

Devotional Thoughts :: Strengthened by Grace by Bob Hoekstra

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Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:1)

Great strength is necessary for living as God intends. The grace of our Lord Jesus is where that strength is to be found. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Some of the specific reasons we need strength are listed in the immediate context of this verse.

Part of our calling as believers in Christ is passing on to others the biblical truths that God has taught us.. "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). Discipling others in God's truth can be demanding and discouraging. Strength is needed. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Another aspect of our life as disciples of Jesus is functioning as spiritual soldiers. "You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (verse 3). We are the Lord's warriors in a worldwide, lifelong spiritual battle. The battle has been won by our Commander, Jesus. However, the enemy will not stop striking back until he is confined forever. As Jesus' soldiers, we face many hardships. Again, strength is needed. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Another perspective on following Jesus is that of an athlete. "And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (verse 5). As it is in athletics, the Christian life requires discipline, training, and the exertion of great measures of energy. Yet again, strength is needed. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

One additional analogy of our life in Christ is that of a farmer. "The hard-working farmer must be first to partake of the crops" (verse 6). As with farmers, we are to sow the seed of the word upon people's hearts. We are to water that seed through prayer. We are to reap a harvest of righteousness. Farming is strenuous work. Once more, strength is needed. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

How wonderful that God did not limit His grace to justification. We need it just as much for sanctification. We need His grace to strengthen us for the diverse spiritual roles that God has for us as disciplers, soldiers, athletes, and farmers. For all of this the only sufficient resource is to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

O Lord of all might and power, I desire to be a faithful discipler, a sacrificial soldier, a disciplined runner, and a laboring farmer. Lord this sounds so right, so good. Yet, You know that I am intimidated by it all as well. I hear the call, and I want to respond; but my strength is so inadequate. So, I look to You and implore You to strengthen me by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, Amen.