

September 29:

Series: Why Do You Buy That?

Message: #4: Inner Strength

Text: “The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.” -Habakkuk 3:19

Scripture: Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10

Memory Verse: “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” -Philippians 4:13

Blurb: Feeling overwhelmed and hopeless is becoming quite common. We struggle with more than we can handle. Do feel at your wits’-and rope’s-end? Come this Sunday and hear the prophets speak of a strength that can carry you when you are weak. It’s an inner strength God provides, and it’s available to you!

Kids: “Why Did You Buy That?” Bidding Game with contestants, including kids -Andrew

Opening Song: *Goodness of Gods* - Sanctify

Welcome: -Pastor David

Welcome to autumn! Leaves changing color.

As you face changing seasons, trust in the unchanging God!

Memory Verse: “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” -Philippians 4:13

Greeting Time:

Worship Music Set:

Raise of Hallelujah

Cannons

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Offering: *Teach Me Lord to Wait*

“Why Did You Buy That?” Bidding Game with contestants, including kids -Andrew
Grow Groups

Prayers: David

Message: Why Do You Buy That? #4: Inner Strength

Bumper video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zwMWLE9fBU> (63 seconds, 2013)

The Force - Volkswagen Commercial in HD

Volkswagen Passat Commercial, boy dressed as Darth Vader trying to use the “force”

PP#1: *Image of the boy dressed in Darth Vader using the force on his dad’s car*

This commercial throws back to last year’s fall message series based on *Star Wars*. Just before the release of the first in the new series, *The Force Awakens*, Volkswagen played on the building Star Wars hype for this commercial of their new Passat.

It’s cute, but it also captures our inner longing for *that* kind of power, that ability to change things, influence our reality. Too often we walk around like the boy, turning to whatever is in our lives, throwing ourselves at it, working hard and trying to make a difference, only to slump in disappointment and defeat time and time again. We hope there is a force within us that we can use to make a difference, but our reality just sits there.

PP#2: Why Do We Buy That?

Inner Strength

“The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.” -Habakkuk 3:19

Why Do We Buy That? Inner Strength. Habakkuk 3:19, “The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.”

Think about that testimony from the prophet Habakkuk. We hardly ever read Habakkuk, it’s a book deep in the Old Testament, among what are called “the minor prophets.” But listen closely to him as he testifies about his experience of God. Habakkuk is praying to God in a time of intense frustration. The culture around him has turned its back on God and is pursuing worldly values of wealth, security, relationships, the using of others, and overall selfishness. He can’t seem to make a difference, either, changing anything in his world, even though he is trying. He’s frustrated, tired, and starting to become hopeless.

But God answers His prayers, reminding him that He is not alone, that God is not far off, and even though at times there seems to be no hope in sight, God is right then preparing to act.

The grand switch here, in Habakkuk, is from trusting in our own strength—which wears down and grows weak—to trusting in God’s strength, which never falters. And so, Habakkuk ends his whole testimony with this amazing witness, “The Sovereign Lord is my strength; He makes my feet like the feet of a deer, He enables me to tread on the heights.”

Do you hear that church? This is the witness of someone who has lived in messes like ours but who has tested the Lord—turned to Him for help—and found that this is what God does for us.

Do you not know? We have a heavenly Father who makes things happen for us. He has a remote, a power, that can make happen what we cannot.

PP#3: *Image of Cal Ripley from church email or Robert’s Funeral Home obituary.*

Yesterday we had the funeral for Cal Ripley. Cal was a strong man of faith. He walked with God many years. Now, things weren’t perfect for Cal. He was never flushed with money (by the way, that was a pun...Cal was a plumber and pipe fitter!), and he never became famous or influential. And since I’ve known him, Cal has struggled with his health. He got exposed to asbestos while in the

Navy—Cal was a WWII vet, and at work. And for as long as I’ve known him, Cal struggled with pack pain and mobility. But you know what I will never forget about Cal? It was his smile and his ability to bring humor and laughter to others. Here he was wracked with pain, at times even bed bound, and he would joke and tease and make me smile. Why? Because Cal had an inner strength that did not come from himself. It came from the God whom Cal lived for.

Yesterday we used Isaiah 40 for Cal’s service. I had chosen this passage for today’s message back in May. I had no idea about the timing, but Cathy shared with me how this passage really helped Cal get through hard times. So, like Habakkuk, and Isaiah, and Cal Ripley, we can turn to our God for an inner strength that only He can give.

PP#4: Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10 (CEB)

28 Don’t you know? Haven’t you heard?
 The Lord is the everlasting God,
 the creator of the ends of the earth.
 He doesn’t grow tired or weary.
 His understanding is beyond human reach,
 29 giving power to the tired
 and reviving the exhausted.

Isaiah 40:28, “Don’t you know? Haven’t you heard? [Do you see how it is posed as a question? We *do* know, right? We *have* heard. But in the day to day, we forget! We get overwhelmed! We start slipping into doing everything in our own strength, and get more and more frustrated and deflated. So, hear it again! Listen up!] The Lord is the everlasting God, [hang on to that word: *everlasting*. Even at your best, you can only make it for a little while. You cannot sustain your effort for long enough. Whatever you are fighting, whatever you are trying to do, is bigger than you. But...don’t you know?...the Lord is *everlasting*! No only is He bigger than anything you face, He is the Creator of all things. He’s everything’s master! He’s the boss of what’s bossing you! He is] the creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn’t grow tired or weary. [Church, say that with me: “He doesn’t grow tired or weary”: “**He doesn’t grow tired or weary.**”] His understanding is beyond human reach, [He’s bigger, stronger, and smarter than you *and* what you’re dealing with. But here is where it gets personal: He gives His power *to the exhausted!*] giving power to the tired and reviving the exhausted.”

That’s you, right? At times you feel strong and vibrant. Things are under control. And then you eat breakfast...and it starts. By lunch you’re struggling to hang on, stay afloat, force a smile on your face.

PP#5: Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10 (CEB)

30 Youths will become tired and weary,
 young men will certainly stumble;
 31 but those who hope in the Lord
 will renew their strength;
 they will fly up on wings like eagles;
 they will run and not be tired;
 they will walk and not be weary.

My son Nathan is just about 17 and playing football. He's in the prime of his life. I'm at the age now where I'm no longer too proud to assign him certain tasks. Rebekah's dorm fridge was downstairs at the house. It's the larger kind. It's awkward and cumbersome. I got it down there last year. So, when it came time to load her up for college, I paid my son a compliment. "Nathan, you're a big, strong he-man. Why don't you show off your muscles and bring up that fridge?"

He wasn't fooled, although he did bring up the fridge. Well, this past week, he came home from football practice one day and collapsed into the chair. "I am wiped out!" he moaned. Practice wore him down. He was down and out!

Most of us are not in our prime, and yet we are facing bigger and harder problems. So, "Don't you know? ... Youths will become tired and weary, young men will certainly stumble; [now, lean in and hear this...] but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary."

They have a strength that comes from outside of themselves, but it resides within them. People who put their hope in the Lord will find that the Lord will renew their strength.

PP#6: Isaiah 40:28-31, 41:10 (CEB)

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

Skip down to 41:10, "So do not fear, [says God,] for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

I want you to take a look at another commercial. It's about a weak, little mouse, a death trap, and some strong cheese. Take a look.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqabqH0TZr0> (89 seconds, 2012)

Nolan's Cheddar Commercial - Seriously Strong (TV Commercial)

Mouse eats strong cheese on a trap and becomes strong, to a mashup of hit songs

PP#7: *Image of the mouse from this commercial "bench pressing" the mouse trap bar.*

We're like this mouse. We're going along just fine, enjoying life, *on top of the world*. But then we hit a trap that snares us in. How does the mouse survive? The cheese he eats is "seriously strong," right? And it, in turn, makes the mouse "seriously strong!" The trap that tries to kill him, he turns into exercise equipment!

This is us! We are disciples of a "seriously strong" Jesus. We learned two weeks ago that He is our Bread of Life. And when we put our trust in Him, He gives us *His* strength!

PP#8: *Image of a slender, weakling Jesus in medieval art.*

This summer we were in Italy and we learned about the Renaissance. Before Michelangelo, Jesus was depicted as slim, and slight, like a little lamb led to the slaughter. And this is good theology, for Jesus is the innocent Lamb of God who came to be our sacrifice. But Michelangelo was in love with the classic Roman sculptures of muscular human bodies. That's why he carved David to be a buff young man, not some wimpy, little, frail boy. God, he believed, gives us strength, and makes us strong. Even when we may not be strong physically, God makes us strong spiritually, and so Michelangelo carved bodies with physical strength to make this point.

PP#9: *Michelangelo's "Risen Jesus" at Basilica St. Mary Sopra Minerva.*

So, we went into a church in Rome, and I came across this sculpture of the risen Jesus at the Basilica St. Mary Sopra Minerva. I was taken back by how strong Jesus looks, how muscular and fit. Sure enough, it was by Michelangelo!

We need a renaissance in our thinking about God! We need to see our God as strong, our Jesus as buff. "Do you not know? The Lord is the everlasting God...He never grows tired!"

PP#10: *The image of buff Jesus that Nathan uses on his phone.*

I looked at Nathan's phone, and I was so excited! I saw that He has Jesus as his phone background picture. But not just any Jesus. *This* Jesus! Isn't that awesome? Church, our Jesus is a buff Jesus! He is stronger than death, and He handles our insurmountable troubles like exercise equipment! ["Amen!"]

PP#11: Inner Strength

1. Let God be your inner strength!

2 Corinthians 12:10 "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

My first main point today, by now, I hope, is obvious: Make God your inner strength! Stop trying to do it all on your own. You can't do it. It will overwhelm you. Instead, turn it over to God. Give it to Him.

You do this by praying and telling God about it. You admit that it is too much for you, and you tell Him, "I give this to you. Please help me. Give me your Holy Spirit so I may overcome this enemy, this trial, this stubborn difficulty. I just can't love that person, she's too vindictive. I can't control my anger, it's comes up too fast. I can't conquer this fear, the diagnosis is too scary. But I put my trust in you. You are strong, and I ask you to handle it." In 2 Corinthians 12:10, Paul talks about how fun it is to see God work in you. Your struggles become places where you see God's power shine out. He says, "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

This third commercial just might be my favorite commercial of all time. Yes, it's a Super Bowl commercial, from eight years ago. It's about Tobasco sauce, which I don't even eat! But it's about an experience we here in Minnesota know all too well: the dreaded mosquito!

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvl6SOlvEnk> (31 seconds, 2011)

Tabasco "Mosquito" Super Bowl Spot

Mosquito bites guy eating pizza with Tobasco Sauce and mosquito explodes!

That is fantastic! You have no idea how much I want to do that to mosquitos!

But perhaps this commercial can help us remember who we are as God followers.

PP#12: "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one." -2 Thessalonians 3:3

We rest in God, feeding on Jesus as our Daily Bread. Mosquitos come to bite us, devour us, suck our life away. But our job as Christians is to trust in what God has placed within us. I love how that guy just sits there, neither bothered nor worried. Actually, he's anticipating what he knows will come. That's the way we need to be! As troubles come, we remain calm, unworried. We keep feeding on Jesus. Our confidence is in knowing that we have the Holy Spirit in us, and we anticipate how great it will be when we see what the Holy Spirit does to our problems.

PP#13: Inner Strength

1. Let God be your inner strength
2. We pursue Sanctification - the long haul

Psalm 73:26 "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

The second point today is how we need to take a long-term view of our lives. We can get so focused on what is in front of us right now, sucked into the drama of the day, that we let it become our whole focus and attention. When we have God as our strength, and we have confidence in the Holy Spirit within us, we can relax about the moment, casually looking at the mosquito that is biting us. Our goal is not to just get through this next hurdle. We set our eyes on the long haul. We want a consistent way of life where we don't freak out about the immediate. In the Methodist tradition, we call this sanctification. It is that steady rudder all through the storms. It's that quiet confidence in the sustaining, everlasting power of God. It lets us be honest about ourselves, but not desperate. Like Psalm 73:26 says, I know that "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Do you see that last word? Forever! I can trust in God today, and so I need not freak out about whatever is in front of me. And, I can trust in God for tomorrow, so I need not let that worry me, or take me prisoner to anxiety. I set my eye on the horizon, to the plan God has laid out for me. I want to be more the dependable, confident, joy-filled disciple that consistently trusts in God through it all. I set my eye not on the trouble, but on the Jesus I want to be like.

PP#13: Inner Strength

1. Let God be your inner strength
 2. We pursue Sanctification - the long haul
 3. Our first response: "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength."
- 2 Timothy 1:7 "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline."

And my third point is that you and I, we can go the distance by turning over every moment, every issue, to the Holy Spirit God has given within us. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1:7, "For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline." His Spirit within us gives us *God's power within us*. But notice this: it's not some force we use to overpower whatever we are facing. Do you see it? It gives us love and *self-discipline*! Most of our problems we create by vilifying the other or being selfishly indulgent. So, God's power is released in us when we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to *lift up* the other, and *push down* our selfishness. Do you see how this is long-haul sanctification? Like the mouse, we need to use our given power to work out and have a sustainable pace of love and self-discipline.

I want us to start using our memory today as our first response whenever we encounter anything too big for us. Let's practice here a bit. Ready to give it a try? Here we go:

When I'm lying in bed and I know I committed to serve as a volunteer, but would rather just hit snooze, we respond—join me, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When the check engine light comes on, and I have no money for any kind of repairs, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When my aging father is refusing to give up the car but he's a danger to himself and others, and my siblings are arguing and fighting, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When my spouse belittled me and treated me with irrelevance, and I want to leave, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When my kids just got caught shoplifting and I've been called to come down and instill inner character, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When I'm told that scary diagnosis and my future will never be how I had hoped, we respond **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When I want to share that dirt on my coworker, especially because he stabbed me in the back, and he's just so annoying, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When my cursor is hovering over a link to pornography and I so want to click, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When I'm so wanting that upgrade on my next trip, but I sense I should give extra funding to the church missionaries, we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

When someone I know writes something idiotic below a post, and I want to lash out in the string under the username, “Morons Go Home,” we respond, **“I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”**

PP#14: An encouraging image of a soaring eagle for “on wings like eagles” Isaiah 40:31.

Why do we buy that? Because God offers you an inner strength to defeat the immediate and to go the distance! Do you not know? You can soar on wings like eagles. You can run and not faint!
Amen.

Closing Song: *Stronger*

Memory Verse: “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” -Philippians 4:13

Announcements: -Pastor David
Grow Groups sign-ups

Benediction: -Pastor David