

Ephesians 15-03-22b

Let's pick up our study now in the Ephesians chapter 6. We have come to verse 10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The text here in Greek gives us three different words for strength, power, and might. Be strong is from *dunamis*, the word from which we get dynamite.

Be strong in the Lord, be dynamic we say, *dunamis*. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Now if you look at this, if you were diagramming this sentence, which those of us who are English majors, we just default to wanting to do this, it's like a compulsion.

What is the structure of the sentence? Be strong in two things, right? We have subordinate prepositional phrases here. Finally, my brethren, be strong. That is the exhortation, right? Be strong, end *dunamais*, that's your verb.

This is potential strength. This is capacity to do things. Dynamite only exists as potential.

Did you ever think about that? Dynamite only exists as potential power. Once you set it off, it no longer exists. The only dynamite you ever see is dynamite that has not yet done its work.

How much dynamite do you see after it did its work? Dynamite has a before and a during. It doesn't have an after. You can see the effects, but a stick of dynamite is potential, it's capacity.

It is ready to do a thing. *Dunamis*. So, Paul says, finally, brothers, be strong, be prepared, have the capacity for life, for service, for bearing fruit.

How? Two ways. In the Lord, in *kurios*. How many times have we seen that phrase in this book? In him, in the Lord, in him, in the Lord.

So be strong in the Lord. Finally, having said everything he has said in the first five and a half chapters here, what's the *loipos* actually means, as for the remainder, what's left to say. As for what's left, now that you know what it is to be in the Lord, now that you know the potentials that you have, the blessings that you have, if it's real to you, and that's a big question, is being in the Lord real to you or not? If it is, then that gives you the capacity to be strong.

That gives you potential. You are prepared to serve. You are prepared to obey.

You are prepared to bear fruit. You are prepared to lay hold of righteousness by faith. You are prepared, hear me now, you are prepared to invest your time in eternity.

That's how you'll know that you can do it. Be strong in the Lord and in something else. Be strong

in the Lord and in the power of his might, in the kratos of his iskus, kratos, the noun from krato, have capacity, be potentially strong, be ready for anything, in the power.

This is the presence of God's power. This is the force. Kratos means force, influence, motive, effect.

We have the potential to do what we need to do because of the force, the applied moving motive energy of God's iskus, strength. How strong is God? You know, they always have this thing, what about when the immovable object is hit by the irresistible force? I actually have an answer to that. The irresistible force wins because God has irresistible force.

And the immovable object is no longer immovable. God is dynamic. God is forceful.

God is powerful. And any previously immovable object in the presence of God's force and God's living power is going to move. So riddle solved.

We can all go home now and never have to worry about that again. God is not an immovable object. He is an irresistible force.

He is motive. He is powerful. He makes things happen.

And what may have previously been immovable moves in the presence of God's power. So finally, my brethren, thinking about all of these things, thinking about the assigned role that God has given us in His overall plan, we are not Old Testament believers. We are New Testament saints.

We are body of Christ. We are in Him. In Him we have these privileges.

We have these grants. We have these rights. We have these enablements.

And so in that light, we exercise them. We use them. We take advantage of them in the context of the authority structure that God has created.

So yes, all things are lawful, but not all things are edified. Not all things are lawful, but not everything comports with the authority structure. So I limit my freedoms and I limit my desires and I limit my actions to those that are edifying and to those that are in line with God's purposes defined by that authority structure.

That's really the whole first part of this letter. We've been given many things, but they have a purpose and they have a direction. There's a purpose and there's a direction.

This is what so many young people today lack. I've got an education. I have the availability of student loans.

The world is my oyster. I can go do anything, but I don't know what to do. I don't know exactly

what school to attend.

I don't know what vocation to pursue. I'm interested in a lot of things. It's kind of sad, really, that the number of people when you ask a teenager, what do you want to do? Well, I want to design video games.

Why is that? Because that's pretty much all they've done in their teenage years is play video games and they think, well, you know, I'm a little frustrated with this aspect. I think I could make this game better. And you become a product of your environment.

Somebody who grows up in the country, a lot of times they'll follow in the footsteps of their parents and become agriculture types. Someone who has medical practice in the family, they end up going into medicine. We go with what we know.

Nothing intrinsically wrong with that. As believers, as children of God, children of a Heavenly Father, from a spiritual perspective, we want to fulfill His purposes, follow in His way, be pleasing in His sight, do what He does. So having been given the information about what God has done for us in Christ, now we have purpose.

Now we have direction. And it's a wonderful thing to know who you are, to know what your goal is. You get up in the morning and you say, I know where I'm headed.

I know how to invest my time and where to set my priorities because I've got a landscape here. I've got a map. I think it would be an interesting thing to see.

You know how on your phone, you used to have a Garmin and that would help you navigate when you're driving? Pretty much now you can do it on your phone. Everything happens on your phone. You can surf the internet on your phone.

You can do Google Maps on your phone. You can take pictures with your phone. You can email on your phone.

You can take selfies with your phone. Here I am, look at me. But by whatever means, when you see one of these maps and you say, I want to go to Nashville or I want to go to bug scuffle Arkansas or whatever it might be, you put it in and it gives you a purple line between where you are and where you want to go.

And then it'll start talking to you. In 500 feet, turn right onto such and such an exit, get on the access road and get in the left lane. It tells you blow by blow, turn by turn, directions out loud.

A lot of times people say, wouldn't it be great if somebody could tell me that for my life decisions. Apply to this school, take these courses and take the courses taught by these professors. There's five sections here and yes, this is, I'd like to get everything stacked on Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, but this professor is such a miserable excuse for a teacher.

You'd be better off driving in the extra two days on Tuesday and Thursday and getting it from this really good teacher where you'll, you'll have an enthusiasm for it and you'll really learn it and get it. It's worth the drive. Well, but this person fits into my schedule Monday, Wednesday, Friday and they're just awful.

They daydream and rant about politics in their personal life and you don't know what's going to be on the test. You can't make heads or tails out of the material. Where was the garment when I needed it? Where was the turn by turn that said, don't take this professor, take that one.

I went up on rate my prof and that didn't help. This is what God gives us. He gives us a sense of direction.

He gives us a defined purpose and we actually have turn by turn directions for our life decisions because the Holy Spirit dwells with us and is in us to guide us in the way. He will lead you into all truth, Jesus said. So when it says here, finally, my brethren be strong in the Lord, well, be strong.

Do you want to be strong like a bull in the China shop? He's strong, but he's not accomplishing anything useful. Be strong in the sense of a runaway bulldozer that, you know, the driver fell off and it just careened into a neighborhood. Be strong like the 18 wheelers I saw that charged with their full strength of their diesel engines into the ditch in this last spell of bad weather.

Strength undirected, strength that isn't employed for a constructive purpose is destructive. Be strong in the Lord. That's direction and purpose.

Be strong. Listen, who did he just get through talking to? Who are the last set of people he specifically addressed? Slaves. Finally, slaves, douloi, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Be strong as a slave, what do you mean? Be strong in the Lord. Be strong to accomplish his will and his purpose. Our lives are not defined by our circumstances, our lives are defined by our purpose.

Life is not defined by circumstance, life is defined by purpose. If your purpose is to please God in all that you think, say, and do, it doesn't matter what your circumstance is. You can be abased or you can abound.

Whatever state you find yourself, you're content because you know what your purpose is. In one context, you're a master, in another context, you're a slave. One context, you're an authority.

You say to some, come and they come, and others go and they go. And in another context, you are the lackey, you are the factotum, you are the servant. Our happiness, our lives, not defined by circumstance but by our purpose.

That's why he could say, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Three different

words here. We saw these same three words back in Ephesians chapter 1, verse 19.

Turn back there. He began the letter. This is sort of a loose, chiastic idea.

Go back to Ephesians chapter 1. Ephesians 1, 19. Paul says, I pray that you will come to know the hope of his calling. Number one.

What is the hope of his calling? You know what that is? Purpose. If you start at verse 15, Paul says, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers, praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit characterized by wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him, the epinosis of him. The eyes of your heart having been enlightened.

Not the eyes of your mind. Not the eyes of your body. The eyes of your heart.

The eyes of your cardia. Having been enlightened so that you can see three things. The heart is the seat of purpose.

The heart is the seat of motive. The eyes of your heart having been opened, And having been enlightened so that you can see three things. Number one, what is the hope of His calling? If you can see the outcome of this call that we have as New Testament believers, as Body of Christ, moving ahead to the Rapture and to the Judgment Seat of Christ and into the Kingdom of the Son and the Kingdom of the Father, if you can see the potential, that's motivation, that's purpose, that's direction.

The eyes of your heart have been opened, have been enlightened so that you can see this. That's number one. Number two, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints? This is the accomplishment of that hope.

This is the fulfillment of those promises. This is the obtaining of the inheritance. The riches of the glory of His inheritance.

You will have a part. You are a citizen of the New Jerusalem. You are a functional member of the government of heaven in the ages to come.

You sit with Christ on His throne. You walk with Him in white. He has a name for you, a nickname that only He and you know.

You are on close, personal fellowship terms with the Lord Jesus Christ. You serve. You are useful.

He is glad to have you nearby, someone on whom He can rely to get things done. And you know how to do them because you learned how to do it here. The riches of the glory of His inheritance

in the saints, that's number two.

Number three, what is the exceeding greatness of His power, His dunamis, toward us who believe, according to the working, energeia, of His mighty power, krato, which He worked in Christ Jesus, energeo, when He raised Him from the dead? You've got five different words in Greek for power. There is energeo. There is krato.

There is dunamis. There is, and you have those same three here that you have in our passage. The exceeding greatness of His power.

This is dunamis. This is the potential, the capacity, according to the working, energeia, energeo, of His mighty krato. This is forcefulness.

This is energy in action, which He energeo-ed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Well, the same thing in Ephesians chapter 6. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord. In chapter 1, He said, I hope you can see this.

The eyes of your heart have been enlightened so that you can see this great gift, this great capacity and potential. So having covered everything in between now, He says, finally, do this. Have that dunamis, power, in God's strength.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. And it is a reminder, if you want to bring this back down to earth, practical terms, when we leave here today and we say, okay, I remember that time is precious and I need to invest it in what counts. I want to partake of eternal things.

I want to have an inheritance. I want my life to count for something. I want my efforts and my actions and the way I spend my time to mean something in times to come.

I want it to be worthwhile. How do I do that? Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. I have to do it in Him.

You can do what you do this afternoon in two different ways. Maybe you're going to cook some food. Maybe you're going to clean the house.

Maybe you're going to rest and relax. Maybe you're going to do any one of a number of things. You can do the very same thing, and in one case, it is only going to exist in the moment.

It will be a momentary pleasure. It will be a momentary task. It will be a momentary activity, and then it will pass and be gone, and there will be nothing left to show for it.

Or you could do that very same thing, very same thing, but you have thought about it ahead of time, and you do it as unto the Lord. I've got this set of things to get done. I'm studying for a test.

I'm preparing for something at work. I'm engaging in some activity, whether it's for pleasure or for

business or for education or for household maintenance or whatever it might be, but I think about it in terms of who I am in Christ. It is as if the Lord Jesus Christ was here, and I'm doing this on His behalf, at His request, for His enjoyment.

And just that turn of mind, that change of focus, that sense of purpose converts that time into something of eternal existence, something of eternal weight. It makes a part of inheritance. Jesus says, Remember He said, If you're serving the members of your household, if you're serving the members or the clientele of your business or your teammates in school or whatever it might be, if you do it as unto the Lord, if you do it to the least of these, my brethren, you have done it unto me.

That change of attitude, that commitment to purpose is an amazing, transformative power. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

That you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Wiles here is the word methodea. Methodea.

We get methods from this. The methods of the devil. But methods is kind of a neutral word in English.

In Greek, methodea had a negative connotation. It was more like we would say machinations. The machinations of the devil.

When you talk about somebody's machinations, you get the idea that there's evil intent. The plotting. The scheming.

What's wrong with plotting and scheming? If you think of them in the abstract, I mean, you need to have some sort of a plan. But we can say, well, he's back there in the back room planning. Well, that could be anything.

That's innocuous. That's neutral. He's back in the back room plotting.

He's back in the back room doing machinations. That's what methodea gets at. And when you think about someone who's carefully... Here's the thing.

If you're an innocent bystander, and you're just doing your thing, and somebody else is giving a lot of thought to the situation and to how they can exploit it for their own gain and their own purposes, you're not giving it all that thought. You're just innocently going along doing your thing. You're just straightforward, left foot, right foot.

This other person is giving it a lot of thought. Well, they're going to be ahead of you. It would be like walking up to a chessboard where one person has been sitting there for a half hour analyzing the position, and you just walk up, and they say, It's your move.

Make one right now. And you look around, and you say, Well, I think I can move this pawn. Nobody's going to die.

This other person has been analyzing the board for a half an hour. They know all about the strengths and weaknesses, the positional situation, and who might be in danger after two or three moves, where they can be and what they can do. And you're just... So normally, you would be at the mercy of someone who has given it a lot more thought than you have.

The devil has given your situation a lot more thought than you have, in most cases. He will outmaneuver us. These are his maneuverings, his machinations.

So how can you stand... He's got more information than we do. He's smarter than we are. And he apparently has the ability to be interested in a lot of people at the same time.

We think, Well, how can the devil be personally interested in me? He's one entity. He's not omniscient. He's not omnipresent.

The way the Bible presents the devil and his capacity is much the way the Bible presents other high angels. And they seem to have a supernatural ability when it comes to time and space. Don't think that the devil is just like sort of an evil snidely whiplash, and he can only be in one place at one time, twisting the ends of his mustache and going off and working.

Well, if he's in Beijing or he's in Peking or he's in Moscow, then he can't be here troubling me. The high angels, the archangel level angels, of which Satan is chief, seem to have time-space abilities that lower angels don't have, and certainly we as human beings don't have. Satan, from our perspective and our observation, seems to be able to be many places at once.

It's just a fact. Look at Scripture. Over and over again, the Lord Jesus talks about what Satan can do.

Paul talks about what Satan can do. Peter talks about what Satan can do. And it's not limited to one person, one place at one time.

He's the highest creation that ever came from the hand of God. And he's got capabilities, time-space capabilities, be there messing with a lot of different people at the same time capabilities. Don't underestimate the devil.

When it says he roams the earth seeking whom he may devour, he's not doing that one at a time. He's a parallel processor. He can do many.

He's multi-threading. He can do many at the same time. And as far as our observation is concerned, he is near omnipresent.

So don't think that he doesn't take a personal interest in some of us, because he does. Either

directly or through his hench demons, his hench persons. We do not wrestle against flesh and blood.

You need to stand against the machinations of the devil. And if it's not him personally, it is his machinations, the things that he has put in place. He has machinations in Hollywood.

He has machinations on the Internet. He has machinations in the Middle East. He has machinations in our government.

He has machinations in a lot of places. And we are not wrestling against flesh and blood. Now, here's my final thought for today.

So, whatever else may have drifted through the air without latching onto it, try to grab hold of this. All of this that we saw in the last two chapters, wives, husbands, husbands, wives, children, parents, parents, children, masters, slaves, slaves, masters, all of that is with a person in view, right? My husband is the problem. Oh, my wife is the problem.

Oh, my child, you know, bad seed, demon child, milkman guy, I don't know what happened. Something got in here, throwback, genetic mutation of some kind. Oh, my parents are just the worst.

My parents are sticking the mud, living in the 1940s. Nobody thinks that way. My parents are the problem.

My master is the problem. My boss is the problem. My teacher is the problem.

The authority structure is the problem. Oh, no, it's the underlings. The peasants are revolting.

That's the problem. Paul says here in that context, rope in the context here, when he says we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, what flesh and blood is he talking about? Your husband, your wife, your parent, your child, your master, your slave. That's not the root of the problem.

We're not wrestling against this person's shortcomings, failures, abuses, right? Get your mind out of that trap. That's not where the wrestling is taking place. There are machinations.

These are just gears in the machine. There's a bigger machine at work here. We're not wrestling against flesh and blood.

Remember, when you come up against people testing, it's not about the people. It's about the test. It's not about can you identify the problem person.

The test is can you identify the machination that is at work and what the proper course of thought and behavior is for a believer in him, being strong in the power of his might. That's the test. The test is not can you identify the problem person.

The test is can you wrestle against the principality, the power, the ruler of the darkness of this age. By the way, the rulers of the darkness of this age, the old text reads rulers of this darkness. And so some manuscripts have Ionon in there, or the Ion.

You know, Ace, Ionion, unto the ages, eternity. But against the rulers of darkness, against spiritual hosts of wickedness. This is pneumonica.

This is the same word that's used over in Corinthians talking about spiritual gifts, spiritual things. It's in the unseen realm. Against spirituals, wicked spirituals, wicked spiritual things in the heavenlies.

So it's an invisible conflict. If you are focused on the visible and the earthly, the personal, you can't be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. You're never going to win that battle.

You're going to get wrestled to the ground. Your head is going to be squeezed between somebody's sweaty thighs and a lock that is pinning you to the mat, and you lose. We're wrestling.

It doesn't say we wrestle not at all, does it? It says we're not wrestling against flesh and blood. We are wrestling. We are pushing against resistance.

But direct your energy, direct your thought, direct your power against the right object. And the object is principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

His power and his might equip us for invisible warfare. And it's going to be difficult to use the weapons of invisible warfare against visible targets in an earthly sense. That's something that bears thinking about.

Many times people say, Oh God, please give my boss a heart attack so that he will quit pestering me. Oh God, please shut the mouth of the lions because they're roaring and I can't even hear myself think. It's a spiritual battle.

Our prayers, our thoughts, our purposes, our resistance against evil and against sin needs to be in the invisible realm. Think big. Think past the immediate and the short term.

Therefore, we take up the whole armor of God. Well, we'll look at the whole armor of God next time. Just remember, you don't win the invisible war with visible tools.

And you don't use invisible weapons against visible targets. The visible is visible. The invisible is in the spiritual realm.

And you've got to keep your weapons and your armor straight. We're not here to win the physical battle. We are here to prevail in the spiritual realm.

And that's why even if John the Baptist gets his head cut off, he still wins. And Herod loses. That's why even if the Lord Jesus is crucified, He still wins.

And Satan loses. That's why even though the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter were executed, they win. Do you know the name of the person that executed the Apostle Paul? No.

Do we have the words and the ministry of the Apostle Paul ministering to untold hundreds of millions of people down through the ages? So who won? Not the Roman. Not the aggravated Jew. It's the Word of God in the mouth and in the heart of the Apostle Paul.

The same is true for us. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for this truth.

Thank You for the perspective it gives us, the power that it confers upon us to live a supernatural life, a life that transcends the earthly, the mundane and the immediate, and enters into the eternal, the spiritual. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will keep us sensitive to these truths and impress them on our hearts so that we can live in a way that pleases You and glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen.