**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

The Power of the Resurrection

**Philippians 4:13**

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

Our focus verse today is Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

The context of the New Testament book we call Philippians is when the Apostle Paul writes to his dear friends at the church in Philippi which was a Roman city in the province of Macedonia. Acts 16 chronicles God’s Holy Spirit redirecting Paul and his companions (Silas, Timothy, Luke) to deviate from their planned route and go to Philippi. Once there, Paul met Lydia, a prominent businesswoman, who takes in Paul and his fellow missionaries. Lydia surrenders to the Gospel Message. Her home is thought to be the beginning of the Christian Church in Philippi.

 The opening verse of Paul’s letter to the Philippians reads. . . *Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:* (Philippians 1:1).

 With the power and authority behind these words, all people of faith who have accomplished God’s plan in their life proved to be effective and overcame their challenges. The list starts with Jesus the Messiah, Enoch and Elijah. All these ascended to be with God. And, at the same time, there have been those that did not avail themselves to God’s plan. This starts with Adam and Eve who had all the opportunity ever given to anyone to be strengthen by God. God strengthened them by telling Adam not to eat from the forbidden tree (Genesis 2:17). How so? Knowledge is strength. God equipped them with knowledge, so that they could choose to live forever in the sinless state in which He had created them. We too are strengthened by knowledge from God in that we have His Word preserved for us to read and study every day.

 In contrast to the opening observations. . .We Believers, know, and are fully aware. . . that we live in a world that not only discounts God and His Word, but many totally dismiss His counsel and deny His existence.

The fallen world has rewritten Philippians 4:13.

 I can do all things through “ME” who strengthens “ME”.

 **Faith** is an unacceptable concept to a naturalist materialistic world. The reality of faith for the Believer is part of being approved by God, like Abel, Enoch and Noah.

 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

 Hebrews 11:1

In the 1stc. A.D., God’s enemies (Satan and his minions) planned and had confidence to end His goal to redeem fallen humanity from itself. Do away with a movement leader and the movement dies. And so, they planned and fulfilled false accusations, arrest, trail and crucifixion. But the Resurrection was not the end result they were seeking.

**Leaders Strengthen Their Followers**

If I were at war with an enemy, say Japan and Germany in WWII. . . I would target their national psyche and spend a lot of my resources to convince them that their leader was dead. Or actually plan to remove him. Once the leadership is removed, the movement dies. A live leader strengthens their followers.

How important is it to remove a movement leader in order to stop their advance? Let’s take a look at WWII. Historians know that there were numerous attempts to kill Adolf Hitler launched from within Germany by German people. These Germans knew that if they removed Hitler, the Third Reich and the Nazi party would fall. (The well-known actor Tom Cruise plays Col. Claus von Stauffenberg in a 2008 film chronicling the July 20th, 1944, attempt to assassinate Hitler at the Wolfsschanze or Wolf’s Lair headquarters near Rastenburg, East Prussia.) In Germany today, there is a plaque and wreath monument to commemorate those involved in the Hitler assassination attempt in the courtyard of the Bendler Block where the conspirators were executed.

In this area of Berlin, there is a permanent exhibition commemorating the resistance to National Socialism (Nazi party). Since 1953, the Bendler Block courtyard has been a place of remembrance. The exhibition and educational center were opened in 1968. <https://www.visitberlin.de/en/memorial-german-resistance>.

Like the German resistance. . .the Jewish Temple leadership and the Roman government leaders had plans for Jesus and His followers. . . arrest and crucifixion. However, there was the issue of not being able to retain Jesus’ body after physically dying on the Cross and entombment. . .even though there were Roman professional soldiers guarding the tomb. History titles the escape of Jesus’ body as “The Resurrection”.

It was Jesus’ witness during the Resurrection ministry time that turned. . .that strengthened people’s heart and minds. The Creator who has the power to form life has the power and authority to resurrect life. It is just that simple. No scientist in the world has a clue in origin of life research of how life started. In fact, Dr. James Tour of Rice U. reports that all the research in the world proves that we are further away from understanding the origin of life than we ever were. This is because the closer scientists look the more complicated the processes in cell formation and duplication become. And everything scientists discover point directly to a design. . . which by its existence calls for a Designer.

**Let’s look at the designed plan for the Incarnation**.

One of the main mission goals of the Incarnation was for God, in the flesh as Jesus the Messiah, to exhibit for us the ability to make life-decisions He desires. But we are not alone in carrying through the most difficult of life challenges, because God empowers Believers with His Holy spirit to accomplish His will in our lives. We continually refer to Jesus’ commissioning the Disciples (John 20:20ff) when He breaths His Holy Spirit into them. Here, Jesus demonstrates His will and our ability to contain His Spirit that strengthens us to fulfill the Great Commission and to live victorious lives in overcoming the fallen world.

Jesus shows us how to pray in Matthew 6. What we call the Lord’s Prayer begins with. . ."Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:9-10).

Through these prayers, Believers access God’s strength. Paul emphasizes this access by recording his own experience with the words. . . “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians4:13).

**Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon:** Strengthen: ἐνδυναμοῦντί (endynamounti)

verb participle present active dative masculine singular from ἐνδυναμόω

(1) of spiritual and moral strengthening enable, empower, make strong (1 Timothy 1.12)

(2) usually of religious and moral strength grow strong (Romans 4.20)

Jesus witnesses this “strengthening” when He prays to God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:39)

God strengthens Jesus, in the flesh (like we are), to go physically to suffer His arrest, trial, process of crucifixion and the Cross. Obviously, a path that no person would choose. However, God strengthened Jesus to complete this main goal of the Incarnation in order to pay the price for the sins of the world. It is accurate to say that every person owes a debt to God for their sins (Romans 3:25, Hebrews. 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10). This is the most rejected element of God’s plan for fallen humanity since the fall of Adam and Eve.

**Fallen humanity does not want to be judged.**

**Fallen humanity does not want accountability.**

**However, judgement is a main stabilizing authority that preserves and protects life.**

 I have said before that I agree with the statement “Survival of the Fittest.” However, the context I observe is one with God. The best plan for human survival is to surrender to God’s plan. Survival of the fittest dictates that humanity must multiply in numbers. The best plan to accomplish this goal starts with God’s Biblical plan for marriage and the formation of families. And the family is to be led by a man and a woman who have surrendered to the Lord in order to be strengthened by Him in rearing their family. This is the building block of a civilized society.

And within God’s plan, there is accountability and judgment. The resulting consequences of our actions and statements are accountability and judgment. The outcome can be good or bad. We are blessed when we live the life God has chartered for us.

But, without judgement, fallen people would not have any accountability. Those that reject God, fear Him. Because there is judgment in fear and, at the same time, there is no fear in the love of the Lord (1 John 4:10, 18). Believers have no need to fear God. We should fear the consequences of sin.

 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. . . .18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

Love is the reason God never intended to back-out of the Incarnation. Love never fails. God’s fail-proof Incarnation demonstrated that sin and death never had dominion over Him. God willfully incarnated Himself to become one of us in order to demonstrate to us that with His Holy Spirit residing in our hearts, by invitation, we too can overcome sin and death.

So, why create a world with sin and death for an option? I have preached on this specific question before. The summation is that we are created in God’s image and God is love and love is a choice for us to choose, but choose over what? Love’s fullest expression can only be experienced through adversity. It is easy to love someone because they give you money and there are never any challenges in the relationship. But throw-in adversity, hardship, raising children, a hard job, financial pressure and the overall challenges of life and then the realization of what love really is comes to life.

At the Cross, God witnessed to us that love never fails (1 Corinthians 13: 8). And the Incarnation is the sacrificial gift by virtue of God’s love-nature.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten (Greek monogene: unique) Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16).

**Begotten Love**

Understanding the English word “begotten” is key in relation to the Incarnation This word in Greek can be broken down into two parts (μονογενῆ / mono-gene) and is parsed: adjective normal accusative masculine singular.

Mono = singular from one beginning (gene) or original source like we see in the book of Genesis (book of one’s lineage from one source, origins/beginnings). Jesus Christ is originated from one and only unique source – God (John 1:1).

Friberg, Analytical Greek Lexicon - mono-genos

μονογενής, ές of what is the only one of its kind of class unique; (1) an only child born to human parents one and only (Luke 7.12; 8.42); substantivally only child (Luke 9.38); (2) as a child born in a unique way; (a) used of God's Son Jesus only, only begotten; substantivally (John 1.14); (b) used of Abraham's son Isaac only true son (Hebrews 11.17)

**God’s Love Strengthens and Conquers Sin and Death**

God intended for no one to be separated from His love. Again, God created us with free-will-choice because love is only love if it can be chosen freely without cost or bribe or coercion.

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 -39 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

 (Romans 8:35-39)

**Ephesians 4:13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

**AMEN**

**“Overcoming” – Strengthening by God’s Will**

John 6:38

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will,

but the will of Him who sent Me.

John 16:33 33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace.

In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

 Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

2 Peter 2:18-20

18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality,

 those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,

promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption;

for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world

by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

they are again entangled in them and are overcome,

the last state has become worse for them than the first.

1 John 2:14

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,

and you have overcome the evil one.

1 John 4:4

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them;

because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 John 5:4

 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world;

and this is the victory that has overcome the world-- our faith.