

## How to Be Strong through Christ

**Philippians 4:13** - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

This is a summary of what Paul had just been writing with regard to handling any of life's problems, no matter how severe. Paul truly felt that it was impossible for life to confront him with anything that he and the Lord could not handle. Christ is the source of Paul's power. The key words of this verse, as seen so often in Paul's other writings, are "through Christ" or "in Him."

I have quoted my favorite verse often and used it many times in sermons. Why? It has personally given me courage and confidence when my courage was weak and my confidence was low.

I want to look at this verse in a different way in this lesson. Have you thought about these questions?

**How** does Christ strengthen us? **How** can we be strong in Christ?

The same questions apply to our local congregation.

**How** does Christ strengthen the Northeast Church of Christ? **How** can our congregation be strong?

Have you ever wondered what makes a church strong?

These are the questions we want to answer in this lesson - **How to Be Strong through Christ.**

**First**, Christ strengthens us through the Scriptures. Strong Christians and a strong church require a foundation of doctrinally sound teaching based upon biblical truth.

**Acts 2:42** - "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine."

This is why the church established on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem was so strong.

We must base what we teach and do on the apostles' doctrine or teaching because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit when they preached and wrote the New Testament. The teachings of man cannot improve what God has given us in the Scriptures.

**2 Timothy 4:2-3** - "<sup>2</sup>Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine,"

Strong congregations demand strong preaching and teaching based on God's Word. You should expect no less.

**Acts 17:10-11** - "<sup>10</sup>Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. <sup>11</sup>These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

Strong Christians take individual responsibility to examine what is taught and compare it to God's Word. Don't take my word for it. Check out what I say by studying the Bible for yourself.

**Second**, Christ strengthens us through prayer. Strong Christians and a strong church believe in prayer and spend time in prayer.

**Acts 2:42** - "And they continued steadfastly . . . in prayers."

This also helped the Jerusalem church be a strong church. A church today will not be a strong growing church without spending time talking with God, praying for each other, and requesting Christ to strengthen us.

**Ephesians 6:18** - "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—"

How can we expect Christ to strengthen us without praying through Him to our Heavenly Father?

**Third**, Christ strengthens us through our worship when the church assembles together. Strong Christians and a strong church gain strength when we come together to worship and praise God.

**Colossians 3:16** - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Christ uses our worship to make us stronger.

**Hebrews 10:24-25** - "<sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." We are commanded to attend the assemblies of the church because this is part of God's plan for Christ to strengthen us this way.

**Fourth**, Christ strengthens us through our relationships with other Christians. Strong Christians and a strong church spend time together and support each other. Someone said that we cannot get to heaven alone. We need to help one another along the way.

**Acts 2:42**- "And they continued steadfastly . . . in fellowship,"

**Acts 2:46** - "So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,"

It should not surprise us that the Jerusalem church was so strong since they spent so much time together.

Paul's letters are filled with encouragement for Christians to stand together to be strong.

**Philippians 1:27** - "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in **one** spirit, with **one** mind **striving together** for the faith of the gospel,"

**Fifth**, Christ strengthens us when we use our talents to serve Him.

Strong Christians and a strong church require that we all use our special abilities to strengthen the body of Christ.

**Romans 12:4-8** - "<sup>4</sup> For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. <sup>6</sup> Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

This is how we should function in the church. All of us working together in our own unique ways to accomplish God's work. We need each other in order to function properly.

A strong church doesn't just happen. It begins with strong individual Christians like you.

When we discover and use our talents we will become even stronger and more effective in our service to the Lord and His church. This is one of the ways that Christ strengthens us and makes the church stronger at the same time.

The most important way to be strong through Christ is to be in Christ. **Galatians 3:26-27** says "<sup>26</sup> For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."