

God Will Strengthen You

(May I ask for your continued prayers for our grandson, Caleb? He is still in the Neo-Natal ICU and keeps having a racing heart and reflux. They're working on it, but I am praying for God's miraculous touch in this little child's life. Thank you!)

Isaiah 41:10 says:

*Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 NKJV)*

We noted previously that God does not want us to fear the present or the future because God is with us. The connection to this promise is made clear in the second statement: *Be not dismayed, for **I am your God***. Having the LORD God as *our* God means that He is *the* only receiver of our worship, not "an" object of worship among other things (syncretism). It means He and He alone is worthy of our total praise and adoration and constant submission to His will over ours.

If we claim the LORD God as *our* God, we will constantly defer to Him; His commands, and His will. It cannot be anything else. It is based on *this* that God confirms His part of the promise in the second statement of the above verse.

God promises to:

- strengthen us
- help us
- uphold us with His righteous right hand

These promises are not free standing, but *connected* to the first sentence of the verse when God tells us not to fear or be dismayed. He is actively with us *because* we have actively made Him and Him alone our God on a continual basis. When we sin and break fellowship with him, while He does not leave us, His active work in us may pause until we regain fellowship through confession of our sin.

I recall my tenure in the Charismatic Movement, the emphasis was often on praising God and quite often repeating verses like **Isaiah 41:10**. It was, however, not usually emphasized that we had an active part to play in this process *apart* from praising Him. We were told to "claim" these promises and by "faith" they would come to fruition, but we were never told what else we were to do in order that God might fulfill His part of the promise. We, as His adopted children, have a tremendous responsibility in our relationship with Him. We are not just "receivers" of blessing. We must be actively involved.

I recall reading many books by Andrew Murray as you may have, and how those books were often confusing to me because Murray never really took the time to thoroughly explain what he

meant by "abiding in Christ." He seemed to talk all around it, but didn't really help folks understand what that meant in daily living and practice. He relegated things to mysticism and I often tended then to focus on my *feelings*.

Abiding in Christ simply means to first, understand the nature of our relationship to Him because of our salvation. Once we receive salvation, we are brought "near" to God in adoption (**Romans 8:17; 9:26; Galatians 3:26**). This adoption immediately brings us into relationship with God. The door has been opened, the veil torn in two, allowing us to boldly approach the throne of Grace (**Hebrews 4:16**).

Second, there is no question that once we receive salvation, we are able to draw close to God in relationship through God the Son, Jesus. The *abiding* that Andrew Murray and others talk *around*, simply means we must, through *effort* (**Philippians 2:12**), ensure that we remain in *fellowship* with Him. This is *abiding*.

Sin (disobedience), puts us out of fellowship until we humble ourselves, confess our sin and thankfully acknowledge His forgiveness for that sin. Once that is completed, we again, enter back into fellowship with Him. It is never a question of potentially losing salvation. We lose fellowship with God and unfortunately, too many Christians seem to not necessarily notice the problem.

It's the same with human relationships. We get angry or sin and often stop talking to that person and they to us until we come back together in humility and solve the problem so that we can again enter into fellowship with them.

Isaiah 41:10 tells us God will do several things for us *if* we ensure that He is the only "god" of our lives as consistently as possible. That means that no person or thing will usurp God's place in our life. If we are willing to *actively* live in this way, God's blessing will be seen in our lives as *strength*, *help* and His *upholding* of us. This is one of those verses that has an implied connection to a requirement.

Only those Christians who choose to deliberately and daily ensure that God is the only "god" in life and determine to live lives in such a way that constantly exalts Him to His rightful position of Lord of our life, will He then follow through by providing *strength* in difficult times, *help* when problems come our way, and by *upholding* us in His righteousness.

In **Genesis 10-11**, we read of the Tower of Babel and the origin of the "mystery religion." People who followed **Nimrod** believed they could build a tower to "go up" to the heavens and allow the gods to "come down" to the earth. It's why God said, "*Let us go down.*" He'd go down, yes, but He would do something they never expected to ensure His will was accomplished. The world is on that path again as we resolutely move toward the final world empire, which will be presided over by another "**Nimrod**," the son of perdition (**2 Thessalonians 2**). This is occurring because of the continuation of Babylon's "mystery religion."

I look back on my life and I can easily see some of the stupid decisions I made at various times that I thought then were wise decisions. I can now see that I was serving Self and not God. I can also see clearly what I *should* have done instead of what I actually did.

Solomon's words bear repeating; "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man,*" (**Ecclesiastes 12:13** NKJV). Many portions of Scripture speak of *how* obedience to God should look in daily living. **Proverbs 1:7** says, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" Would you consider yourself foolish or wise? It is easy to determine. Do you *fear* the LORD God? Do you hold Him in absolute, profound and reverential *awe*? Do you strive to obey His commandments so that your relationship with Him grows and deepens and so that He can recreate within you the character of His Son, Jesus?

If we do not fear the LORD, we are *fools*. There is no true wisdom in us despite what we may think. We will avoid His Word, hating it.

According to Solomon, it all starts with our fear of the LORD. Do we fear? Is that fear growing within us? That fear provides a number of things within us, which translates to a growing:

- humility
- love for Him
- desire to please Him
- desire to sin *less*
- awareness of His truth
- discernment
- knowledge of the holy (Proverbs 9:10)

I became a Christian at 13. It was at that age that I recall going down front to "receive" Jesus while attending church. However, I honestly believe I was saved *before* this so I look at that event as the public confession of my faith in Him. I don't see anywhere in the Bible where altar calls are given. Peter did not give one on the Day of Pentecost. Paul never talks about it. Jesus never did it, but somehow today, because of people like Charles Finney, an altar call and repeating the "sinner's prayer" has become *the* method of receiving salvation. I don't believe that's it at all. I believe people become saved as their eyes are open to the truth and they embrace that truth. While public confessions of faith are worthwhile, we've gotten to the point of thinking that without the sinner's prayer publicly, no one is truly saved.

Once our eyes are open to the truth of the Gospel and we embrace that truth, we *are* saved. From that point onward, we must work on developing our relationship with God in Christ just as we develop other relationships in life. God has clearly delineated what He wants and expects *from* us and what He will provide *for* us based on how we live our lives.

The Israelites were essentially no different than we are today. Then, salvation ("imputed righteousness"), was granted based on the inner faith of the individual. Israel had to approach God through the temporary sacrificial system that pointed to the Perfect. Many Israelites simply

went through the motions without any inner reality and God got really tired of it. They lacked truth in their inner parts.

Is that the way it is for Christians today? Our salvation is given based on our faith and like the Israelites Christians also approach God through the sacrificial system, the once for all completed sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Without His perfect propitiation we would not be able to be in relationship with God at all.

I truly believe we Christians in America especially have had it way too easy for way too long. We've grown lazy and fat. Now that things are starting to get seriously dark in society, we wonder "where is God?" Too many have wandered away from fellowship with God they may have once known. Others were never truly saved but thought they were and by departing the faith, they are finally being honest.

May the Lord help us to make Him *and* keep Him *the* LORD of our life so that He can fulfill His promise to strengthen us, to help us, and to uphold us with His righteous right hand. Amen! We all need to grow there - me included!