

Strength through Conflict

by Charles Haun

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Isaiah 54:11. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy foundations with sapphires. 12. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncle, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

God is talking here to someone who is afflicted, who is tossed with tempest, and God is not comforting them. And God doesn't want you to comfort them either. Behold what? The affliction, the tempest or discomfort! No! Behold, I will lay thy stones ... and lay thy foundations ... and make thy windows...and thy gates ... and thy borders. So, God is working. And part of the process of God to get in us and from us what he desires, is the sending us into trouble.

Joshua 2:2. And it was told the king of Jericho saying, behold there came men in hither tonight, of the children of Israel to search out the country.

Now here are two men of the children of Israel and they are in enemy territory. And in verse 1, we find that these men were sent to enemy territory. They did not wander there. They did not on their own decide that they're gonna have a little venture there, so that they get thrills and adventures. But they were sent to enemy territory.

Do you know that God will see to it that you get put in a fix so that God can fix you the way he wants you fixed? And He will get you in a fix to fix you. And we think that satan has got us into the fix, or we ourselves got us into the fix. That may be true, but it also may be true that God has put the fix on you, because God does that. Now, if you don't believe it, all you have to do is read your bible.

Lam 3:1. I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath (God's wrath).

Now this is Jeremiah the prophet talking. He is not speaking out of the experience of sin. Not Jeremiah! He is speaking out of his experience of following and obeying God. Now, if you're not ready to face certain things, than you better think twice. You can be willing and not be ready and then God will make you ready. But if you're not willing to face certain things, then you better think again about following God. Jesus said: "Follow me and I will make you." And so when the pressure is on in the making process, we wonder why did we ever begin to follow in the first place, or perhaps we're ready to cast out the enemy.

Jeremiah says, He (God) hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light (Lam 3:2). God has led me. And because I have followed God, I find myself in darkness and not in light. When I first read this I thought surely someone made it up, but it's there, that's God. It's His process. And in following God, he brings you into the most unlikely places and you don't like them. But this is part of the following. God led Jeremiah into darkness. Jeremiah did not stray into darkness. Satan did not lead him into darkness.

God led him into the place where there was no light. Ever been there? I have! It's a nice place after you get out of it and it's a nice place when you're there, but you don't think so.

Matt 4:1. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

Wow, what a way to get tempted, led of the spirit of God into the wilderness in order to be tempted of the devil. Ai-yi-yi! How do you get tempted? God does not tempt any man, but he may lead you to the tempter. God will lead you to Satan. Oh, what a horrible thought. Not only a horrible thought, it's a horrible experience. And I've been there! A terrible thing to face Satan himself. Now, to face a demon that's one thing, but to face Satan himself, that's quite something else. And the spirit of God leads us to face the enemy.

The Lord does not do this to lambs. We are taught in conflict and battle. The children of Israel coming up out of the wilderness were led through the wilderness for 2 years to train them hopefully, for the battles that were to come.

God said to Moses, "Now I could lead you right, straight directly into the Canaan land which would only be a matter of few days, or a week, but I am not gonna do it, lest when you see battle, you repent in your heart and want to return to Egypt. So I'm gonna train you! And what am I gonna use to train you? The blessings of God? No, I'm going to use the enemy. And then I will lead you from one enemy to the other enemy in order to train you for the very arch enemy." This is God's process.

Look at David. Before he faced Goliath, he had to face the lion and the bear. And before David faced the armies and battled the nations, he had to face Goliath, led from one enemy to another enemy. How would you like to have that kind of life and leading of God? Beautiful huh? But that's what he does. We don't like some of God's processes. We like to walk through the Canaan land, drinking the milk and eating the honey and the grapes of eshcol. But the enemy is there! And God is leading from one enemy to another.

Now, in the wilderness, not only were the children of Israel engaged in certain battles, they were led from one trial to another. No water, no food, this trial, that trial. And they followed the cloud! They didn't wander on their own, just wandering anywhere and everywhere. They followed the cloud! And the cloud led them from one bad situation into another. And they wept and they mourned before the Lord, wanting the pressure off. And all the time, God was keeping it on. They wanted deliverance from this trial of affliction and God did not want them delivered from it. And so the spirit is leading and he leads us into the lions' den. And the Lions there, do not have wax teeth, they have real teeth. And there we are, by God's appointment, in the lions' den. And what do we see then? We see lions! We see them twice as big as what they are. But the secret in the Lions den is to see God. And He's bigger than the whole pack. That's the secret. We are being led. We are being sent by God!

Luke 10:3. Go your ways Jesus said, to His disciples. Behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

You may say, "What are you doing this for, Jesus?" He is sending you! This is not an accident! The enemy did not get in here by some slip-up on God's part, this has been designed by God. In the Garden of Eden, the enemy didn't slip in there unawares, that was designed by God. And Jesus didn't slip up here when he said, "I send you as lambs among wolves." No, that's His intention. "Behold I send you, as Lambs among wolves." So the next time he sends you to the wolves, what are you going to think? That the devil is in this? Well, he might be in the picture, but he's not in command. God is king of the Earth. God is King of kings!

And Jesus sends us where we don't like to go. He said to Peter, "When you were young, you went where you wanted to go." "Bless me Lord," you say, "I'll go where the blessing is, and if I can't get it here, bless

God, I'll go where the blessing is. "But when you become old (mature), you stretch forth your hands, and another girds you, and carries you where you would not go." When you were young you'd throw a tantrum about it. Now you're old, and a more mature. And you will go where you would otherwise not go. You go to the places you don't like to go. You endure the things you don't like to endure.

When I got to the tribe of Indians, way back in the jungles of Peru, I saw there a sight, a condition that was just hard to believe. It was the most pitiful thing I had ever seen. Indians were dying. One body was wrapped up and on poles above a smoking fire. They were preparing that body. Others would die. No one was working, hunting or fishing. All of them were sick, perhaps except for two or three of them. And consequently, there was not much to eat, I was hungry all the time. They had cooked Yucca there, in which two dogs ate from immediately after they were eating human waste. A boy got out of his hammock with Diarrhea with worms, sick unto to death, just like the others. Excreting upon the dirt floor, the dogs began to eat of it. They don't feed their dogs anything and the dogs will eat anything. And the Indian woman that was able to get around chased the dogs out of that, and on the way out of the hut, the dogs ate from this open pot of cooked food.

Now you can imagine, that as the dogs made a withdrawal there, they made a deposit also. It was on their whiskers! This seemed to remind the Indian woman that she should feed me. And she went to the same pot and got the food, and handed it to me. And he'll give you to eat what you don't want to eat, but when you're old, you'll eat it. And I held that thing to the Lord and I said, "Now Lord, you see this, and you see what's in it, and I'm gonna eat it." And eat it I did, with no ill effects at all. For God is King over the Earth. He is King of kings. And the might and power of God is over any enemy and any deadly thing. He's over all! And you need never fear when he leads you into the teeth of the lions because he is greater than the lions. You need never fear. And as Jesus said, "I send you as lambs among wolves." Wolves so what, he goes with is us and that's what counts. He is with us.

Now, in Joshua 2:2, it says that the men were the children of Israel, the elect of God. What a consolation to know that you, as the elect of God, have been sent to the enemy. Not as someone that God has cast off, but as the elect of God. As the child of God, you are sent to the wolves. I'll tell you what happens to the wolves when they bother a child of God. They break their teeth. "Touch not my anointed and do my prophets no harm." And as many as heard these witnesses, "they shall be killed by the fire that comes out of their mouths." And not a hair on your head is able to be lost through the wiles and the power of the enemy. Even though they kill you, that's alright. They can't touch that which God preserves. They may take your physical life but can never touch that which God preserves. The only thing they can do is strengthen it. But God has gone with us. And even in the darkness that Jeremiah was led into, it says, "And God inhabits the thick darkness."

Ps 23:6 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. Why? "For thou art with me." David sees God with him. He is not focusing upon the shadow of death. His life does not come under the impact of this thing because he knows that God is with him. God goes with us! "Lo, I am with you to the ends of the Earth." You can take up serpents, you can eat any deadly thing. Wherever I send you, I am with you, no matter what enemy you must face. David seemed to have understood this as he faced many enemies, and of course, he had to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Saul was hounding him almost every day, trying to kill him. "I will fear no evil," because God is greater than the evil. And though David had occasion to get rid of this evil, he did not take it. He allowed Saul to live when he had opportunities to kill him and escape with his life, from persecution. But he says, "For thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies." How do you get such a table? You have to go where it is, in the presence of enemies. And God leads us to the enemies, because there are certain dishes there that He wants you to eat; certain kinds of food! A certain type of table is prepared for you in the presence of your enemies. And there he wants you to eat. He has not sent you into the face of the enemy for the enemy to eat you. He has sent you to the enemy that you eat. Now He's not serving you in bed. He's serving you in the presence of your enemies. Not in your bedroom, but in the enemies' camp, He is serving you. "Thou anointest my head with oil, my

cup runneth over." Do you think you get this stuff on the mountaintop of blessing? No, not Psalms 23, it has nothing to do with that. You go where God sends you and God is with you. And the provisions of God are there!

Back in Luke again, chapter 10:19, "Behold I give unto you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Wow, did you know that? Did you know, that as he sends you to the enemy, he does not send you empty handed? He goes with you and he gives you the authority that you need in every place that He sends you. You have the authority that you need in that place to which God sends you. And you have authority over all the power of the enemy.

Where is this authority to be realized? Where is it to be exercised? Where is the truth of it to grip your heart? It will never be, if it's untested. But it will be in the presence of your enemies. This is what it takes to face the enemy. And so there is no reason to fear. There is no excuse that God has given you that would legitimately carry that fear in your heart, in the face of the enemy. "I have given you authority over all power." The power of the enemy! That's fantastic!

We have to deal with quite a variety of people in the ministry and some of them are actually filled with the power of Satan. I mean filled. But we do not approach the situation with fear. If we did, we wouldn't approach it. There's no reason to approach it. In fact, you better not. We approach that knowing that we have authority over all power of the enemy, given by the Lord as we go where He sends us.

Acts 5:40-41 And to him they agreed, and when they had called the apostles and had beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the counsel (the presence of their enemy) rejoicing.

This is another aspect for the elect of God, which is rejoicing. Can't you just hear them saying "Glory to God, isn't wonderful to be in the presence of the enemy and to be beaten by him?" That's what they were doing. They were rejoicing that they were found worthy to suffer shame for His name. The lash fell and they cried "Glory to God." Do you know something? For God to send you into a situation like this is quite a compliment. He is trusting you to face something that no normal person could hold up under. Led of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of satan. What a compliment! Led of God into darkness. What a trust he puts in our hands to consider us capable enough of moving into this and face the enemy. He sends us to face Goliath. And what man will despise God will count worthy. God sends us to the lions' den. What a compliment! What a compliment it was to send those who did not accept deliverance. And by faith, Hebrews says, "not accepting deliverance" by the same faith (if not greater faith) than those that were delivered. Sure, it takes faith to be delivered, but I would reckon it takes a whole lot more faith not to be delivered. How do you like that? They stopped the mouths of lions, some of them, through faith. They obtained promises through faith. But others were tortured, not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection.

No matter what happens, you have to have faith and go through it with faith. So, it takes greater faith in not accepting deliverance when it's there, even when you can have it! Jesus said, "I could call to the father and He would send me 12 legions of angels." It's available. I can have it! That is fine if you don't have enough faith not to have it. Well, say, no thank you, not this time. This is how God is leading. Make sure he is leading that way, of course, but the Lord did not accept it when he had it as His. And so, even though we have to suffer, the joy of the Lord becomes our strength.

I want to show you particularly, how the encouragement and strength comes to us out from our encounter with the enemy. Back in our text, going onto Joshua 2:9-11, Rahab said to these two men, "I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all of the inhabitants of the land faint because of you." Do you know that the enemy is afraid of us? If we are moving right in God,

he has a right to be, he should be. "For we have heard had the Lord dried up the water ... Wow, what do you think these 2 men thought when they heard that? What an encouragement! Everybody's just fainting dead away for fear of you guys. Is that right, tell me more? Yes, they are shutting up the city at night. They're scarred to death. That was such an encouragement that it gave these two men more strength and faith in that situation, the fact that the enemy was thinking himself that he was defeated. Glory to God, let's get at these guys and hit'em while they're weak.

You have the same thing in Judges 7:9-15, and this concerns Gideon as God calls him to deliver Israel from the Midianites. God tells them to go down to the enemy camp and hear what the enemy is saying, "and afterwards shall thy hands be strengthened." Where at? In the camp of the enemy! Why, because of what the enemy says. Gideon overhears a man's dream about the sword of Gideon (this is the enemy now) and the interpretation was that they had been given into Gideon's hand. The bible tells us when Gideon heard this dream that he worshipped the Lord and returned to the host of Israel to gather the troops. Glory to God, what an element to come out of the enemy camp with. Worship came out, inspired by the enemy in the heart of Gideon. And when he heard what the enemy was doing and saying right in the presence of the enemy, God prepared for Gideon a table. And Gideon ate, worshipped, and arose, and went back and said "Boys, let's go get'em." He wasn't so ready before, was he? No, he wanted to fleece his way out of that situation. But now he is ready. He got some strength when God sent him to the camp of the enemy.

Judges 14:5 Then went Samson down, and his father and mother, to Timinath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him: v6 And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would a kid, and he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

Although they both went down, there was a separation here between Samson and his parents. They were not together. "And behold a young lion roared against him." What for? Well, he was going to devour Samson. "And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him ...and he had nothing in his hands." But the spirit of the Lord is not nothing. The spirit of the Lord is something. There was no human ability that Samson possessed but the (v6a) "spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent the lion as he would a kid (easily) and he had nothing in his hands."

Jud 14:6b But he told not his father or mother what he had done. V7 And he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. V8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion. And he took thereof in his hands and he went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.

And of course he said later on "And from the eater there came forth meat." Now this is God's design. The lion had a different design, he did not intend to be chewed up by Samson. He intended to chew Samson up. But God had other intentions. He intended that enemy go through the meat grinder and become hamburger for Samson. And this is what he intends for you. He intends that these situations will feed you. And from the eater, and from that situation that has been designed to destroy, from the impact that comes upon your life and seems to almost crush you beyond the point of your endurance, what God wants you to do is chew him to bits. And that situation becomes your food, your eat, your drink, and your nourishment. "And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson." Now when that happened, Samson knew something, and he knew it forceful enough to stand up against that lion. Now he would not have done that, if he did not know something. For before that lion ever reached him, he knew, although he had nothing in his hand, he was going to make minced meat of that lion. He knew it before it happened. And the spirit of revelation can so come upon you in a situation that you know the end of that situation from the beginning. And when the spirit of revelation comes upon you, and you see the light and the power of God greater than that lion, you know that the lion is on a one-way road. And he's headed for a dead end.

When the spirit of God comes upon you, you can face that thing regardless of the strength of it because there is a power and a authority that is far greater. Have you seen it? It's around! Once we have seen this "it," we are able to face satan himself, knowing God. I want you to see something further about this in the temptation of Jesus that we mentioned.

Luke 4:14. And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee:

Now, this is after he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of satan and he is tempted by him. He is full of the Holy Ghost as he goes to meet the enemy but notice how he comes from that meeting of the enemy. "And Jesus returned in the power of the spirit." Now, he did not go up in the power of the spirit. The bible does not say that, but it does say he returned in the power. For these things have been designed for us of God for strength. This was the object that God had in the Garden of Eden. If you can maintain the direction of revelation that the spirit gives you, you are led of the spirit, full of the Holy Ghost. You have the spirit of wisdom and revelation and with these elements, you can maintain the direction that God sets you in and don't let the enemy kid you, because you can maintain the direction.

As we go to feed of the lion, and as we seemingly are thrown into situations that are beyond our comprehension on how are we going to get out of this thing, and what in the world are we going to do, God sends you into them and brings you out with more strength than what you had when you went into them.

1 Pet 5:8-10. Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour (Keep on the right track). Who resisteth steadfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world (your brethren, you're not the only one destined for this). But the God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile make you perfect, established, strengthened, settle you.

After - not before the suffering. After you have first suffered awhile, then he will make you perfect. This is the purpose.

Deut 20:1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemy and seest forces and chariots and people more than thou, be not afraid of them for the Lord thy God is with thee.

Although God ordains us as soldiers of the cross to endure hardships and to be sent forth to the enemy camp, remember that He is there also. And there is no reason that we should be afraid of the elements that seem to be too much for us. If God being with us, sends us into these situations, we strengthened by him can endure hardships, endure suffering, and can endure the battle. Consequently, we can be strengthened from our conflict with the enemy and we can return in the power of the spirit for further conquests and for the fulfillment of the ministries and tasks that God has for us. We are strengthened for the fulfillment of his divine will and for his pleasure in and through us if we are able to face the process that's necessary to bring us to the place that God wants us to be.