Keep Holding On - A Lesson on Strengthing One Another

Luke 22: 31-32 & John 21:15-17

Strength- The quality or state of being strong: a capacity for exertion or endurance. Or the power to resist force: solidity or toughness. The vigor of expression. Webster’s

Strength --The quality of power and might which characterises God and his relationship to his creation[[1]](#footnote-1)Human strength can lead to rebellion against God on account of a belief in human self-sufficiency.[[2]](#footnote-2) Dictionary of Biblical Themes

Strengthen: Build up, nourish, reinforce, temper, boost, renew. To make able to withstand physical hardship, strain. **Strengthen** (στήρισον). 1 Pet. 5:10. Rev., *stablish*, which is much better. *Strengthen* may denote only a *temporary* effect. The word implies *fixedness*.[[3]](#footnote-3) [*Word studies in the New Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/vincents?ref=Bible.Lk22.32&off=270&ctx=hast+turned+again.%E2%80%9D%0a~Strengthen+(%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CC%81%CF%81%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BF)

Verb: to make or become stronger. In the Greek it means to “to support”, to fix something so that it stands upright and unmovable.

**The Revelation of the strength of God in creation:**

**Job 38:4**-Foundation laid **Psalms** **68:34-35**- Strength over the elements/strength and power to his people **Psalms 104:1-3**-Majesty of God

**Jeremiah 32:17**-creative power **Romans 1:20-** Things clearly seen in creation

As we talk about strength, we must be strengthened and strengthening one another, we must recognize and Honor the Strength giver, **Psalms 33:13** God’s eyes are upon us and looking for ways to bless you. Therefore the word may be used interchangeably but know that we are talking about strengthing one another.

**God Our Strength** :

**2 Samuel 22:33**-Makes ways perfect

**Psalms 28:8**-Saving strength **Psalms 46:1-3**-Protective

Sirach 6:37:Let thy mind be upon the ordinances of the Lord, and meditate continually in his commandments: he shall establish thine heart, and give thee wisdom at thine own desire. [[4]](#footnote-4) King James Aprocrapha

**Luke 22: 31-32**

**Background points:**

* Feast of Unleaven Bread/ Passover was about to begin-vs. 1
* Betrayal plans devised-vs. 2
* Celebration of the Passover and the Last Supper-11-19 The Passover meal has a menu of roast lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine. Each food dish is a reminder of the exodus from Egypt.

The roast lamb commemorates the lamb which was slain for each household and its blood painted on the outside door.

The unleavened bread recalls the bread that was made and eaten in haste, with no time for the dough to rise.

The bitter herbs are a relish to eat with the bread and a symbol of the bitterness of Israel’s slavery in Egypt.[[5]](#footnote-5) **The Bible Guide**

* Side talk of who would be the greatest in the kingdom-v. 25-27

31- And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: 32But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and **when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren**. 33And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Peter**-Called Simon, Cephas, Simon Peter, Petros(Greek Name), or the Apostle, Kepha (Arabic). He is attributed as to writing the Acts of the Apostles and 1st & 2nd Peter. His given name is Simon barJonah (Matt. 16:17). The brother of Andrew.

He was born in Bethsaida and he had a fishing business with his brother Andrew and business partners with James & John (Luke 5:10). Some scholars seem to think he continued his finishing business after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was married because the Bible mentions his mother-in-law.

Peter was originally called by Andrew his brother and later confirmed by Jesus. Peter was the vocal disciple of the 12, he is considered the leader both of the 12 and in the church. He was a strong personality. Yet Peter had some character flaws that might cause some to question his salvation.

1. He didn’t believe that Jesus rose from the grave until he went to the tomb
2. When discouraged he returned to his profession of fishing **John 21:3**
3. He had a temper or a violent streak, he cut off the ear of the high priest. **John 18:10**
4. He professed that he would never leave Jesus, but under pressure, he denied him three times. In the denial he cursed but we say he cussed
5. He showed prejudice when he was with the Gentiles and when the Jews showed up he left the Gentiles. It was disturbing until Paul confronted Peter **Galatians 2:11**

Yet he was a prominent leader in the church, later canonized by the Catholic Church.

So we see here everyone is present to eat the Passover and Jesus calls Peter’s name.

He is renamed by Jesus “The Rock”, which denotes strong, unmovable, firm stoic in his belief of Jesus Christ. However, John records the calling of Peter’s name in a different way. **John 21:15-17—READ**

 Jesus gets his attention by calling his name twice.

**THE SIFTING OF SIMON**

Here Peter is our example of how we may fail when in a crisis or our backs are against the wall. Remember Peter was not saved yet when this was spoken to him by Jesus.

The Bible clearly points out that Satan has it out for Peter. Jesus says to him- Satan hath desired to have you

Satan, who deceives and accuses humankind, has asked permission to test Simon—just as he once tested Job (**Job 1:6–12**). Satan wants to prove to God that his faith in humanity is misplaced.

Jesus speaks specifically to Simon—repeating his name, as he likes to do, to emphasize his point. Simon is more boisterous than the others in his protests of commitment to Jesus, and yet he will vigorously deny him before daybreak (**22:31–38).**  He is more demonstrative in his belief as he steps out of the boat and walks on water. He is all of these things and Satan has it in for Peter.

 But Jesus has prayed for Simon—standing before God to defend his friend against Satan’s attack. Jesus sat and prayed for Simon, his disciples, Wilma, and you (**John 17: 7-9, 14-16, and 22-26**) Jesus hopes that, when Simon has come through this trial, he will be a rock to strengthen his brothers.

Jesus warns his disciples that they are to be plunged into crisis. In the old days in Galilee, they lived without the clutter and protection of possessions. Now, says Jesus (putting the situation starkly), they will do well to get hold of a sword.

Jesus knows that he is about to endure the degradation and death of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53). The disciples produce two swords for Jesus—but he didn’t mean them to take him literally. He is simply warning them to brace themselves for conflict.[[7]](#footnote-7) **The Bible Guide**

 “Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12, nkjv).[[8]](#footnote-8)

**What does God’s Strength Offer**?

**Psalms 27:1** – Light **1 Th. 3:2**-Establishes and comforts -It may be accomplished, besought, or commanded. It presupposes that the Christians who are to be strengthened are under assault and in danger of becoming uncertain or slothful in their faith or walk. **Psalms** **3:13**

**2 Th. 3:3**-Faithfulness

**What happens if we do not strengthen?**

Among non-believers, strength may become a source of arrogant self-confidence, the oppression of others or rebellion against God.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Genesis 11:4**-arrogant **1 Samuel 1: 41-44**-belittling **Luke 18: 9-12**-self confidence

 **How do we gain strength enough to help our brothers?**

**1 Peter 5: 8-9** Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: 9Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**1 Peter 1: 13-16** Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: 15But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; 16Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy[[11]](#footnote-11)

**Luke 21:34**-And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares.[[12]](#footnote-12)

36Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.[[13]](#footnote-13)

The effect or aim of strengthening is the impregnability of Christian faith in-spite of the troubles which we have to endured.

**Strength can be tested**: Peter’s self-confident boasting is a warning to us that none of us really knows his own heart (Jer. 17:9) and that we can fail *in the point of our greatest strength*. Abraham’s greatest strength was his faith, and yet his faith failed him when he went down to Egypt and lied about Sarah (Gen. 12:10–13:4). Moses’ strength was in his meekness (Num. 12:3), yet he lost his temper, spoke rashly with his lips, and was not allowed to enter Canaan (Num. 20). Peter was a brave man, but his courage failed him, and he denied his Lord three times.

Examples of strength:

**Some examples of strengths you might mention include:**

* Enthusiasm.
* Trustworthiness.
* Creativity.
* Discipline.
* Patience.
* Respectfulness.
* Determination.
* Dedication.

The word *converted* in Luke 22:32 means “turned around.” Peter was already a *saved* man, but he would soon start going in the wrong direction and would have to be turned around. He would not lose the gift of eternal life, but he would disobey the Lord and jeopardize his discipleship. Actually, all of the disciples would forsake Jesus, but Peter would also deny Him. It is a humbling lesson for all of us.[[14]](#footnote-14) [*Word studies in the New Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/vincents?ref=Bible.Lk22.32&off=50&ctx=+prayers%2c+ch.+5%3a33.%0a~Art+converted+(%CE%B5%CC%93%CF%80%CE%B9%CF%83)

**Art converted** (ἐπιστρέψας). Converted is simply the Latinized rendering of the word *to turn round* (*convertere*). Rev. renders the aorist participle, denoting a definite act, by *once:* “when *once* thou *hast turned again*.”[[15]](#footnote-15) [*Word studies in the New Testament*](https://ref.ly/logosres/vincents?ref=Bible.Lk22.32&off=50&ctx=+prayers%2c+ch.+5%3a33.%0a~Art+converted+(%CE%B5%CC%93%CF%80%CE%B9%CF%83)

 **When you are strengthened find a brother or sister and strengthen them Iron sharpens Iron!**

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