

Strengthened for
Suffering

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- Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane

Luke 22:39–46 (NKJV)

Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. **40** When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” **41** And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, **42** saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” **43** Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. **44** And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. **45** When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. **46** Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

Strengthened for Suffering

- Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane
- Elijah in the wilderness

1 Kings 19:1–4 (NKJV)

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. **2** Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” **3** And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. **4** But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!”

1 Kings 19:5–10 (NKJV)

Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise and eat.” **6** Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. **7** And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.” **8** So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. **9** And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **10** So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

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- Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane
- Elijah in the wilderness
- Paul's thorn in the flesh

2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (NKJV)

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. **8** Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. **9** And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **10** Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Similarities

- A faithful, but troubled servant of God
- Carrying a heavy burden of suffering
- Multiple fervent requests for the burden to be removed

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- In each case, God strengthens them for their suffering

Strengthened for Suffering

- Jesus: strengthened by an angel

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- Jesus: strengthened by an angel
- Elijah: fed by an angel, given more assignments

1 Kings 19:13–18 (NKJV)

So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” **14** And he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.” **15** Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. **16** Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. **17** It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. **18** Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

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- Jesus: strengthened by an angel
- Elijah: fed by an angel, given more assignments
- Paul: strengthened by revelation

Results of God's Strengthening

- Jesus: prayed more earnestly, faced the cross

Luke 22:41–46 (NKJV)

41 ...He knelt down and prayed, **42** saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” **43** Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. **44** And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. **45** When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. **46** Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”

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- Jesus: prayed more earnestly, faced the cross
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- Jesus: prayed more earnestly, faced the cross
- Elijah: forty day journey, returned to active service
- Paul: able to glory in infirmity and welcome additional suffering

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2 Corinthians 11:23–28 (NKJV)

Are they ministers of Christ? ... I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. **24** From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; **26** in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; **27** in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—**28** besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

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- The same will of God that brought you into the suffering intends for you to continue carrying the burden
- Like Jesus, Elijah and Paul, God will strengthen you for your suffering!

Can You Carry One More Burden?

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2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV) - Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. **17** For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, **18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Our Choice

- Suffer OR
- ~~Don't Suffer~~

Our Choice

- Suffer with God's help and strength OR
- Suffer without God

A Difference of Expectations

Romans 8:18–19 - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Hebrews 10:26–27 - For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.