

# Becoming Strong in the Lord

by Alan Martin

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**Scripture:** Ephesians 6:10, 2 Peter 1:3, Deuteronomy 29:29, Hebrews 4:15, James 1:19, Philipians 2:14, Psalm 23:4, 1 Thessalonians 5:18

**Topics:** "Spiritual Strength", "Transformation in Christ"

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## Description

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## Transcript

As you know, we've been talking about the reality of spiritual forces that seek to manipulate human weakness. Now, whether you're aware of them or not, they'll manipulate you. We've talked about the fact that their strategy is to create division.

God loves unity. God desires people to become one. Mutual respect.

Mutual esteem. Mutual honor. Mutual care.

Jesus gave one command to his disciples. This was his command. You love others like I love you.

And by this, all men will know that you're my disciples. And the Bible says that love is the bond of unity. And since God desires unity, the enemies of God seek to hinder unity.

They sow division. They sow strife. They sow it in marriages.

They sow it between parents and children. They sow it between families. They sow it between neighbors.

And what they do is they take advantage of natural human weakness behind the scenes, and they provide suggestions that come into your mind as thoughts. You don't even recognize that they're thoughts. You're

being manipulated.

They have the power of suggestion. A thought comes to your head. You assume it's yours.

And we've been talking about how to detect whether those thoughts are from the Lord or whether those thoughts are from these spiritual forces to create difficulty in people's lives, to cause you to say things that only are going to make a matter worse. We talked about how if they can manipulate the way you think, they can arm your mind. They can weaponize your tongue.

And the tongue is a weapon. The Bible says the tongue is a world of evil among the parts of the body. And once the tongue is armed with thoughts that these spirits have suggested, have input to your mind, which you may not even recognize it, and you yield to them, and you speak them, you spread a fire.

The Bible calls these thoughts fiery darts. We talked a little bit at the end of last week about how with the shield of faith, you have to learn to recognize these thoughts and put them out. But I know we have some people here for the first time, and so I can't necessarily cover the whole study again, but I'm going to go in a different direction.

Overall, we've been saying, how do you stand when evil is attempting to attack you? Because the Bible talks about standing in the day of evil. And we said it's not some day out there. We're talking about the day when these spiritual forces or evil in the world comes and it wants to affect you.

It wants to control you. It wants to make you do something, respond in some way that is going to make a situation worse, going to inflame a situation and produce more problems than it helps. It'll wreck a marriage.

It wrecks a home. It wrecks families. It wrecks neighborhoods.

And you need to learn to stop them, recognize them, what to do with them. But I realized something. One of the first things that needs to happen is you need to prepare beforehand because if you're not prepared, there's very little chance you're going to be able to stop these attacks from just being manipulated.

So what does preparation look like? This is a verse that Paul said. It wrote to the church of Ephesus. It's in chapter 6 of his letter to Ephesus.

And it says this, Become strong. Now, you won't see it that way. You'll hear it translated.

You'll read your Bible. Be strong in the Lord. But the idea is become strong, notice, in the Lord.

Here's what I'm going to say about that. It is up to us to become strong. You can stay weak and be manipulated.

You can make no preparation and be taken advantage of. But that's not what God's will is. We are called to prepare for action.

If we know there's an enemy, if we know that there are spiritual forces that are seeking to take advantage of us and our natural weakness, doesn't it behoove us to undergo some training and to make some preparations so that we can stand in the day of evil? And that's what Paul said. Become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might so that you can stand firm in the day of evil. I want to break that sentence down a little bit.

Become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. The word power there comes from the Greek word dunamis, which we get the English word dynamite from. But in the original language, it actually meant ability.

So hear it this way. Become strong in the Lord and in His ability. Too many of us live in our own natural weakness.

We run at the mouth. We lose control. We act out.

We speak out. We freak out with our ways because we're not strong in the Lord. We haven't become strong in the Lord because this is what the scripture says.

I'll write. Ken, did you find me a dry erase marker? No, I found the paper towels. That's as close as I can get.

Oh, that's fine. No problem. There is a marker here.

Oh, I found the dry erase marker, but not the eraser. Oh, thank you. I just want to write down a scripture reference for you.

2 Peter 1, verses 3-5. 2 Peter, his second letter. This is what it says.

God's divine power has given us everything we need to live a godly life. It's all given. But if you knew that you had been fully equipped and fully outfitted by the Lord, everything you need to live a godly life has been given, then what excuse is there for not living a godly life? If you're not actually going to the closet where He's placed everything, taking out what He's provided, learning how to use it, putting it on, and become trained to be able to stand so that evil doesn't have its way with you.

This is what Paul's saying. We are responsible to come to know everything that God has already provided us in Jesus Christ. And this is where not near enough people understand this.

When people think of the Lord Jesus, they think of Him. He lived His sinless life. He died on the cross so that we could be forgiven of our sins.

That's only a very little part of the story. It's a wonderful part of the story that He did die for us so that our sins could be forgiven. But we don't understand the point that He said that He was going to the Father and He was going to send the Holy Spirit.

So that in the Holy Spirit, here's what He said that the Holy Spirit would do. He said that the Holy Spirit would take the things that were His and make them known to us. That's the ministry of the Holy Spirit and that's way more than forgiveness.

And let's talk about this in a practical way. I, in my own self, can become irritated. And when I become irritated, I become agitated.

And when I become agitated, I become aggravated. And aggravation leads to communication, usually. And it's not very pretty.

I usually have some negative comment, snide remark, kind of an ugly thing. Suddenly, whether I intend it or not, I'm looking to hurt. I'm looking to put someone in their place.

I'm looking to set someone straight. That's my natural weakness. Jesus has provided something for that.

Jesus has perfect self-control. Jesus has perfect patience. And the Holy Spirit can take the perfect patience and self-control of Jesus and make that known to me.

That's becoming strong in the Lord in that area. And you know how you do that? You ask for that. Part of the way that comes is as you get to know Jesus, one of the things that He said about Him, this is what you're going to come to know, take my yoke upon you and learn of me.

Learn about me. And what did He say we're going to learn? You're going to learn that I am meek and I'm lowly of heart. Meekness has the idea of restraint.

A restraint. And you know what I need when I'm aggravated? When I'm irritated? Agitated? You know what I need? I need restraint. Because I feel a storm inside me.

And my mind is racing and my tongue is just about ready to get in gear. It didn't park. But all it needs is a little bump in the gear and it will go and it will do its thing and it will be as ugly as the thoughts.

Actually, we call this, the tongue is the missile launching pad of the thoughts. If you don't take care of those thoughts, that irritation, that agitation, that aggravation that's going on in your head is going to come from here to here and out. Out it goes.

But there's an answer. Jesus, in my faith, I know that Jesus is the perfect self-control of God. Perfect.

And if I see in Jesus the beauty of His meekness, you know what it first shows me? It's suddenly, it's light. I'm seeing something. Because remember what Jesus said? He who follows me will never walk in darkness.

He will have the light of life. What does light enable us to do? See, I see every one of your faces because the lights are on. Why do we do the things we do? Why do we not recognize the cycle? Why do we not recognize what the spirits are doing? Why do we not recognize how ugly our own agitation and irritation and aggravation is? Because we're not seeing it in the light of the Lord Jesus.

When you see the beauty of His meekness, when you see the beauty of His gentleness, suddenly your own ugliness becomes stinky, wretched, and it's something you finally want to get rid of. Because some of you just live with it. You don't think you just can't help it.

You haven't seen Jesus. You don't know Jesus. Because Jesus said the Holy Spirit will take His gentleness and make it known to you.

He'll teach you how to receive His help to be gentle, and that's incredible. And that's a life with Jesus. That's more than just being forgiven for being ugly.

That's seeing in Jesus the beauty of God's nature in Him, and by faith receiving that, and then suddenly His power, His ability begins to be perfected in your weakness. And suddenly, even though you're still tempted, you still live in this world, and even though you still feel the agitation, the irritation, starve, you come under temptation, suddenly you remember, you've seen the beauty of the gentleness of the Lord Jesus, and you cry out, Lord Jesus, I want to be like You. I want Your gentleness.

I don't want to be ugly. I don't want to do what I've done. And suddenly, you know what you're doing? You're actually doing what Jesus said.

You start denying yourself that ugly part of you, the old part of you, the part that was natural to you before. And you say, I want to share Your nature. I want to receive the ability that Your Spirit can bring to me.

And what you do is you open your heart, and in that area, the ability of Jesus begins to come and fortify you. You're becoming strong in the Lord. You receive ability, and now you're also being changed.

That old quick trigger of you, that old short fuse, that old, I can't help it, begins to die, pass away, and you begin to experience what the Scripture says. If any man is in Christ, then the life of Christ is flowing into that man. He's receiving the ability of Christ.

Old things begin to pass away. Old habits, old responses, old ugliness begin to pass away, and things begin to become new, because you're receiving what Jesus is perfect in. And it's beginning to actually enable you to do as He does.

His nature is changing your nature. The old you starts passing away, and a new you begins to be created. It's a process.

And there's another, let's say, you... I'm trying to think of another area that's... Yes, sir. I say wholeheartedly, amen to everything you have said. But at one time, even Jesus had an outburst of righteous indignation when He went to the temple and turned the tables and scattered all the animals and all that.

Let me clarify that distinction about that time, because you're right. Jesus was angry over what they were doing to the name of His Father. It was not personal at all.

He was angry over how the poor were being taken advantage. He was angry over the bad testimony these people who were in charge were giving to His Father's kingdom. They had turned what His Father had meant to be a house of prayer for all nations into a marketplace where people were getting ripped off in the name of the Father.

And for the right reason, in the right degree, because all He did was, even in this time, is He, first of all, and if you read in the gospel accounts, He had seen it the day before and went out and prayed all night. How many of us wait to have our outburst after we've prayed all night? Not many of us do that. And then when He came back the next day, He was still.

His heart was grieved over what they were doing. That's why I say righteous indignation. Yes.

Jesus always did what the Father said and did. So I don't think this was... No, not an exception. Even to show you how perfect self-control it was, He didn't go to some soldier and say, Give me a whip.

Their whips had leather thongs and bone tips and metal tips at the end of them, which would be very damaging. He went and found some rope, and He made a whip of rope. Now, come on.

If you raise goats and if you raise cows, you're not going to hurt a goat or a cow by hitting them with a whip made of ropes. It'll accomplish a purpose. It'll scatter them where you want them to scatter.

And what He did in His anger, still under control, is He drove out the cattle, didn't hurt them, drove out the goats. They weren't supposed to be there anyway. Then He went to where the people were ripping people off and had the money, and He turned the tables over.

Does that hurt anybody? No, it just stops people from being ripped off. And it showed all the people how disgusted His Father was with what they were doing. Perfect control.

And so we... Anger is not wrong. But anger is a situation we need extra power to control it. It's said of the Lord Jesus in the book of Hebrews that He was able to measure His passion, to measure it appropriately.

Because sometimes you need passion. Look, if your baby's running to the sidewalk and a car's coming, you need to get agitated pretty quick. You need to get to move on, and you need to yell.

That's not sin. That's just God-given emotion just to help. But what... Almost in every situation when the power of the Lord Jesus is coming to our weakness, it produces good fruit.

The kind of anger we're concerned about is the kind of anger that destroys, tears down, not builds up. Just the... Here's one of the things that Jesus is perfect in. He's perfect in His patience.

And how many of us wish at times we could have those words back that we said? And look what the Scripture says. The Scripture says to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Have you ever noticed how quickly we can become angry? How quickly.

I mean, suddenly... And it could be a setup. Maybe we've had a hard day. Maybe something's been going on.

Maybe something our wife or our husband or our children have been doing, and they've kind of been doing it, and you've just been kind of... And then suddenly, they come and do it again, and before you know it, it is flash. Boom! You know like the fireman that opened the door? And it just... Boom! The combustion blows them right back. Sometimes emotions come on us that quick.

And when it happens, y'all, here's what we can do. We can look to the Lord Jesus. And we say, Jesus, I need Your ability to control my anger.

Amen. You can be honest. You see it.

You see it in the light. And you're not coming because you're scared He's going to reject you. You're seeing the beauty of His control.

How do you do it? How do you do that? Now, I know that sometimes if we read the Scriptures, we misunderstand, I think, how Jesus... If you read... It's in all three Gospels when Jesus began to denounce the Jewish leaders, you know, woe to you. I think we picture Him saying, woe to you! Anger and loud, when He could have been just saying, woe to you. You guys are like a brood of liars.

You guys are like unmarked graves. People walk over you, it's like you're full of dead man's bones. They don't even know how unclean you are.

I believe He could have been pleading with them for them to try to see their real state. We like to imagine that our anger is similar to His. But I would caution that, my brother Ruby.

I would caution that. Because here's what the Scripture says. Man's anger does not work the righteousness of God.

If God makes you angry, wouldn't it be nicer to just, nope, I'm not going to be angry. But He forces you to be? Wouldn't that be the better side to be on than to be so quick to be angry and He's trying to stop you? I think most of us have spent enough time being quick to anger that we'd rather say, God, just keep me from being angry at all. Right? And that's what we need.

This is where we come to the Word of Jesus. And we worship Him. And in faith, we believe that His nature, His ability to maintain control can literally come in and strengthen us to control our speech.

We've been talking about some of these things. For example, I believe this with all my heart. I believe that there is a beautiful life that He's called us to that excludes and puts in the past forever murmuring and complaining.

Let's just put it away. Now, does that mean you'll never be tempted to murmur or complain? No. In this world, there's a lot of things that we could complain about, right? That we could look at, try.

I mean, who knows? You know, a lot of things we could complain about. But if by faith, I've caught a glimpse that there's a beautiful life of not responding in that way, hearing the words of the Lord, in everything give thanks. If by faith, the beauty of that arrests my attention, and I come to the Lord Jesus, and I say, Lord, I struggle with being critical.

I struggle with being negative. I struggle with seeing the problem that gets me, and I build up, and I'm weak. Lord Jesus, would You perfect in me a thankful heart, a heart of gratitude, where I see in a different way.

Regardless of how difficult it is, I remember You're with me. I remember You'll work this situation as difficult as it is for my good. That I'm coming to the Lord Jesus.

I'm asking the Holy Spirit to make Jesus' beautiful control real to me. And as I receive that, I'm becoming strong in the Lord. The Holy Spirit is taking what is Jesus, and He's making it real to me.

And you know what happens? A little more of the old me fades away, and a little more of the Lord Jesus is in His place. And guess who notices? Everyone. Everyone who knows me notices.

Everyone who knows how quick I was. I was a walking volcano. Everybody knows something's happened.

He's gone dormant. There's no longer Mount St. Helens. You know? I mean, it's... And it's what's beautiful.

God actually can take the areas that we... And we all have different areas where we struggle in or we're weak in. And if you've heard that Scripture, that the Bible talks about the Lord will give you beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. What it's saying is the Lord can turn something that's very ugly and detrimental to you into something that's wonderfully beautiful and makes a testimony for Him.

And when we become strong in the Lord and we become this new creation in Christ Jesus, little by little, you know what happens? We look more and more like a Christian. Like a follower of Christ. Because this is what... I will tell you honestly what the world doesn't respect.

The world doesn't respect that the only difference between Christians and them is we claim that we're forgiven and they're not. But we have all the same problems. They don't respect that.

If we talk like they talk, if we lose it like they lose it, if we have the same problems they have, but here we are in church and we're so glad we're forgiven and we're going to heaven and they're not, they don't buy that. But everyone who knows your life, everyone who knows you, especially the people closest to you, they can anticipate your weaknesses, can't they? They've tasted them. They've heard them.

They've seen and they know that look. It looks good kill. You've killed them a thousand times.

They know that. They know. It doesn't always take words, does it? They've seen the sigh.

I mean, they've all experienced it. And what if in those areas you've caught such a glimpse of the beauty of the Lord Jesus and in faith you're asking the Holy Spirit to take whatever that area is that He keeps beautiful in and strengthen that area that you see is so difficult for other people in your life. And the change begins to take place and they may not even say anything at first.

But I'll tell you this, every time they notice, they will see. What does the Scripture say? Just about no longer murmuring and complaining. You know what the Scripture, Paul said? Paul said, do everything without murmuring and complaining so that you may become blameless and pure children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation in whom you shine like stars.

You stand out like a star. Anybody seen Jupiter this week? It's just beautiful in the night sky. It stands out.

It is the brightest thing you can see in the sky when the moon's not out right now. It stands out and it's surrounded by darkness. And when the Lord Jesus begins to touch your life, that's what it's like.

Because the difference between a star and a planet, as bright as Jupiter is, you know it's not a star. It's a planet. What's the difference between a star and a planet? It may look different to you, but here's the real difference.

The planet has no power and light on its own. It's only reflecting the light of the nearest star. It's caught in the orbit of a star.

So it orbits a star and it's the star's gravity, it's the star's light that you're seeing. A star is filled with nuclear dynamic power and it's radiating light from internal combustion. It's giving light even though it's surrounded by darkness.

And those who are filled with Jesus Christ, they radiate light. Now there are people who are more like planets. Maybe you're here, maybe you're reflecting the light of some other good Christian friend you have.

You're here because they're here. But there's no light emanating from you because Jesus Christ is not in there in his brilliance shining out. But when we are becoming like him, that's when we fulfill what Jesus said.

You are the light of the world. They're going to see my nature by the work that I'm doing in you. You are going to show them my gentleness, my kindness, my self-control, my purity, my patience, my ability to change people, my ability to show love and mercy even in difficult situations.

You're going to demonstrate that I'm real by becoming strong in me. And that's part of what we're trying to train one another for. Now, there are those, I don't know if I hear any here tonight, but it's very natural for someone to think, uh-uh, no way.

That's impossible. You remember why Jesus said that? So one time a father whose son was being thrown into an epileptic or demonic convulsion said, Lord, if you can do anything, help us. If you can do anything, help us.

Do you remember what Jesus said? If you can? If you can, he goes, all things are possible to him who believes. It's not a question whether I can. The question is, do you believe I can? And I'm telling you, if you don't believe that the Lord can do this in your life, that's your issue.

It won't happen. It won't happen. But it's not going to happen.

It won't happen not because you're the realist. That's not going to happen. It doesn't mean, and this happens.

This happens when someone becomes pessimistic and negative and down. They really believe that they're seeing straight and everyone else is kind of pie in the sky. Ah, that's a bunch of crock.

So it's because it's rare and you don't see it regular, that makes it, it's not real? So what, do you just find diamonds laying around on the street all the time? How come you don't find diamonds just laying around all the time on the street? Because they're rare. Do you believe in diamonds? Are they real? Yeah, they're real. Just because something is rare and you don't see it every day doesn't mean it's not real.

The Lord Jesus and his power for every single one of us is real. The question is, will we take, realize that he wants to do this and begin to come to him and learn in him and do what Paul said. Become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.

Here's another example. I'm trying to think of just examples for us. Let's say your weakness is kind of worry.

Worry, anxiety, fear, they're kind of similar. Anxiety, in the Biblical word for anxiety means to go back and forth in your mind. How many of us do that in certain situations? Well, we're thinking it through.

That's anxiety. That's worry. And the Bible says not to do that.

What do you mean, not think it through? Not think it back and forth? The Bible actually says if we lack wisdom we should pray, right? And God will give us wisdom. But only let us believe and not doubt. The word for doubt is very similar.

It also means to be back and forth in your mind to waver. So how do you not do that? How do you not do that? You look to the Lord Jesus. You can't change a situation you're concerned about.

That's why you're back and forth, back and forth. You're not even sure what to do. That's why you're back and forth, back and forth.

So how do you get out of that trap that produces in you that worry and anxiety and you're all tense? How do you do that? How about this? Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because... Oh, you mean I don't have to know how you're going to work it out? Oh, I don't have to...

Oh, you're not going to give me the answer of what you're going to do. You just promised to be with me. You just promised to work it together for me.

You just promised to help me. So I don't even have to know what you're going to do. I don't have to know how it's going to work out.

I get settled and have peace by remembering you'll be with me and you love me and you care for me. And you can make difficult things beneficial. A lot of us benefit from difficult things we've gone through.

We've learned a lot through some tough times. Here's a poem. There's a poem.

I still remember it. I walked a mile with pleasure. She chattered all the way and left me none the wiser for all she had to say.

I walked a mile with sorrow and not a word said she but all of the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me. God didn't promise to spare us from difficult things, just harmful. He can make the difficult and the painful beneficial.

He can do that. And see, that's faith. That's coming to the Lord Jesus in faith.

That's saying, even though I'm feeling what I'm feeling and I'm struggling and I'm weak, I know, Lord Jesus, your trust in the Father is something I need right now. Strengthen me with the kind of trust you had in the Father. Amen.

And literally what happens is as we learn to believe, as we learn to respond in faith, as we learn to look to Jesus for more than just... And people already do this. People look to Jesus for forgive me, Lord. Forgive me, Lord.

I mean, it's the one prayer everybody knows. Forgive me, Lord. The other one they know is help me, Lord.

Help me. They throw that one up there real quick. But what they don't know is they don't realize that Jesus wants you to come and spend time with Him.

The Father wants you to come and spend time with Him so that He can share with you His own beautiful nature. And that nature will actually strengthen the areas that you're needing help with and produce change. You become this new creation.

Again, not overnight. How many... Most of us, even if you don't read your Bible too often, most of us know that in the book of Genesis it records the creation process. How many days did creation take? Six.

Six. So God made things in six days. And if He's God, He could have made things in just one day, one hour.

But He chose to do some things the first day. And He chose to do other things the second day. So what if He doesn't want to do everything in your spouse's life this day? What if He only wants to do one little thing? What if He wants to save the other thing He needs to work on tomorrow? Or later? Do you have hope? Do you trust God's power? Can you say thank you, Lord? The thing is that we as humans, we want to know the answers to everything.

But Deuteronomy 29.29 says, The secret things belong to the Lord our God. And those that are revealed belong to us and to our children. And when the apostles, right before Jesus ascended, when the apostles asked Jesus, Lord, will you restore the kingdom to Israel? Jesus told them, It is not to you to know the seasons of the Father.

But He didn't stop there. No, no. He said, but you will receive power.

And the word is ability. See, they wanted to know how He was going to work things out. And He said, that's not important for you.

What you need to understand is, my abilities come into you. We don't have to know everything, brother. But we need to know that when the Spirit comes, He brings the ability of Jesus with Him.

Yes. And that's the difference. That's the kind of miracle the world needs to see.

The world, they don't need to see someone rise from the dead. They need to see you rise from the dead. The dead of your old anger.

The dead of your old habits. The dead of your old ways. They need to see you become a new living person in Jesus.

Amen. That's the miracle they need to see. That's the miracle we want to show them.

That's why we gather here. That's why we have this dinner. That's why we encourage one another.

Because it's not just about, we're going to come here and have another meeting, and say, thank you, Lord, that you forgive us again. That's not it. There's so much more to the word Jesus than that.

It's becoming like Him. And this is one thing the Bible says, we're being renewed into His image and likeness. It's by degrees.

It's a little bit of time. But it's a wonderful thing. And we want to encourage you.

And that's why I want you to continue to come. I thank you for coming. But the whole purpose of our being here is to help one another fully come to understand who Jesus is.

So that we can become strong in the Lord. And in the areas that we struggle and we have need in, and His own ability would transform that area. You know, you've heard this idea of being filled in the Spirit, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And I know some of you may have seen some crazy things. You watch TV, you may see some crazy things. Have you noticed I don't ever really have a line here, and I lay hands on you and you fall over? Those things I'm just not very familiar with.

But here's what I do know. The person who's continually looking to the Lord Jesus, seeing His beauty, and asking for that beauty to become a part of their life, that person starts being filled. And you know what I believe happens? That person becomes filled with the Holy Spirit.

They surrender. They're receiving all that the Lord Jesus gives. And that person has an ability to walk in a way of joy and of peace, whether things are calm or hectic around them.

Whether they're busy in the kitchen, or whether they're out here just relaxing. It's just in the Lord. It's all possible.

And you just so enjoy life with the Lord that it's just a beautiful life. And I love everybody who experiences it. We want to help one another experience it.

That's why we gather. And so tonight's study is more like part of our preparation is we need to understand that it's not just about recognizing what's wrong and stopping wrong thoughts and putting them out. It's let's be proactive.

Let's realize that there is so much the Heavenly Father has given us in the Lord Jesus that we need the Holy Spirit to teach us so that we can become strong in the Lord. Okay? Alright, think about that. Hit them with a whip made of ropes.

It'll accomplish a purpose. It'll scatter them where you want them to scatter. And what he did in his anger still under control is he drove out the cattle, didn't hurt them.

Drove out the goats, they weren't supposed to be there anyway. Then he went to where the people were ripping people off and had the money and he turned the tables over. Does that hurt anybody? No, it just stops people from being ripped off.

And it showed all the people how disgusted his father was with what they were doing. Perfect control. And so we... Anger is not wrong.

But anger is a situation we need extra power to control it. It's said of the Lord Jesus in the book of Hebrews that he was able to measure his passion, to measure it appropriately. Because sometimes you need passion.

Look, if your baby's running to the sidewalk and a car's coming, you need to get agitated pretty quick. You need to get a move on and you need to yell. That's not sin.

That's God-given emotion just to help. But almost in every situation, when the power of the Lord Jesus is coming to our weakness, it produces good fruit. The kind of anger we're concerned about is the kind of anger that destroys, tears down, not builds up.

Here's one of the things that Jesus is perfect in. He's perfect in his patience. And how many of us wish at times we could have those words back that we said? And look what the Scripture says.

The Scripture says to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Have you ever noticed how quickly we can become angry? How quickly. I mean, suddenly, and it could be a setup.

Maybe we've had a hard day. Maybe something's been going on. Maybe something our wife or our husband or our children have been doing, and they've kind of been doing it, and you've just been kind of... And then suddenly, they come and do it again, and before you know it, it is flash.

Boom! You know like the firemen that open the door? And it just, boom! The combustion blows them right back. Sometimes emotions come on us that quick. And when it happens, y'all, here's what we can do.

We can look to the Lord Jesus, and we say, I need your ability to control my anger. Amen. You can be honest.

You see it. You see it in the light. You're not coming because you're scared He's going to reject you.

You're seeing the beauty of His control. How do you do it? How do you do that? Now, I know that sometimes if we read the Scriptures, we misunderstand, I think, how Jesus... Because if you read in all three Gospels, when Jesus began to denounce the Jewish leaders, you know, woe to you. I think we pictured Him saying, woe to you! Anger and loud, when He could have been just saying, woe to you.

You guys are like a brood of vipers. You guys are like unmarked graves. People walk over you.

It's like you're full of dead men's bones, and they don't even know how unclean you are. I believe He could have been pleading with them for them to try to see their real state. We like to imagine that our anger is similar to His, but I would caution that, my brother Ruby.

I would caution that, because here's what the Scripture says, man's anger does not work the righteousness of God. If God makes you angry, wouldn't it be nicer to just, nope, I'm not going to be angry, but He forces you to be? Wouldn't that be the better side to be on than to be so quick to be angry, and He's trying to stop you? I think most of us have spent enough time being quick to anger that we'd rather say, God, just keep me from being angry at all. And that's what we need, and this is where we come to the Lord Jesus.

And we worship Him, and in faith we believe that His nature, His ability to maintain control can literally come in and strengthen us to control our speech. We've been talking about some of these things, like for example, I believe this with all my heart. I believe that there is a beautiful life that He's called us to that excludes and puts in the past forever murmuring and complaining.

Let's just put it away. Now does that mean you'll never be tempted to murmur or complain? No, you live in this world. There's a lot of things that we could complain about, right? That we could look at, try.

I mean, who knows? You know, a lot of things we could complain about. But if by faith, I've caught a glimpse that there's a beautiful life of not responding in that way. Hearing the words of the Lord in everything give thanks.

If by faith, the beauty of that arrests my attention, and I come to the Lord Jesus, and I say, Lord, I struggle with being critical. I struggle with being negative. I struggle with seeing the problem.

It gets me, and I build up. I'm weak. Lord Jesus, would you perfect in me a thankful heart, a heart of gratitude, where I see in a different way.

Regardless of how difficult it is, I remember you're with me. I remember your work, this situation, as difficult as it is for my good. That I'm coming to the Lord Jesus.

I'm asking the Holy Spirit to make Jesus' beautiful control real to me. And as I receive that, I'm becoming strong in the Lord. The Holy Spirit is taking what is Jesus, and he's making it real to me.

And you know what happens? A little more of the old me fades away. And a little more of the Lord Jesus is in his place. And guess who notices? Everyone.

Everyone who knows me notices. Everyone who knows how quick I was, I was a walking volcano. Everybody knows something's happened.

He's gone dormant. There's no longer Mount St. Helens. I mean, it's what's beautiful.

God actually can take the areas that we... And we all have different areas where we struggle in or where we can. And if you've heard that Scripture, that the Bible talks about the Lord will give you beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning. What it's saying is the Lord can turn something that's very ugly and detrimental to you into something that's wonderfully beautiful and makes a testimony for Him.

And when we become strong in the Lord and we become this new creation in Christ Jesus, little by little, you know what happens? We look more and more like a Christian. Like a follower of Christ. Because this is what... I will tell you honestly what the world does.

Like hitting them with a whip made of ropes. It'll accomplish a purpose. It'll scatter where you want them to scatter.

And what He did in His anger, still under control, is He drove out the cattle. Didn't hurt them. Drove out the goats.

They weren't supposed to be there anyway. Then He went to where the people were ripping people off and had the money. And He turned the tables over.

Does that hurt anybody? No, it just stops people from being ripped off. And it showed all the people how disgusted His Father was with what they were doing. Perfect control.

And so we... Anger is not wrong. But anger is a situation we need extra power to control it. It's said of the Lord Jesus in the book of Hebrews that He was able to measure His passion.

To measure it appropriately. Because sometimes you need passion. Look, if your baby is running to the sidewalk and a car is coming, you need to get agitated pretty quick.

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And I would caution that, my brother Ruby. I would caution that because here's what the Scripture says. Man's anger does not work the righteousness of God.

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And this is where we come to the Lord Jesus. And we worship Him. And in faith we believe that His nature, His ability to maintain control can literally come in and strengthen us to control our speech.

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