

In His Mighty Power (Eph 6:10)

1. Finally

Eph 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

This verse starts with the word “Finally”. This section comes as a conclusion of what Paul has been speaking since 1:1.

When we read the Bible, we open here and there. We read a little here and then read a little there. But, what about when we read a letter? We don't usually read it like that, do we? It starts like “Dear so and so” and end with “Sincerely,” “Best Regards,” something like that.

Paul wrote to the people in the church in Ephesus. There are not only adults but also children (cf. 6:1). People in the church in Ephesus received the letter from apostle Paul. They gathered together, and someone started to read, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.” Oh, dear Pastor Paul! We miss you! “To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.” God's holy people, the faithful? Is that us? You made me shy!

They've been listening since verse 1, chapter 1 and now they reached here “Finally”. When they heard the word “Finally”, they had what they've been listening from the beginning in their mind. Then they hear, “be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

“Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.” Here, what they've been listening so far are all connected together now. This word also resounds in our heart, we will be strengthened in the Lord like that.

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? He was caught and put in prison in Rome. While he was in prison, he still had this conviction that our God still protect him, support him and strengthen him by his mighty power. Because of this conviction, he could say “Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”

Paul wrote many letters. Before he wrote the letter to Ephesians, he wrote the letter to Corinthians. In his second letter to Corinthians, he wrote as follows:

2 Cor 1:8-11

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers.

Paul and his team were preaching the gospel in Asia. And they were persecuted. There were times they were stoned and almost died (Acts 14:19). They felt they had received the sentence of death. Through those sufferings, Paul finally relied on God, who raises the dead. He honestly confessed he used to rely on himself, but through sufferings in which he felt as if the sentence of death has been passed against him, he finally relied on God. It is not just believe in God, but believe in God who raises the dead. He says that our hope is in this God.

This Paul says “God, in his mighty power, is protecting me, supporting me and strengthening me. So you too ‘be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.’ ”

He was in the prison where he had no idea what would happen the following day. But he says, “To live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phi 1:21). He felt as if the sentence of death has been passed against him. But God who has been supporting me so far is still, certainly supporting me now. In the midst of heading toward death, God is walking with me. And God will continue to support me until the end when I take hold of his glory. It is not that I am taking hold of God’s hand. But Christ Jesus is taking hold of me (Phi 3:12). Paul had unshakable confidence to the extent that joy came up from within (Phi 4:4).

In the prison, where he felt the sentence of death, what his care is the church in Ephesus. In Ephesus, there was the great shrine of Artemis (Acts 19:35). The city of Ephesus was the guardian of the temple of Artemis and of her image. The whole city was worshipping Artemis, the goddess. And many practiced kinds of witchcraft (Acts 19:19). The church in Ephesus was in the midst of all these.

Paul had heartache when he thought of the church which is fighting in that kind of circumstances. It is not just the church in Ephesus, but Galatia, Philippi, Colosse and so on.

While in the prison, he had the presence of God beside him. He had confidence in God's support and protection. "Oh, how are they doing?" He sent a letter and said, "Be strong in His mighty power."

Eph 1:19

his incomparably great power for us who believe.

Paul says "for us". It is not just him who are experiencing this great power. But this power is working for everyone who believe in God. This power is surely working, so he wanted them to be strengthened by all means at any cost.

2. God's mighty power

In Ephesians, Paul describes how God's mighty power is working in believer's life.

(1) The power of resurrection

Eph 1:19-20

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, ²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead

Eph 2:5-6

[God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

God's mighty power, that is the power of resurrection. We used to be dead in transgressions and sins. Since the time we believed in Jesus, God's mighty power has been working in us and that makes us alive with Christ. When we are made alive by God's power, our life surely reflects the character of God. We can live the new life with the life of Christ.

The power of resurrection is not just for life after death, but it is working for us now. We can daily experience the power of resurrection in our lives. We can live more and more lively as Christlikeness.

(2) The power of transformation

Eph 3:7

I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.

Paul used to persecute Christ. He used to catch disciples of Jesus and put them into prison. But what is he doing now? He is proclaiming Jesus at the risk of his life. Even though he was persecuted, knocked about, almost killed, he never stopped proclaiming the gospel. He became totally different.

Think about it. For Paul, Christians were the people whom he used to persecute. He had strong conviction that what they believed was completely wrong, they were blaspheming God. Now he came to those people and asked them to let him join them. Isn't it amazing!?

Not only that, but he also wants to preach the gospel they have been preaching. And it is not to preach for the people who want to listen to it, but he is to preach to the people in the city where the whole town serve Artemis, the city where it is full of idols, in the city where people are against the gospel. And he even goes back to the city where he was whipped, and preach the gospel again there.

Paul used to be a persecutor of Christ, but he was transformed and became an apostle for the gentiles. Paul says he couldn't have done it, if it was by his own effort. It was done by the power of God. The power of God can even transform not just the useless, but also the harmful and grow them into servants of the gospel. And God will use the person to show the glory of God.

(3) The power of victory

Eph 3:16

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Who strengthens us? It is God the father through God the Holy Spirit. Who will strengthen our inner man? It is God the father through God the Holy Spirit.

When he wrote this letter, Paul said the days were evil. Today the days are evil too. There are full of temptations. Evil things are described, and talked about as if they were beautiful. But in the midst of that, the Holy Spirit gives us self-awareness “I am a child of God, I live as a child of light.” The Holy Spirit is within us, and he reminds us who we are, and gives us power to live.

The Holy Spirit helps us to understand what God’s will is, and help us to recognize what is pleasing to God. If we deviate from His will, the Holy Spirit will grieve within us and let us know that we left Him and bring us back to Him.

How much are we aware that the Holy Spirit is with us in our daily life? How close do we spend time with the Holy Spirit? How sensitively are we listening to the Holy Spirit? How much are we inviting Him in each of our daily incidents?

Paul said, “I can do all things through him who gives me strength” (Phi 4:13).

The Holy Spirit is also with us. Not only on Sundays, in the worship services. Not just when we read the Bible, pray or praise Him. He is with us, when we are in the work place, school, office, in the market place, and in our family. We can do all things through the Holy Spirit.

When we start something, we can pause a moment with a short prayer, “Dear Holy Spirit, I start now. Please lead me, guide me.” In the middle of work, we can look up to heaven and pray, “Dear Holy Spirit, what shall I do from now?” When we are in trouble, or stressed, we can pray, “Dear Holy Spirit, help me. I don’t know what to do.” When we face temptation, we can pray “Dear Holy Spirit, please help me to love you more than anything.” When we rejoice, we can praise him, “Dear Holy Spirit, thank you! I give glory to God.”

When we feel nobody understand us, when we are misunderstood, when we are lonely, we can pray, “Dear Holy Spirit, you are always with me. Help me to know how close you are with me now. I thank you that you know everything about me.”

(4) The power of love

Eph 3:18-19

[You] may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

God gives us power to understand how wide, how long, how high and how deep the love of Christ. We can ask the Holy Spirit to help us to hear God's voice. When you read the Bible, please listen to God. Ask Him, "How much do you love me? Please help me to understand that. Please show me, teach me how great your love is."

God teaches us as reality how wide, how long, how high and how deep the love of Christ through our fellowship with other Christians.

Let me introduce what I am trying to do. I try to see Jesus in three places. The first is to see Jesus in me. The second is to see him in the other person. And the third is to see him in the situation.

I am not always successful. Sometimes I totally forget about all these. But, by doing this, I can come to know Jesus more and more tangibly and clearly. Little by little, God helps me to understand that Jesus is there in each situation at each moment.

When we meet a difficult person in a difficult situation, we also feel difficult. But even in that difficult moment, we intentionally try to fix our eyes on Jesus. Even though we have a feeling, "I don't get on well with this person," but when we think that Jesus also lives in that person, the feelings of condemnation and criticism against that person fade away. Please try that.

"We are chosen in love and for love. We are spoken forth out of the heart of God's love so that we might not only know that love but find our perfect wholeness in loving union with God. Being beloved is no more our doing than being God's chosen ones."¹

As Christ's living in us, the love of Christ lives in us, and works through us. Jesus is the power of love with which we love God, our neighbors and ourselves whom God loves.

3. The Lord is with us

Mark 4:35-41

¹ M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *The Deeper Journey* (IVP, 2006), p.119

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. ⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Jesus' disciples took Jesus along, in the boat and started sailing. Sometime later, a furious storm came up, and brow over the boat. The boat was violently shaken by wind and waves. The waves came into the boat, and the boat was filled with water. What was Jesus doing at that time? He was sleeping on a cushion.

Let's think about it. How can you sleep soundly in the boat which was violently shaken? Moreover, the waves came into the boat, and the boat was filled with water. No matter how you think it's probably impossible. In short, for disciples, Jesus looked like sleeping.

Some of the disciples used to be professional fishermen. Controlling a boat is in their line. But they couldn't control it at that time. Finally, they came to Jesus and woke him up, and said, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

Jesus woke up and what did he do? He rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!"

What did he rebuke? It was not the disciples. It was the wind. Disciples panicked. Jesus said "Why are you so afraid?" It's not the words of rebuking. Rebuking can't help those who are in panic. "Do you still have no faith?" He doesn't rebuke them but persuades them, he is teaching them, waking up their faith.

Here we can learn a couple of lessons.

First of all, Jesus is waiting for his disciples to come to him and ask him.

Jesus was waiting for them in the boat violently shaken by a furious storm. The waves came into the boat, and the boat was filled with water. But Jesus was still waiting for them in the boat which was about to swamped. While they were

trying to solve the problem by their own strength, Jesus was waiting for them. When they tried to solve the problem relying on their own experience and wisdom, he kept quiet.

It's the same for us. The problem happens. We face difficulty. We rely on ourselves to make a solution. At that time, Jesus is waiting quietly. Until we cry out, "I surrender all to you," he is waiting.

Secondly, Jesus listens to his disciple's cry from their heart.

The boat was about to sink. Disciples cried out to Jesus for help. Immediately, he woke up and rebuked the wind and the waves. Then it was completely calm. (Matt 8:26)

"What kind of words shall I use in my prayer so that God may listen to my prayer?" This kind of prayer may sound beautiful, but we still try to make it by ourselves.

The boat is about to sink. We have exhausted every possible means. No time to keep up appearances. Then we come to God and cry out to him from the bottom of our heart at last. The Lord will listen to our heart cry.

We pray and ask God without paying any attention to our appearances. Because there is no other place we can go. We never cry out from heart while we are still thinking we have other options, while we are doubting if God listens to our prayer, or thinking it will be lucky if God listens, or we don't mind if God doesn't listen.

We may not be able to express our thought and feeling very well. It may be just like groaning. But it's okay. Our Lord listen to our cry from the heart.

Thirdly, v.35 says "That day when evening came." Only Mark described this, Matthew and Luke didn't.

For Jews, the evening is the beginning of a new day. Up to this time, disciples did a lot of works together with Jesus. Jesus taught many things. Before this section in the same cp.4, Mark talks about the parable of four kinds of ground. Then following this, a parable of a farmer sowing seeds, and then a parable of the mustard seed, and then comes to this part.

Let us put in that sequence. We received a Word from God, a little seed of faith, and then start a new day. The new season begins. Jesus said, "Let us go over to the other side," and leads us to a new stage, moves toward a new vision. Then, if everything goes well without any trouble, that will be great. But the reality

is not that easy. We may face an unexpected storm. We may be hit by winds and tossed by waves. Our experiences and wisdom so far don't help us. We don't know what to do. We are almost drowned. At last we hear the voice of the Lord that says, "Do you still have no faith?"

It's at evening, not daybreak. It will be getting darker. In the true darkness, we can't even see the next step. We never know what may happen. When something happens, we may not be able to handle it. In worries and fear, at last, we come back to the Lord and hear his voice, "Do you still have no faith?" "Don't you remember I'm with you?"

"Let us go over to the other side." It is Jesus who said this. And we began this journey. Now, surely we are going forward in his will. In the darkness, you can't see. You don't know what may happen. Even if the winds hit you, the waves toss you, and you may feel you are about to be drowned, yet you are walking in his will. Surely the Lord is with you.

Until now, the Lord has been leading us, and he will continue to lead us by holding our hand, by his almighty hand. Until today, the Lord has been supporting us, and he will continue to support us by his great mighty power until we finish the race and receive the crown of righteousness.

The power of the Lord works for the person who surrender all to him, trust in him, and hope in him, and the glory of the Lord will be shown through the weakness of the person (2 Cor 4:7; 12:9). "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" (Eph 6:10).

For Lifenet groups and personal reflection

- 1) The power of resurrection, of transformation, of victory and of love. Which one do you feel you need most? Why? What would you do to be empowered?
- 2) Read Mark 4:35-41. How can you identify you with the disciples? When you hear Jesus says "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" is there anything God deal with specifically in you? How would you respond?