

Oak Beam (Strength In Christ) (Holy Spirit)

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

The Basic Bible Truth

In ourselves, we are nothing. Our value, our strength comes completely from God. The word “hope” here is a rope making term. It hints at the idea of a life intertwined with God, and therefore quite strong.

The Object

A 4 Foot Long 4 x 6 Oak Beam
Two 1 Inch Coil Bolts 4 Inches Long With Washers
4 Foot Long 1/8 Inch Thick Piece Of Oak
Socket And Ratchet



First, I drilled two holes in the 1/8 inch thick material. Then transferred the location of the holes to the oak beam, which is then drilled accordingly and threaded for the 1 inch coil bolts. These bolts have a very coarse thread and are less likely to strip out in the wood. The contrast for the lesson is based upon the fact that the 1/8 inch material is quite flexible and easily broken when stressed. But when it is bolted down to the 4 x 6, it would take many tons of pressure to bend or break the thin piece of wood. So it is for us as Christians. We get our strength from Him.

The Lesson

There are times in our lives when we honestly believe that we can do it by ourselves. Who needs God? When life is simple and going well, we begin to feel confident in our own selves. I have had many days where I feel good enough to take on the world. But reality has a way of shaking us to the core, and it is those moments that we learn that God is our only hope. He is the source of our strength.

During my middle school and junior high years as a child, I was a member of Boy Scout Troop 112. I was fascinated by all of the things that were available to me to learn. I was not a particularly outdoorsy type person, but the minutia that was associated with camping and hiking interested me greatly. I recall going to one exposition in which various troops each had a booth in which they displayed a particular special aspect of the Boy Scout world. One had a tutorial on knot tying, another on cooking in a Dutch oven. I watched with great interest a group that had constructed a rope-making machine. It was handles and gears and pulleys that rotated and twisted the jute fibers into a perfect ½ inch rope. It amazed me. I have always had a soft spot for the mechanical, and this one did not let me down. It was simple, yet elegant, functional, and fascinating to watch.

The individual fibers of a rope are not very strong by any measure used. Their strength comes from numbers. An individual cord may be easily torn, but a three stranded rope is amazingly strong. The word translated “hope” in Isaiah 40:31 is a nautical term. It is used to describe, in secular literature, the process of making ropes used on the high seas by mariners of the day. In all honesty, our lives are quite delicate. The slightest change can upset things dramatically.

I recall a number of years ago a bout with the disease known as “Shingles”. I now understand the meaning of the word pain. I found myself lying in bed in tears from the intense pain involved in this viral attack from the latent chicken pox virus. No longer was I in control of my life as I had become accustomed to being. Such a small thing, a little tiny chicken pox virus, knocked me down for weeks. It took 2 years for the pain to completely disappear.

God reminds us that even in the difficult times, He is still in control and still loves His children. There is a song from years ago that has this phrase, “The joy of the Lord is our strength.” Let me ask you a question. Is God happy or sad? I resoundingly tell you that He is happy. I Timothy 1 says that God is blessed. He is happy and joyful with all that He does and has done. He is happy and joyful over His children as well. Have you ever watched a parent introduced to their child the first time? It is an amazing thing to behold. God’s joy, God’s happiness, God’s perfection, is the source of our confidence and strength. The perfect interaction of the Trinity creates joy within Them.

When our activities and thoughts are sufficiently intertwined with God through Bible study and prayer, our lives will be strong and unbreakable—all because of Him. The 1/8 inch oak board will bend quite a bit. When we are stressed by life, we are somewhat resilient to difficulty as well. If I continue to bend this board, it will eventually snap and shatter and pieces will fly. There is a limit to how much hardship we can take on our shoulders at one time. If pushed beyond our limits, we will snap as well. But with God on our side, we can have the confidence that He is able to handle everything that comes our way. When we place ourselves close to Him, we gain strength from the source of all strength. I don’t know how much weight it would technically take to break this large oak beam, but I can guarantee it would be measured in tons of pressure.

God will not force us to remain close to Him and rely on Him through everything in life. He gives us a choice in the matter.