

## "Strengthen Thyself"

I Kings 20: Selected unto verse 22.

Text: - I Kings 20: 22. "And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest!"

Introduction: - Israel had been at war with Syria. They had come off victorious. They were happy over the victory and were congratulating themselves on their success. Just when they felt that they had had a great victory the prophet of God came and gave him, the King, this message. "Go, strengthen thyself". This was a call to wisdom. The king was reminded that life before him was a struggle and because he had won this victory he was not to live carelessly as though he had no enemies. A greater struggle was ahead of him, and unless he strengthened himself by careful preparation he was sure to meet defeat.

### I.

This is a message which God sends to every man and every woman today. It should come to every Christian with great emphasis. Perhaps you have had a great spiritual victory. God has been blessing you in a gracious and marvellous way. Old temptations that used to grip you with their power are losing their grip. Old appetites and old passions that were once your master are coming under your feet. Yet is it too presumptuous to say to you, "Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest, for on a day when you are least expecting it, Satan will come against you, and unless you have made yourself strong in the strength of God, you will be overcome. God had given David many victories. He had rescued him from the lion and the bear. He gave him the strength to slay Goliath; He had given him deliverance from the envy and jealousy of Saul. He had given him great spiritual insight as is revealed in the Psalms. But after David had thanked God a thousand times, Satan came to him with a new temptation, a temptation unexpected, which

led him into a sin so terrible, that he came very near to losing his own soul.

Peter had many marks of the favor of Jesus. He had been with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, he had been chosen to go with Christ to the garden of Gethsemane and witness the supreme agony of atoning love; after he had sworn that though all men forsook Christ he would remain faithful, it was the same Peter who was unexpectedly assailed by Satan, and denied having known the Lord. It behooves every one of us to be very humble. We should never be self-satisfied to walk even one day alone, yes even one hour alone. Has God blessed you? Then thank God and take courage, but strengthen yourself and look carefully to your steps. Until we are safe in heaven Satan will not cease to war against our souls.

## II.

If sincere Christian needs to be exhorted to constant watchfulness, lest he fall into temptation and his strength be broken down, how much more is the message pertinent to those who have been living without God and without hope in the world. The only way the sinner can strengthen himself to meet the struggles of life is by making his peace with God. No man is ever safe who has God against him, and no man is ever in danger who had God for him. You can, if a sinner, get into harmony with God, "if we confess our sins; then He will cleanse us from all unrighteousness. There is just one way open, that is we can surrender unconditionally at the mercy seat, and ask him in the name of Jesus Christ who died on the cross, to have mercy on us; He will have mercy on us and forgive us freely. He will also give us the witness in our own hearts that we are forgiven. That is where the sinner must get his strength; by ceasing to be a sinner and coming to be a Christian.

The strongest saint in the world is not stronger than the weakest convert who relies on the atonement of Christ.

### III.

It may be that some of you are trying by the grace of God to do right, are pursued by some of the old temptations. A hundred times a day the devil tempts you. He whispers in your ear that your resolve to live a Christian life is ~~not~~ only temporary. That some day you will stumble and fall. No, that need not be your end. As long as you will prayerfully, reverently, humbly, but confidently, trust God and rest on the atoning blood of Jesus Christ for your salvation, you will be stronger than all the hosts of evil that can be brought against you. God has never left a poor sinner who has been saved by grace. Trust Jesus. Lovingly obey him, and nothing can harm you.

Conclusion:- Jesus Christ will never fail one who will trust him. Trust him. He is God both of the hills and valleys. He will be with you on the high breezy hills of prosperity, and he will go down with you into the dark valleys of adversity. Yes, when we come to walk in the ~~x~~ valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil. His rod and his staff will be there to comfort us, and bring us to eternal peace.