

Strength in Trial

by John Newton

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in the Lord's goodness and promises, and finding strength in faith in Christ, especially in times of trial.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:38, Hebrews 4:16, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Trusting God", "Spiritual Strength"

Description

John Newton preaches about the importance of trusting in God's love and faithfulness, even in the midst of trials and uncertainties. He shares his personal experience of illness during a journey, highlighting how God's peace and strength sustained him. Newton encourages the congregation to draw near to God through prayer, reminding them of God's compassion, grace, and faithfulness as a Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, and Husband, who will never abandon His children.

Transcript

May 31, 1769.

I was sorry I did not write as you expected, but I hope it will do now. Indeed I have not forgotten you; you are often in my thoughts, and seldom omitted in my prayers. I hope the Lord will make what you see and hear while abroad profitable to you, to increase your knowledge, to strengthen your faith, and to make you from henceforth well satisfied with your situation. If I am not mistaken, you will be sensible, that though there are some desirable things to be met with in London preferable to any other place, yet, upon the whole, a quiet situation in the country, under one stated ministry, and in connexion with one people, has the advantage. It is pleasant now and then to have opportunity of hearing a variety of preachers, but the best and greatest of them are no more than instruments; some can please the ear better than others; but none can reach the heart any farther than the Lord is pleased to open it. This He showed you upon your first going up, and I doubt not but your disappointment did you more good than if you had heard with all the pleasure you expected.

The Lord was pleased to visit me with a slight illness in my late journey. I was far from well on the Tuesday, but supposed it owing to the fatigue of riding, and the heat of the weather; but the next day I was taken with a shivering, to which a fever succeeded. I was then near sixty miles from home. The Lord gave me much peace in my soul, and I was enabled to hope He would bring me safe home, in which I was not disappointed; and though I had the fever most part of the way, my journey was not unpleasant. He likewise strengthened me to preach twice on Sunday; and at night I found myself well, only very weary,

and I have continued well ever since. I have reason to speak much of His goodness, and to kiss the rod, for it was sweetened with abundant mercies. I thought that had it been His pleasure I should have continued sick at Oxford, or even have died there, I had no objection. Though I had not that joy and sensible comfort which some are favoured with, yet I was quite free from pain, fear, and care, and felt myself sweetly composed to His will, whatever it might be. Thus He fulfils His promise in making our strength equal to our day; and every new trial gives us a new proof how happy it is to be enabled to put our trust in Him.

I hope, in the midst of all your engagements, you find a little time to read His good Word, and to wait at His mercy seat. It is good for us to draw nigh to Him. It is an honour that He permits us to pray; and we shall surely find He is a God hearing prayer. Endeavour to be diligent in the means; yet watch and strive against a legal spirit, which is always aiming to represent Him as a hard master, watching as it were to take advantage of us. But it is far otherwise. His name is Love! He looks upon us with compassion; He knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust; and when our infirmities prevail, He does not bid us despond, but reminds us that we have an Advocate with the Father, who is able to pity, to pardon, and to save to the uttermost. Think of the names and relations He bears. Does He not call Himself a Saviour, a Shepherd, a Friend, and a Husband? Has He not made known unto us His love, His blood, His righteousness, His promises, His power, and His grace, and all for our encouragement? Away, then, with all doubting, unbelieving thoughts; they will not only distress your heart, but weaken your hands. Take it for granted upon the warrant of His word, that you are His, and He is yours; that He has loved you with an everlasting love, and therefore in loving-kindness has drawn you to Himself; that He will surely accomplish that which He has begun, and that nothing which can be named or thought of shall ever be able to separate you from Him. This persuasion will give you strength for the battle; this is the shield which will quench the fiery darts of Satan; this is the helmet which the enemy cannot pierce. Whereas, if we go forth doubting and fearing, and are afraid to trust any farther than we can feel, we are weak as water, and easily overcome. Be strong, therefore, not in yourself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Pray for me, and believe me to be,

Yours, &c.

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