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MESSAGE 2

THE TRULY STRONG AND THE TRULY WEAK

In Message 1, we noted that the world is preoccupied with being strong and powerful and that the history of mankind is filled with power struggles. Millions of people suffer because of the abuse of power and exploitation of the weak.

We also noted that God wants His people to be truly strong as this is vital for effective Christian living. To be overcomers, we need to be strong in the Lord.

In this message, we will continue to consider what it means to be truly strong and powerful. We will also look at a few examples of those who are truly weak and those who are truly strong.

Truly strong – strengthened by God with all power

To be truly strong, one has to be strengthened by God's power. Let us look at Paul's prayer for the Colossians:

Colossians 1:9-11

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously

In verse 11, Paul prayed that believers might be strengthened with all power according to God's glorious might. Mark the words "all" and "God's glorious might". That is, we should not be satisfied with just a little taste of strength, but to be "strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might".

To what ends are we to have this power? Verse 10 tells us that it is "so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God". And verse 11 tells us that it is "for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience".

In order for us to be able to live a life worthy of God, and to be able to persevere in this path, however difficult it may be, we need to be strengthened with all power, according to God's glorious might.

True power comes about through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Just before His ascension, the Lord Jesus said:

Acts 1:8

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Here, the Lord was commissioning His disciples to be His witnesses. This is an important responsibility the Lord entrusts to us for our time on earth. But to be effective witnesses to the truth and effective servants of God, we will need the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Scriptural examples of the truly strong and the truly weak

I wish to consider with you two episodes in the Scriptures that can give us a better understanding of what it means to be truly strong and truly weak. The principles we can learn from these incidents are applicable to many situations in our own lives.

Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's three friends (Daniel 3:1-30)

Nebuchadnezzar was a great king of a great empire. He made an image of gold and instructed the people in his kingdom to assemble together to worship it. Whoever did not fall down and worship would immediately be cast into a furnace of blazing fire (vs. 1-6).

In those days, when a king commands his subjects, they have to obey. Those who disobey will be punished. Nebuchadnezzar was in a position of authority and power. And so, the people submitted to his orders and commands. But the king received news that there were certain Jews in his kingdom who were not obeying his command.

Daniel 3:12-15

12 "There are certain Jews whom you have appointed over the administration of the province of Babylon, namely Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. These men, O king, have disregarded you; they do not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar in rage and anger gave orders to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego; then these men were brought before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?

15 "Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

These men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, refused to worship the golden image. Nebuchadnezzar became enraged and he ordered that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual (v. 19). He then commanded his valiant men to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego and cast them into the furnace of blazing fire (v. 20). And so, this was what they did.

Daniel 3:21-23

21 Then these men were tied up in their trousers, their coats, their caps and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire.

22 For this reason, because the king's command was urgent and the furnace had been made extremely hot, the flame of the fire slew those men who carried up Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

23 But these three men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, fell into the midst of the furnace of blazing fire still tied up.

Who then was strong and who was weak? To the world, the answer is clear. It was Nebuchadnezzar who was strong and powerful. The three friends of Daniel were helpless before this tyrannical king. They were at his mercy. He could order their deaths, and the three of them would not be able to resist.

When we are confronted by the strong and powerful in this world, like these three friends were, we may feel very weak and helpless. And we will tend to look at such situations from the world's perspective. But is that the correct perspective? How does God look at a situation like this? Who is strong in the eyes of the Lord? Is it the angry, tyrannical ruler of this great empire, or the three seemingly helpless men?

Note that the seemingly helpless Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had made a very courageous stand.

Daniel 3:16-18

16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter.

17 "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king.

18 "But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego had confidence that God was able to deliver them from the furnace, though they did not assume that He would. If God did not deliver them, they knew it wasn't because He couldn't. If God should see it fit for them to be burnt in the blazing fire, they would still choose to remain true to the Lord, rather than worship the golden image.

From the true perspective, it was Nebuchadnezzar who was weak and the three friends who were strong. Nebuchadnezzar was self-centred, lacking in self-control and driven by his emotions, and his tyrannical behaviour was clearly not of the truth. In contrast, the response of the three friends was commendable. They demonstrated faith in God and faithfulness to God. In that context, God had the freedom to manifest His power.

Let us see what happened after the three friends were thrown into the blazing fire.

Daniel 3:24-27

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astounded and stood up in haste; he said to his high officials, "Was it not three men we cast bound into the midst of the fire?" They replied to the king, "Certainly, O king."

25 He said, "Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!"

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!" Then Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego came out of the midst of the fire.

27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king's high officials gathered around and saw in regard to these men that the fire had no effect on the bodies of these men nor was the hair of their head singed, nor were their trousers damaged, nor had the smell of fire even come upon them.

The three friends were miraculously preserved by the Lord. A fourth man was seen walking among them in the blazing fire. He was "like a son of the gods", and could well be the Logos – the Lord Jesus before His incarnation.

Here, we see God manifesting His power by delivering the three friends. This incident had a powerful impact on the people of that time and continues to have an impact, even today. The deliverance itself was a powerful testimony in the spiritual realm. But the basic aspect of the power of the testimony is in the lives of these three men

– their courage, their steadfast confidence in the Lord and faithfulness to Him – and how the Lord enabled them to make that courageous stand in that situation. They were truly strong.

Notice the impact on Nebuchadnezzar. In verse 26, Nebuchadnezzar said: "Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God". In verse 28, we see that he could recognise these three friends were worshipping the true God, and that the true God was the One helping them.

Daniel 3:28

Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who has sent His angel and delivered His servants who put their trust in Him, violating the king's command, and yielded up their bodies so as not to serve or worship any god except their own God.

Contrast this with verse 15, when he asked: "What god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?" The king now recognised God was the One who had delivered the three friends. The king had been very angry with the three men when they violated his command. But now, he looked at them differently. He realised that they had violated his command because they trusted their God and wanted to be true to their God. He now knew that they stood by their conviction, even to the point of yielding up their bodies, because they would not worship or serve any god except the true God. Having understood the meaning of the stand taken by these three friends, he commended them. He went even further by decreeing that nothing offensive should be spoken against the true God.

Daniel 3:29

"Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation or tongue that speaks anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego shall be torn limb from limb and their houses reduced to a rubbish heap, inasmuch as there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way."

As we consider this incident, we should reflect on a major truth that is helpful for our own lives. Nebuchadnezzar, the autocratic ruler of a great empire, appeared to have unlimited, unrestricted power and authority to act as he pleased, but in reality, he did not. No one has unlimited, unrestricted power except God. Only God is truly all-powerful. All things – people, objects, the powers of darkness, circumstances – are subject to His sovereignty. Nothing can happen without His permission. Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of God (Matt. 10:29).

Let us rejoice that our great God is favourably disposed towards those who love and trust Him and walk with Him. He will cause all things to work together for their good, as Paul puts it in Romans 8:28. This ought to be a great encouragement for us to

walk in faith. Let us deeply appreciate and receive this truth into our lives and live with this deep sense of assurance.

The Lord Jesus before Pilate (John 18:28-19:16)

In this passage, it is recorded that the Jews delivered the Lord Jesus up to Pilate, the governor, and Pilate was sitting in judgement over the Lord Jesus. Pilate summoned the Lord Jesus and interrogated Him (18:33), and subsequently had Him scourged (19:1).

A short while later, Pilate questioned the Lord further, asking where He was from. When the Lord did not give him a reply, Pilate responded:

John 19:10

So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

Pilate claimed to have authority over the Lord Jesus. He could release the Lord Jesus, or he could have Him crucified.

At one level of perception, we can say that Pilate wielded authority and power over the Lord Jesus. Pilate could decide on how he would deal with the Lord Jesus. From this perspective, the Lord Jesus appeared weak and helpless before Pilate.

But what was the reality of the situation? Note the Lord's reply to Pilate:

John 19:11

Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

The Lord said that Pilate's authority had been given to him from above. The phrase "from above" is best understood to mean "from heaven, from God". Pilate would have no authority over the Lord Jesus unless it had been given him from God, unless God allowed it. And therefore, Pilate would be accountable to God, the ultimate Ruler and Governor of the universe.

So it is clear that Pilate would not have been able to do as he pleased with the Lord Jesus, but only what God the Father had permitted in that situation. Whether Pilate was conscious of it or not, he did not have ultimate power and authority over the Lord Jesus.

So at the deeper and higher level of perception, we can say that it was Pilate who was on trial. In reality, Pilate was being judged for how he conducted himself in that situation. Though Pilate thought he was sitting in judgement over the Lord Jesus, it was the Lord Jesus, the true Judge, who was judging him then, and would do so again on Judgement Day.

From this encounter between the Lord Jesus and Pilate, we can take note of two points:

1. The weakness of Pilate

Although Pilate appeared to be the one wielding authority and power over the Lord Jesus, he was in reality a weak man. Matthew 27:22-26 captures the tension Pilate was under:

Matthew 27:22-26

22 Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Crucify Him!"

23 And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they kept shouting all the more, saying, "Crucify Him!"

24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves."

25 And all the people said, "His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

26 Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

Under the instigation of the chief priests and the elders, the crowd was pressing for the Lord Jesus to be crucified.

Pilate became afraid when he saw that a riot was starting, and he tried to disclaim responsibility. He took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying: "I am innocent of this Man's blood".

Pilate had found no guilt in the Lord Jesus (John 18:38) and he knew that it was out of envy that the Jews delivered the Lord to him (Matt. 27:18). Yet, contrary to his better judgement, he yielded to the demands of the crowd and delivered the Lord up to be crucified.

The Roman Empire was noted for its law and order and administration of justice. As governor, Pilate was entrusted with the solemn responsibility of upholding and administering justice. But he succumbed to gross injustice. And no matter how hard he tried to claim innocence, he could never be innocent of the blood of the innocent Man he delivered over for crucifixion.

Here we see a manifestation of an appalling weakness of character. Pilate showed a lack of sense of justice in such an important issue as a death sentence. He did not act responsibly. He was weak in principles and moral convictions, and he lacked the strength to act according to what he recognised to be right. Instead, he succumbed

to the pressure from the multitude, and did what was wrong in a very serious matter – delivering an innocent Man to be crucified.

Was Pilate strong here? No, he was weak, even cowardly.

2. The strength of the Lord Jesus

Now, consider the Lord Jesus. He is the Son of God, the Creator of all things, yet He was mocked, spat upon, scourged and then crucified. In spite of all the terrible treatment and intense agony He had to endure, He maintained His composure, dignity and faithfulness.

This is how Hebrews 12 puts it:

Hebrews 12:1-4

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

The writer to the Hebrews encourages us to focus our eyes on the Lord Jesus, and to run the race with endurance. Every believer has his or her race to run – the race that is set before us – and we need strength to run it with endurance.

The Lord's example of endurance is an encouragement to us not to grow weary and lose heart. How He went through the Cross supremely manifested true strength. If we are truly strong, we will not be easily shaken. We can go through all kinds of situations well, remaining steadfast in the truth and unshaken in faithfulness to God.

Strong in the world, yet easily shaken

Many may appear strong, powerful and confident, but in reality, they can be easily shaken, troubled and fearful. Even Nebuchadnezzar, the arrogant, tyrannical, powerful ruler could be fearful. When exercising power, he appeared very confident and courageous. However, he could be troubled and alarmed, just by dreams. Let us look at his testimony and admission of fear and alarm.

Daniel 4:1, 4-5

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound!

4 "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace.

5 "I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.

Nebuchadnezzar was at a point in his life when everything seemed to be going well for him. He was at ease and flourishing. Then he had a dream, and he became terrified. Daniel 2:1 tells us that because of his dreams, "his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him".

Another striking portrayal of such fear can be seen in Nebuchadnezzar's descendant, Belshazzar. He ruled after Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel 5:1-4 gives an account of the king hosting a great feast for a thousand of his nobles. During the feast, he gave orders to bring out the gold and silver vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so they could drink from them. They were having a great time, or so they thought. Verses 5-6 tell us what happened as they were drinking and praising the gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone.

Daniel 5:5-6

5 Suddenly the fingers of a man's hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing.

6 Then the king's face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed him, and his hip joints went slack and his knees began knocking together.

On seeing the back of the hand writing the inscription on the wall, the king's face grew pale. He became nervous and frightened. Verse 6 paints a vivid picture of how terrified he was. When his wise men were unable to read or interpret the inscription, "King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew even paler, and his nobles were perplexed" (Dan. 5:9).

Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are just two examples of many who may appear strong and confident, but in reality, are lacking in true strength and power.

As the psalmist tells us, true power belongs to God (Ps. 62:11). Those who do not experience it, who do not know the power of God, can never be truly strong. They may appear strong, but they only know the power of the world, not the power of God.

The kind of power and strength the world offers is feeble and unreliable and can be easily shaken. Yet many are striving after it, and sadly, even believers.

All that the world offers – power, strength, security, position, riches, honour – has no true substance and quality. They may look attractive, but are vanity of vanities. They are deceptive, like a mirage in the desert, and fleeting, like the dew that appears for a while, and then vanishes in the sun.

They are in contrast to the abiding realities, the substance that truly counts, that can be found only in the kingdom of God. As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, what is found in the kingdom of God endures and cannot be shaken.

Hebrews 12:27-28

27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

He who is truly strong is like a building with a strong foundation. Because he is grounded in the Lord, and because he takes refuge in Him, he is not easily shaken.

We need to ask ourselves: What are we setting our hearts on? What are we impressed by? Are we still enticed by what the world has to offer? Are we overawed by what we see in the world? Are we envious of what the people of the world have? Have we perceived what truly counts and set our hearts on it?

Those who fear the Lord are strong

Let us look at Psalm 112.

Psalm 112:1-2, 6-7

1 Praise the Lord! How blessed is the man who fears the Lord,
Who greatly delights in His commandments.

2 His descendants will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.

6 For he will never be shaken;
The righteous will be remembered forever.

7 He will not fear evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

Many people are nervous, worried and afraid when they hear of evil tidings. The word translated as "evil" here may have to do with moral evil, but it does not have to be. It can convey a sense of calamity, disaster, a broad sense of what people would normally describe as something "bad" happening or "bad news".

The one who is truly strong is not shaken by or afraid of evil tidings. Why? Verse 7 explains: "His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord". When our hearts are steadfast, trusting in Him, and we have a proper basis for having such a posture, then we need not be fearful, whatever may happen. Who is the one who is unshaken in the face of evil tidings? It is "the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments" (v. 1).

If we are walking well with the Lord, if we love Him, trust Him, know His way and walk in it, then we need not be shaken. We can attain stability and steadfastness. We can properly trust in God. We can go through any situation without being afraid or worried. Verse 4 tells us: "Light arises in the darkness for the upright". Even when we go through situations that appear dark, if we live a life of righteousness, God can cause light to arise in the darkness. God is gracious, compassionate and righteous, and if He is for us and with us, why should we be afraid or shaken?

True strength – testimony of Paul

The apostle Paul testifies in Philippians 4:13 of what it means to be truly strong.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

When Paul says: "I can do", there is a deep sense of having strength. The Greek word translated "I can do" conveys the meaning "to have strength, to be able". In the preceding verses 11-12, Paul tells us he has learned to be content and knows how to get along in all kinds of circumstances. He continues in this verse to say he has the strength to go through all situations well through Christ who strengthens him. This includes having confidence to accomplish what the Lord desires of him.

Many people try to "claim" this verse, but inappropriately. When they are confronted with difficulties, they think they can fare well by simply affirming, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." However, if their lives are not consecrated to the Lord, they will not be able to "claim" the realities of this verse.

How can Paul's testimony in this verse be true in our own lives? How can we meaningfully testify likewise? By learning, like Paul, to walk with the Lord, abiding in Him and being strong in Him. Only then will we have the strength to go through all situations well and do all the things He requires of us. The almighty God will strengthen us; His grace will be sufficient for us. We can be steadfast, unshaken in the truth.

Different manifestations of true strength

True strength can be manifested in different ways. It can appear obviously strong; it can also appear weak, helpless, and even pitiful. Let us look at the list of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:32-34

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon,
Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,
33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness,
obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

Men of faith “conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouth of lions, quenched the power of the fire... put foreign armies to flight”. All these are obvious manifestations of true strength and easily recognised as such.

But contrast verses 35-38. Notice these verses are still talking about people of faith – people who are strong, who are empowered by the Lord.

Hebrews 11:35-38

35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.

These men and women of God may appear weak. They were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated, wandering in deserts.

They seem pitiful, but it requires true strength to go through all these difficult situations in faithfulness to the Lord. And they were able to persevere in spite of all the hardships and pain inflicted upon them because God strengthened them.

True strength can be expressed in different ways in different phases of a person’s life. For example, as a fugitive fleeing from King Saul, David went through a lot of hardships and difficulties. But the Lord was with him and granted him success. He was strong in the Lord at that time. In another phase, David was a powerful king over a conquering Israel. He was still faithful to the Lord, and generally strong in the Lord.

This was also the case with Joseph and Daniel. The Lord was with Joseph while he was a slave and prisoner. Subsequently, when Joseph was exalted to a high position in Egypt, he continued to be faithful to the Lord. In all these contexts, Joseph was strong in the Lord.

Daniel was in an exalted position for many years, serving different kings. During the reign of King Darius, as a result of a conspiracy against him, Daniel was thrown into

the lions' den. But whether he was in an exalted position or in the lions' den, Daniel was strong in the Lord.

Outward circumstances may vary; we may have to go through various kinds of situations. But these are secondary. The critical issue is the inward reality: Are we strong in the Lord? Are we strong in our inner being? Are we faithful to Him? Are we able to persevere in the path of truth?

Those who are truly strong will care for the weak

The strong in the world tend to exploit the weak to get what they want. But this is not the biblical teaching on the truly strong. Paul tells us that the truly strong not only do not take advantage of the weak, but will also help and bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please themselves.

Romans 15:1

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves.

If we are truly strong, we will not try to get our own way, fulfil our selfish desires, and disregard the interests and welfare of others. Those who are truly strong will be compassionate to those who are weaker. Instead of pleasing themselves, their hearts will be motivated by love to build others up.

In Romans 15:2, Paul exhorts each one to "please his neighbour for his good, to his edification". We are to please our neighbour for his ultimate well-being. True strength from the Lord is intended for building up, not for us to feel good that we have strength. The Lord strengthens us that we may be able to live out the truth, that His purposes may be fulfilled in and through our lives.

In the next message, we shall consider how we can be strong in the Lord for specific occasions as well as generally.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Who are truly strong and who, truly weak, in the episodes involving
 - (a) King Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's three friends (Dan. 3:1-30)?
 - (b) Governor Pilate and the Lord Jesus (John 18:28-19:16)?Give your reasons.
2. Those who are strong in the eyes of the world can be easily shaken, but those who are upright and who fear and trust the Lord are steadfast. Why is this so?

3. What do you understand by Paul's testimony: "I can do all things through Him (Christ) who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13)? How is it possible for Paul to testify to this reality? How can we meaningfully testify in the same way?
4. What are the different ways in which true strength may be expressed? Consider the examples in Hebrews 11 and other scriptural passages.

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