

# Spiritual strength from the Lord (Quality: Very good)

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Date: 08 November 1987

Preacher: Relf, John

[ 0 : 00 ] Hymn number 1739, the tune is Hymn number 89.

O God, our help in ages, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy clouds, and our eternal light, before the hills in all the students, or earth we see earth light, from everlasting, thou art God, to the end is the end of the night.

Hymn number 1739. Hymn number 1739.

Hymn number 1739.

THE END Him, I know, the blue blue the blue, the blue blue Jong-un.

[ 2 : 44 ] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

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SINGS CHOIR SINGS For Ebor Fernandes

The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun.

[ 6 : 14 ] The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

[ 7 : 47 ] The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun. The night before the rising sun.

It's already fine sinking into your heart. very soul's desire a deep concern with you as to your waiting upon the Lord and the renewal of your strength when you feel your strength is at a low end well here we have one of those precious months it's set in contrast it's set in contrast to those that are strong those that are hardly affected by weariness if we read verse 30 we read even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall but they that wait upon the Lord not difficult to understand is it the strength that we possess in our youth that is if we're normal and blessed with health and strength bigger of mind of body of life it's the hallmark of youth isn't it what we want to do we strive to do within the bounds of legality and normality and happy are we when we can enjoy youth and enter into the spirit with vigour and life with vigour but even in that says the prophet young men shall run and be weary and walk and faint don't have to go far do we don't have to go far to see that even in a natural sense men push it to limits and when they push it to that limits if they're unsuccessful their strength is dissipated by the lack of success

I might take a natural example I don't like these things but they're to the point I once remember a picture of an Oxford crew in defeat in the boat race and there they were all slumped in their boats the Cambridge crew were up carrying their boat upon their shoulder and walking away with strength and vigour through victory the others had worked just as hard had rode just as long had used as much energy but you see it was dissipated by their their failure to win the race natural strength is dissipated and can decay but says air text they that wait upon the Lord now I want just to lead your minds to if you're able a whole spiritual experience of waiting upon the

Lord or if you can but just encompass all your waiting upon the Lord you say what poor sort of waiting that was doesn't give me much satisfaction to look back over my spiritual life and see how poor I've been in waiting upon the Lord and how little results I've had of my strength being renewed well we must ask you to consider that spiritual strength is here set for not natural strength and vigour in spiritual strength spiritual life imparted by God sovereignly in the new birth powerfully is the imparting of quickening grace to quicken into spiritual life spiritual life can be dissipated and spiritual life needs vigour unless we have that spiritual life we can never run the race unless our strength is renewed we shall fall by the way there's a beautiful promise here they that wait upon the

[ 13 : 11 ] Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint and before I go any farther doesn't it symbolise to us of a rising up you see the eagle would rise strongly and swiftly you say my poor spirit doesn't know much about rising strongly heavenward and swiftly and soon lost in the heavens above pause a moment pause a moment can you say the Lord has done great things for my soul whereof I am glad there are times in remembrance when you your spirit was made like the chariots of a minadab to rise up and carry you away beautiful figure here isn't it of times when the

Lord revives and the Lord comes in there are times when your spirit is like that that you do rise and soar strongly away in spiritual vigor and with spiritual and heavenly desires and the Lord is in the desire and the Lord draws your soul from earth away and makes you only to know his call and his voice and bless you with his presence renews your soul's vigor well that's the figure before us today the blessedness of those that wait upon the Lord I want to come and just look in the context with you for a moment a beautiful context

I felt as we read it a beautiful portion of God's word it deals with the comfort to Zion and that I will not enter into how warfare was accomplished it speaks of the glory of the gospel the voice of John the Baptist who was called in later years to cry prepare ye the way of the Lord make his path straight it speaks of Zion that bring his good tithing it speaks then of the nations as being as a drop of a bucket and counted as a very small thing it speaks of the likening of God and what will you compare unto him and goes on to speak of those that will make idols and worship idols and worship things that they can see rather than a God that they cannot see and must worship by faith and the prophet goes on to tell how they will even the poorest of men will choose a tree to make an oblation and will trust in it and the

Lord says with one breath of his mouth they shall not prosper they shall not prosper it hardly seems that these words are relevant today does it about idols only this week I heard of a minister whose son was rather taken up with the sheik religion it's a sad story but he joined the community he had all manners of candles in his home and all manners of images around his room and he worshipped those images and his father found him and was amazed and appalled by what he surrounded himself with and this was all he said you won't get to heaven with those and the holy spirit used those words and that lad was brought out from this idolatry and from these superstition in a wonderful way it seems that the simple words of his father from his heart were made effectual now he said you won't get to heaven with them well the

Lord can blow upon them blow upon all their false hopes as well we may not serve and have all this incense and things around us but we may have those things that take our heart and the Lord can blow upon them then the Lord speaks of his greatness and he speaks then to the weary why sayest thou Jacob and speakest thou Israel my way is hid from the Lord and my judgment is passed over from my God we often come there don't we I'm sure we often come there my way is hid from the Lord in spiritual experience it's a full expression I no need to go into it add your own experience to it my way is hid to the

[ 19 : 11 ] Lord can you remember the Lord speaking to you in it and he will yet why say so oh Jacob why when it isn't so when no way is hid from the Lord the Lord's way may be hid from us our way is never hid from the Lord never however dark and intricate it may be however trying to flesh and blood never hid from the Lord now there's an encouragement here too he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength I want to come here for a moment again in spiritual experience if your way is not hid from the Lord and it seems hid from you if often you don't know which way to turn or how to pray if you seem as if you are weary of crying and

David was there he said I am weary of my crying my throat is dried my eyes fail waiting upon God that's a trial of faith and patience isn't it that's coming into a path that is deep and you say well surely you would expect the Lord when anyone waits upon him in that way to appear at once and to deliver at once and to make his way and will made exceedingly plain at once is that the Lord's way have you proved that to be the Lord's way that you don't wait on him for long that you get what you want at once like a spoiled child no my friend but it is the

Lord's way so often to declare the greatness of his name that gives your soul rest when the Lord declares his name you know he did beautifully in this chapter hast thou not known hast thou not heard that the everlasting God the Lord the creator of the earth faint is not neither is weary there is no searching of his understanding and your poor soul is humbled within you the declaration in your soul of the Lord's name his holy name and his great name and his gracious name and power and you have to say Lord it is enough it is enough Lord choose though the way as we sing but still lead on it is enough

Lord enough whoever happened to want the almighty to reveal himself at once and in ways that appeal to our reasoning what a mercy when we are given grace to say Lord enough enough enough the people of God have always had to come this way the path they have always walked in there waiting upon God but you say how does that when the Lord doesn't appear when the Lord doesn't give direction when the Lord doesn't deliver how does that give me renewed strength Godly Job he said all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come I don't see everything made right in my family

I don't see what I want to see I don't see what I need to understand perhaps but I wait and that resolve given to him to wait upon the God of all grace the God that is infinitely wise and infinitely good and infinitely kind gives strength to poor sinners like you and me you think of the favour that if God should appear to your soul and say I am thy God you say that would put everything right it would strengthen my soul in every purpose to wait in every purpose of my weak soul to believe and have faith in God and trust in God and hope in

[ 24 : 29 ] God you see if you wait upon the Lord you will find your strength renewed and our man in deep conflict and he's not very gracious about it either and where we are with him and his great plea is that the Lord is sovereign and that all has to be wrought by his power and that there is a lot of free will and the whole questions of all this and I just have to feel in my own heart and the truth is this that if a person knows the truth that we must be born again that it is all of God's spirit that it is of free and sovereign grace that it is of his free spirit I have to say truthfully with you if you know these things are right the

Lord will give you to know the grace of them before long or else you don't know them only in the letter of it and that man in his conflict is so disturbed doesn't seem to be brought out into what he wants and I feel sometimes he's going the wrong way about it but I'm sure of this that if he's rightly exercised with others concerning the truth of God's salvation and God's gracious way that you'll be brought into the experience of it before long that your strength will be renewed that you'll not fail by waiting upon God my soul wait thou only upon God for my expectation is from him to wait only upon God means not to give up waiting upon God to wait only upon

God not on any others or any less but only upon God himself the apostle found in God the fountain of all his joys and therefore the foundation of all his hope and the ground of his trust and rejoicing but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength I want to quote one or two more cases and I want to come and see what this strength really means in a spiritual way don't you think Hannah had her strength renewed Hannah was barren from the Lord it was an exercise to her mind and as a distress being taught in by the other wife as was permitted in those days and what a sad affliction that was to her that she was barren and the other fruitful well it was such a trouble to her she couldn't go to the house of the

Lord but her very spirit was waiting upon the Lord she wanted the Lord to appear she wanted the Lord to vindicate her well the time came when she must wait upon the Lord in his house who had waited upon him in secret and the way she waited upon the Lord was in a sorrowful spirit out of the abundance of my sorrow and grief have I poured out my petitions before the Lord and you say there must have been a good deal of self pity in her heart I wouldn't be at all surprised if there wasn't there would have been in mine but it wasn't a dictatorial spirit it was a spirit that humbled itself under the mighty hand of God her great concern was for a child you say oh but she wanted to be delivered from this false accusing and from this mocking anything she'd even give the son away if she could be delivered from that well we have to leave that but there was working with all her desire for relief and for her strength to be renewed there was a real desire that that child should be given unto the

Lord because the Lord's purpose was to accomplish just that the trial of her faith was to bring her not only to wish relief for herself but to lend that child unto the Lord as long as she lived she didn't get much to renew her strength did she put away thy wine from thee count me not as a daughter of Belial I'm not drunken as ye suppose I'm a woman of a sorrowful spirit didn't get much help from Eli did she her strength was renewed when the godly man dissipated in unbelief and weakness of age when in that sad condition the prophet had to realise that she was under an influence of the Lord and when in his shame in that sense he had to say go and the god of Israel bless thee there was a little strength renewed don't you think and god called his servant of old to just encourage her that the

[ 30 : 43 ] Lord that she waited upon and prayed to earnestly not rebelliously submissively humbly would hear her prayer and deliver her from her self pity and deliver her from her enemies and put a song in her mouth oh her strength was renewed she mounted up when she sang that song unto the Lord for his goodness and mercy and appearing yes her strength was renewed she went away inwardly persuaded that God was with her and God would bless her and God would give her a child she wanted strength didn't she to give that child to the Lord when it was born and so she did and made cakes and made garments her love followed what the Lord had given strength is very beautiful to consider how that we perhaps don't look on it as strength we perhaps don't see it as such but when the Lord renews our souls there are many tokens of strength being renewed not only do you mount up to heavenly things not only do you bless and praise

God from the highest of your heart but when you're brought back to earth again as we speak there's many many ways in which your strength is renewed that you can carry on you know that beautiful saying of the apostles kept by the power of God through faith faith is the means isn't it whereby our strength and hope in God is renewed and faith is the means whereby we're kept hoping and praying and longing and kept from evil and kept from disbelieving and giving up yes their strength is renewed well I think something of the spirit of Asaph you know is before us too his strength was dissipated he believed in God but he was an afflicted man he seldom was at ease and he was envious at the foolish their prosperity and it dissipated his strength his desire to worship

God and give thanks giving to God was dissipated and some of you might just be like that this morning Lord look at this loss look at my affliction look at the infirmities of old age I'm despondent I've got no heart oh if you can look back on us spiritual experience with a heart made tender and a heart made willing and a heart made loving you'll mourn if you've lost it if you've lost your first love you'll mourn if you have to say Lord look at my heart now I've hardly got strength to seek the secret place I've hardly got strength to pray to my God I've hardly got strength to read his word to the renewal of my strength hardly got any desire to come to the house of God except come and go worth a little like

Asaph was until I went into the sanctuary of God there you see he saw what we've read in this chapter this morning he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth inhabitants of the world as grass offers there Asaph saw the almightyness of God and the weakness and puny nature of man there Asaph understood the end of the wicked what a sad end what a sure end what a certain end now that you see put Asaph right the Lord had but to show Asaph his own nature his own glory and his own mercy and that took away the envy took away the envious of their prosperity and lifted his soul up you see

Asaph had his strength renewed didn't he and Asaph no doubt mounted up with wings as eagles I've been thinking of that word I couldn't preach from it but I've been thinking of it I'll enter into his gates with praise and into his courts with thanksgiving and on a long journey this week that seemed to be my meditation and I seem to see a back cloth to all entering into his courts with praise see you don't go in and just start praising do you there's a back cloth to praise isn't there what the Lord's done for you how he's humbled you led you and been faithful to you and then it issues in a desire to praise God and to enter into his courts with praise well it was for me in my long journey don't you think Asaph was like that the back cloth to all his trouble and then his being delivered and then his finding strength of mind and heart and purpose and that from God himself as the source of all his joys to praise and bless his God

[ 36 : 50 ] Lord make me to know mine end the measure of my days how frail I am but didn't end there did it wouldn't he have said oh I know how good the Lord is how gracious the Lord is how compassionate how full of long suffering and tender mercy the Lord is Asaph would have blessed God and I've no doubt if he went home to his family he would have said oh I went into the house so depressed farthest from my thoughts was it to praise God as I have done this morning but I've been lifted up to holy and heavenly and thankful praise my soul my soul my soul is truly humbled within me do you know it do you know it praise thankful sacred solemn praise and blessing of God the background of it well now we leave

Asaph spiritually consider child of God your strength renewed I know you'll get into these places I know you'll come in I know it's through much tribulation that we enter into the kingdom it isn't all trouble it isn't all joy it isn't all an easy path the rough places will be made plain and the crooked things made straight and the mountains shall fall down at his presence but you say I don't feel I've got much strength at all I want to lead you away from any feelings you might have like that this morning to the source of your strength the apostle in teaching believers says when we were without strength in due time

Christ died for the ungodly now that's an expression that is so full when we were without strength and that really has in connection with it righteousness righteousness and that was a beautiful line we sang in the hymn for God has slain them with his sword in other words he's taken the spirit out of us naturally our proud boasting spirit because we are slain by the sword oh do you know it God's sword self sufficient can manage don't need God nor his mercy can manage your affairs quite nicely we're all like that weren't we if we're taught by God but God slew us with his word then we realised for the first time in our lives that we were without strength yes we were without

God we were at enmity with God by wicked works and by an evil nature and under guilt and sin too we were at enmity with God trembled for our lives some of us before a holy God under conviction of sin and realised there was none to plead and there was no plea in our own heart and in our own fitness or righteousness there was no plea that's a beautiful description of what you and I felt when the Lord brought regenerating grace in our hearts without strength advance a little bit has God given you strength has God given you strength in your soul to say in the Lord shall one say have I righteousness and strength in the

Lord will I glory the Lord is my refuge and my rock the Lord is my strength and my song and is become my salvation couldn't say that once could you that would have been boasting and presumptuous wouldn't it consider then the nature of your strength without strength proud rebellious natural heart until the Lord comes then there's a humbling now what about your strength can you look God in the face oh no says one I couldn't lift up my eyes to heaven truly I felt like that publican smiting upon my breast not able to look up to heaven I haven't got strength to lift my soul or my eyes up to heaven

[ 42 : 22 ] I haven't got strength to pray the only prayer I could find was God be merciful and as for the sinner well your description is best the sinner you say I hadn't got strength to pray I hadn't got strength to come before God I hadn't got strength to hope that he would forgive me or that he could forgive me I hadn't got strength to look away I hadn't got strength to hope that ever he would forgive me you say when I look back on those days of spiritual exercise when the Lord first wrought in my heart I was without strength I hadn't got strength to face life you know when the Lord works we're strangely detached aren't we from our fellow creatures around us husbands and wives you're strangely exercised secretly and there's a sense in that something's going on you're not the same now and what does the world say it said to me and I'm no dead it would have said to you well you want to get up and find entertainment and fill your thoughts with things that will keep you out of this depression of mind doesn't help one upon whom the finger of God is does it doesn't help one whose strength is weakened in the way does it fill your mind with all sorts of worldly vanities and work and so forth it doesn't help when the

Lord has weakened your strength in the way your soul is crying out for God yet you can't find God you can't pray to God you can't be fit to appear before God you cannot hope in his mercy nor have strength to face up to future judgment hell is my portion hell is my portion everlasting ruin is my portion yes and that's aggravated by the enemy of your souls that's what you deserve and your soul sinks under the truth of things as well as the error and lies that he's spoken to now truly they were times when you found you had no strength also when I had strength to plead my own righteousness I was praying more and reading the scriptures more and I was reforming my character more no strength in that is there the more I strove against sin's power the more I stumbled but the more till late till late all beautiful hymn that is come hither soul

I am the way cast your sin and your weakness and helplessness and your lack of strength all upon me and find it all in me and I will give rest to your soul a weary sinner finding rest is a beautiful sight finding rest in Christ casting all away false righteousness trusting in all sufficient grace and in the righteousness of Christ that chapter in Ezekiel which the Lord speaks to his people is a beautiful chapter to consider when the Lord again speaks of idols and speaks of what he will do and when the Lord says that I am the only true and living God and I'm a just

God and a saviour you know when you're without strength in that condition you want a just God t'were just Lord if my soul were sent to hell yet Lord from darkness save and if my soul were sent to hell thy righteous law approves it well and God reveals himself as a just God and a saviour and you don't want any less you wouldn't find strength in an unjust God but you'll find strength in a just God and a saviour God exhorts his people in that beautiful chapter look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is none else now that puts strength in your soul doesn't it so I can't look but I would look and I will look

I want strength to look I want help to look I can't look anywhere else I want to look unto that just God and a saviour will he destroy me with his great power being just and holy no says Job he could but he would put strength in me strength to believe and strength to cast my poor soul strength to trust him forever and for all well now at the end of that beautiful chapter surely says the prophet shall one say in the Lord have I righteousness and strength for the Lord to appear to a sinner in his pardoning mercy and justifying grace if he has to you and me and to show your sins charged on

[ 48 : 46 ] Christ and forgiven for Christ's sake and to declare with peace unspeakable and then shedding his love abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost to declare I say in your soul's experience the righteousness of God you know it do you know it here's something you must give him no rest for if you don't pray that he might speak with his pardoning voice and his justifying mercy speak strength and comfort to your poor soul and then to be able to say in the Lord have I righteousness and strength you see you're lifted up you're strengthened with faith in God through the Lord Jesus Christ do you think there's any other strength that's worth boasting of this morning natural strength that won't get us anywhere will it young men shall utterly fall and faint and be weary they can come to the end of their strength and take natural strength and with this I must close natural strength while you know many of you you're coming growing up as I have and you have into adulthood and maturity of womanhood to bear children and manhood in the strength of life but there comes a pitch doesn't there and you can't expect life to go on at that same vigor it declines and it's not renewable either do what you can to restore youth you cannot you can exercise and preserve the fitness of your body as long as may be possible but there still come a time when there will be a going down strength is not renewable but spiritual strength is renewable you say

I thought I'd got to that place in my spiritual experience where I would never rejoice again never find peace again never find the aspirings of hope again my hope seems almost perish from the Lord now then spiritual strength unlike natural strength can be renewed see a young person may have far more strength than an older person far more natural strength and vigor of mind but is it only mental powers wouldn't have much hope if it was the mental powers because their mental powers fail but those that wait upon the Lord find their strength renewed the vigor of the spiritual mind is something very blessed

