. To use us as a people who will go to prayer as our first response every single time.

And to see You, Lord God, shake a place. To see You awaken sinners. To see You set captives free.

I'm asking You, Lord God, to overcome not only this lion that walks about seeking whom He may devour. You've taken care of that lion. You've given us authority over that lion.

But deal with this lion inside every one of our hearts. This lion of flesh, Lord, that is opposed to Your will. And I'm asking You to kill that tonight.

Crush it. And keep us at this place, Lord Jesus, of total dependence upon You. Thank You, Lord.

Would You encourage the church tonight? Would You take us out these doors strengthened in the power of God, overflowing with the love of God. Would You enlarge our hearts and stretch us and take us beyond ourselves for Your glory and for Your honor and for Your namesake. I thank You for it, Lord.

I thank You with all my heart. In Jesus' name, amen. God bless you, brothers and sisters.

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