Audio Transcript of Sermon April 30, 2022 God is Our Strength

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are reviewed by businesses, organizations, and governments in developing strategic plans to plan for the future. As Christians we have faith in what will be our future, the Kingdom of God and eternal life. Just like strategic plans are used by businesses, organizations, and governments, it should not come as a surprise to us that God uses these same elements throughout the Bible. As we look to what will be our future, it is useful to consider the source of our strength, knowing that our enemy, Satan, will seek to minimize our strength.

It was immediately after the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea and witnessed God's destruction of the pursuing Egyptians, that they took a few moments to sing a song of praise to God, and acknowledged that among many attributes, God is our strength who exercises power for the benefit of His people. Exodus fifteen verse one.

Exodus 15:1-6

1. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.
 The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name.

4. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

5. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.

6. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

In the most challenging times and circumstances, it can be easy to forget that God is the source of our strength. Decades later in the journey from Egypt when Moses knew he would die, he told Joshua to be strong and of good courage,

because God would not forsake them or let them fail. Deuteronomy thirty-one verse one.

Deuteronomy 31:1-8

1. And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.

2. And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: also the Lord hath said unto me, Thou shalt not go over this Jordan.

3. The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee, and he will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt possess them: and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath said.

4. And the Lord shall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and unto the land of them, whom he destroyed.

5. And the Lord shall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.

6. Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

7. And Moses called unto Joshua, and said unto him in the sight of all Israel, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou shalt cause them to inherit it.

8. And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

God is the source of our strength, however merely acknowledging that God is the source of our strength is insufficient. We have to do something with that strength that God brings to us. When Moses was telling Joshua to be strong and of good courage, he was telling Joshua to act on the knowledge that God is the source of our strength. He told Joshua to fight the battles that would need to be fought knowing that God would not forsake them or let them down. Today when we acknowledge that God is the source of our strength, we must act. We cannot be without action in our life because we also know that God will not let us down or forsake us, even when the road ahead may be difficult.

God reminded the children of Israel that at times they would need to take decisive action that rightfully could intimidate them to the point of being afraid. God told them to never let doubt come into their mind should they see a difficult

situation ahead of them, because God would go with them, to fight their battles for them, to save them. God today will do the same for us. Deuteronomy twenty verse one.

Deuteronomy 20:1-4

1. When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,

3. And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;

4. For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Through time, the children of Israel would forget that God was the source of their strength. It was one of the reasons why the Philistines and their warrior Goliath was able to challenge Israel in battle. The warriors of the day were terrified of Goliath because of his size and it became easier for them to focus on the physical attributes than the promise given by God during that earlier time. It took David to refocus on God as the source of strength. It was David who was well aware of the struggle and challenge Israel had with the Philistines and Goliath, and it was David who knew that just like God had delivered him from wild animals, God would deliver him from this Philistine. David looked to God as the source of his strength and then David acted. He considered the choice of weaponry offered to him and defaulted to what had worked for him before when God had previously delivered him from the wild animals. Instead of taking weapons of war to the battle, David took an improvised device, a slingshot and five smooth stones, because David knew that God's strength had previously delivered him when using the slingshot and stones. David had no prior experience with the weapons of war he was offered and declined in favor of what he knew.

David boldly told Goliath that he saw the weapons of war that Goliath had come prepared to use and told him that he had come in the name of the God of Israel. As the events of that day would play out, coming in the name of the God of Israel means coming with great strength because the victory of David over Goliath was

so unexpected that it led to a complete route of the Philistines by the armies of Israel. First Samuel seventeen verse twenty-six.

1 Samuel 17:26-51

26. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27. And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28. And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29. And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

30. And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

32. And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33. And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34. And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35. And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37. David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

38. And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

40. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41. And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hands.

48. And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49. And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50. So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

David saw victory that day becoming the champion of Israel. Years later would come another battle that saw Israel invaded by the Amalekites and the people of

Israel wanting to stone David. With his armies in retreat and the people wanting him dead, and even with David's wives being taken captive, David found strength in God; he encouraged himself in God. When in our life we feel the pressure from all sides, we know we find strength in God, just like David found strength. First Samuel thirty verse one.

1 Samuel 30:1-6

1. And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2. And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

3. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

4. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

In Nehemiah's time, he had to remind the people that God is the source of our strength. Nehemiah eight verse nine.

Nehemiah 8:9-10

9. And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

David wrote in many of the psalms, how God was his strength and shield. In battle the shield was always a defensive tool, to protect against attacks by others. Similarly, God will protect us from attacks. Strength is something we use. When

we have strength we act. In battle, when we have strength, we typically go on the attack. Just like God was the source of David's strength, God is the source of our strength, and just like with David, God protects us in all types of situations in life. Psalm twenty-eight verse seven.

Psalm 28:7-9

7. The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.
8. The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.
9. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

The concept of God protecting David defensively while also being a source of strength continues in other psalms written by David. David likened God to a strong rock and a fortress, a God who would save him from the traps laid by his enemies. David knew God would protect him while also acting as a source of strength. Psalm thirty-one verse one.

Psalm 31:1-5

1. In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

2. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

3. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength.

5. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

David knew God was worthy of praise in public and in private knowing that God had shown David great mercy, kindness, and truth. In whatever situation David found himself in, he was able to find strength through God. Psalm one hundred thirty-eight verse one.

Psalm 138:1-3

1. I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

2. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

3. In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

It was Isaiah who described God as the source of strength. Isaiah explained that God is the source of our strength even when we feel God may not be paying attention to us. Israel thought that God was ignoring them during this time, and it was Isaiah who wrote that God is never without strength, that God gives of His strength to the week and powerless. He added that when God gives of His strength, those who receive this strength are strong, impossible to defeat. Isaiah forty verse twenty-seven.

Isaiah 40:27-31

27. Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28. Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

29. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

During his years of prophecy, Daniel saw a vision of a translucent man dressed in white with bronze skin, having flaming eyes. It would have been easy for Daniel to be frightened because this man sounded as if he was speaking for many and gave a vision of what would happen in the latter days. It was during this time that Daniel found himself looking at the ground unable to speak. Whatever was shared with Daniel was so overwhelming that it took Daniel's strength from him. When

Daniel shared this with the man, he was told to be strong and fear not, and immediately his strength returned. Daniel ten verse fifteen.

Daniel 10:15-19

15. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

18. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

19. And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Even who we call the minor prophets saw God as a source of strength. Habakkuk even wrote a psalm about this. Habakkuk three verse seventeen.

Habakkuk 3:17-19

17. Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

In Mark's account of the gospel, when Jesus was asked about the first commandment of all, Jesus shared that we are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, and with all of our strength. God is the source of our strength and it is through strength we serve God. Mark twelve verse twenty-eight.

Mark 12:28-34

28. And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29. And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33. And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

34. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

With God we are not worshipping God in a defensive manner. When we are to love God with all of our strength, there is action we are to take. The battles we face are spiritual battles, not physical battles. When we love God with all of our strength, we are fighting spiritual rather than physical battles. We never surrender spiritually; we endure to the end. With spiritual battles the type of battle we fight, there is never a reason or need for physical action to substitute for the spiritual fight. Even the two witnesses who in the future will bring physical havoc to people on behalf of God have God bring this about through divine intervention. When the Bible says fire proceeds from their mouth, they are not flame throwers from a circus, the fire that proceeds from their mouth is brought about through the power of God by God.

To the Philippians, Paul acknowledged a life of ups and downs where at times he lived a life of plenty while at other times he barely scraped by. Paul did not see either as a source of strength or weakness and instead reflected on circumstances of life many of us can relate to. Instead, Paul knew that through Jesus Christ, he could do anything, because it is through Jesus Christ Paul was strengthened. Philippians four verse twelve.

Philippians 4:12-13

12. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

In writing to Timothy, Paul reminded him to stir up the gift of the Holy Spirit, a spirit that is not a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, a spirit of strength. It is through the Holy Spirit we have incredible spiritual strength, and this incredible spiritual strength also gives us the power to love and have a sound mind. Second Timothy one verse six.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

6. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

7. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Later in the same letter, Paul told Timothy that he was strengthened by God to do something with that power, to preach to the Gentiles, even to the point of being saved out of the mouth of a lion. Second Timothy four verse seventeen.

2 Timothy 4:17-18

17. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

18. And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

When God gives us strength, it is a spiritual strength so we can do whatever God would have us do to further the message of His righteousness and His Kingdom. God does not give us spiritual strength to hide it under a rock. Jesus made it perfectly clear that those who choose to hide their spiritual strength are unprofitable servants. Matthew twenty-five verse fourteen.

Matthew 25:14-30

14. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.23. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.30. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

To the Corinthians, Paul would write to act like adults and be strong, and in whatever action we take, to take action in love. First Corinthians sixteen verse thirteen.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

13. Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.14. Let all your things be done with charity.

To the Corinthians, Paul would also write that we should not confuse the physical with the spiritual strength we have been given. Paul acknowledged a thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan that manifested in physical infirmities. Paul told the Corinthians then and we are reminded today that Satan can attack us with our body, much like he sought and received permission from God to attack Job. We are to take glory in our physical infirmities knowing the spiritual power of God and Jesus rests with us. With this mindset even when we are weak physically, we are strong spiritually. Second Corinthians twelve verse seven.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

To the Ephesians Paul wrote that we are to be in awe of God the Father and Jesus Christ knowing that all salvation comes through them. It is through the Holy Spirit we are strengthened. It is through the power of God and Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, that we are strengthened, not so we can become righteous in our own minds looking down on others, judging them, but so that we are grounded in faith, knowing that all we do is for God's righteousness and the Kingdom of God, looking forward to this future time, a new heaven and a new earth. Instead of being self-righteous selfishly deflecting faith on just ourselves, we become rooted and grounded in love, the kind of love where we do what Jesus commands us to do, where we live a life that is reflective of fulfilling the law of God loving God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, as we also love our neighbor, giving a focus to those who find themselves isolated, such as widows and orphans. Ephesians three verse fourteen.

Ephesians 3:14-19

14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16. That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18. May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

We are to be strong in God and the power of His might so that we can withstand attacks by Satan, knowing we fight a spiritual war. The only time we ever need to use the power of God defensively is when Satan attacks. Ephesians six verse ten.

Ephesians 6:10-18

10. Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15. And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

As we fight our spiritual battles today, we can take comfort in the words of God to the children of Israel when they were told that God would go and fight their battles for them. When it comes to fighting our spiritual battles today, God will do the same for us. Every element of our faith not only brings us closer to God, it becomes a defensive weapon that God can use on our behalf as we allow God to rebuke Satan for the harm intended against us. God was the source of strength for Israel, and today God is our Strength.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.