

“Finally”

Ephesians 6:10

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.”
Ephesians 6:10

It is a little different starting off a new year with the word “finally.” But it couldn't be a more appropriate word.

At the time of this writing, the Apostle Paul was writing from prison where he had been held a political hostage for almost five years because of false accusations in Jerusalem. The Jews wanted him dead and the Romans don't know what to do with him.

Here he is several years later writing the book of Ephesians. We find in Ephesians 3:1 and 4:1 he calls himself **not a prisoner of the Jews**, not a prisoner of the Romans, but a **prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ**. Here is an incredible insight to the life of Paul,

What could have been his greatest time of despair became his greatest time of investment!

Paul is talking to the Ephesians about endurance. He is talking about finishing the race.

There are two ways to look at “finally”- One is a best described in a descriptive picture. The picture is one that most of us experienced in the last few days filled with travel, different environments and a whole different diet. On our Christmas holidays there was a long travel and a few days away and I “finally” got home. To my own environment, my own bed, my own people.

The other way to look at “finally” is **bringing everything to a close or reaching the point**. It's forth quarter in this letter to the Ephesians. We are “finally” at the point of what remains for the readers to do... **“Be strong”**

- **“Be strong”** is a passive or middle imperative in the Greek text. It probably meant both to **“allow the Lord to strengthen you”** (passive) and **“strengthen yourself in the Lord”** (middle; cf. 1 Sam. 30:6). It is the Lord who provides the power in both cases.

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- The word **“power”** (dunamis) means **ability, ability to do what you could not do before Jesus came into your life**.

Here in verse 10, there are three different words for power and they are a reminder to us that it is the Lord's power that we need, it is the Lord's power that is available and that it is only the Lord's power that will cause you to have victory in the spiritual dimension of your life.

The scripture could read:

“Finally, be powerful in His powerful power!”

Without this power there is no warfare because you are already defeated. What you might think is a warfare is only the despair and struggle from constant defeat. All you see is an imprisonment from Satan rather to Jesus Christ!

Do not mistake constant agitation from Satan as active Spiritual warfare!

God's Divine Power

Paul puts emphasis on the importance of the **divine power** at work in us as believers. And we must be strong in the Lord to carry out the last few verses of chapter 6. This divine power, the Holy Spirit, is now here and in our lives. He lives in within us in order to strengthen us, to cause us to be able to do what we could not do without Him. You've heard this before but it's worth repeating:

New Levels, New Devils

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being..."

Ephesians 3:16

Life Groups Make Your Strong

I believe that our Life Groups are part of the solution to the united front for spiritual warfare. As our church continues to attract new people, it must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

Getting connected in a Life Group provides opportunities for authentic relationships to be built, the biblical community to grow and Satan to be defeated on a united front.

We have discovered that our "Rush Week"—aligning the teaching of the weekend service with the launch of new Life Groups—are big. Very big. **Whether you're just getting started or looking to revamp your whole life, our Life groups offers help in establishing a clear vision for life as well as assist you in developing practical tools for your life and the ministry God has called you to.**

We believe that we were created to have affect in our community, we desire to see everyone who attends Cornerstone Church become a part of a Life Group. See, Life Groups are simply small organized fellowships designed to help people in Cornerstone Church live healthy, balanced, and successful lives. We believe you will grow spiritually and relationally and learn key tools for having a better family and a better life. It's not just about connecting people into a Life Group for the sake of Life Groups, but it is changing our community through the community of a Life Group in order to make new disciples in our culture for the sake of Christ.

To involve yourself in a Life group you sometimes need to step out of our comfort zone and see that the only way to experience the true comfort found in Jesus Christ is by connecting with others. Here is what we have found out about our Life groups:

- 1. You will understand the Bible better in a small group.**

In a small group setting, you can ask questions, participate in a discussion of the text, and hear others share insights and illustrations of the truth you are trying to grasp.

- 2. You will begin to really feel like part of God's family and Cornerstone Church.**

Most people who have been a part of a group say the greatest benefit is the close relationships and friendships that develop.

3. Prayer will become more meaningful to you.

Many people are hesitant to pray in front of others, especially in a large church or have not learn the keys of praying affectively. Consequently, there have been little results through prayer. In a small group of 6 to 12, you will learn to participate in prayer by having a conversation together with God and for others. We have seen so many people touched by the power of God the testimonies of His miraculous answers are reported on a daily basis. Through our Life groups, you will learn how to make prayer a dominant tool in your resources for life.

4. You will be able to handle stress and pressure better.

Small groups provide excellent support in times of crisis, change, and stress. You'll have a sense of stability and security knowing there are people who really care for you and are committed to standing with you.

5. You will have a natural way to share Christ with friends, relatives, and work associates.

You may have some friends who wouldn't be caught dead in a church. They have a preconceived idea about God and Christians and the thought of going to church makes them defensive. But those same people may be open to an invitation to a Life group and for the first time listen in on a casual Bible discussion or be touched by prayer.

6. You will develop leadership skills you never knew you had!

The Bible teaches that every believer is given certain talents or "gifts" to benefit others in the family of God. Unfortunately most Christians remain as Sunday morning spectators all their lives because large group meetings are primarily "sit and listen" situations. As you share and participate in a relaxed small group setting, you'll discover your confidence and self-esteem rising. This will help you at work, at church, and in every other relationship.

7. You will deepen your understanding of worship.

Many believers mistakenly believe that worship can only happen on Sunday morning in a large group. Worship happens anytime we focus on God. Sometimes that happens best in a smaller group in praying or singing together.

8. You will be a New Testament Christian!

The book of Acts is very clear about how God intends for His people to grow and have their needs met in the church. We will never be able to hire enough professional pastors to meet all the individual needs in our family. God never intended for it to be that way!

Consider these verses:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in

common. Every day they continued to meet together... they broke bread in their homes and ate together... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Acts 2:42, 44, 46-47

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is the Christ."

Acts 5:42

"Greet also the church that meets at their house."

Rom. 16:5

"Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord and so does the church that meets at their house."

I Corinthians 16:19

I am excited about the incredible potential of the network of small groups we're building within Cornerstone Church. Our Life Groups have these eight benefits that no believer can afford to pass up. If you are not participating in a Life Group, why not join one this week?

2008- Prophetic Word From Elders and Pastor

Glenn Ramsey (Elder)

The fear of man will disappear this year. For God has not given us a spirit of fear but a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind. In which faith in God and His wondrous way will give us a boldness to step into the things we never thought were possible. But God said you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. You are overcomers. You sit at the dinner table with Jesus to eat with him. You are royalty. Because of a new understanding of our place in Christ there will be new leaders taken up our mantle that God has on them. Anyone willing to believe God will go into the new areas of the Kingdom of God if you're willing to believe what he says. Just believe God and die to our pleasure and live with and for God's pleasure. Then God will give us the desires of our hearts for now they will be His desires. And we will be one mind with Christ. Let your expectations this year be big. For personal growth, for relationships, for marriages and for Cornerstone and our community . Big expectations. God's way is our way. Growth sometimes hurts. But usually it takes a little pain to stretch ourselves and go to a different level than we have been before. It hurts sometimes to be stretched emotionally, spiritually but the growth is tremendous and that's okay. That's what we need each other for....to stretch each other, to encourage each other, to spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

Ed Lobdell (Elder)

Men of this church are being called to become the Priest of their household .They are supposed to step up into that role. (Analogy of famine and church garden. Being told that a family can get food from the garden and the man of the household takes his family to the garden and sits on the hood of their car and stares at the garden and goes home instead of actually gathering the food to feed his family.) As leaders of your household and as husbands and fathers, you are supposed to be the spiritual hunter and gatherer. And You are supposed

to be bringing things back to your family. And when you come here to Cornerstone Church that's an opportunity to gather up some food. But if you just come here eat and go home then nothing happened. It's our responsibility as elders and pastors to make sure there is bread here in the house when you come. You need to be bringing that, picking that up, taking it home, and then being the spiritual leader of your house. Spending time in your bible, spending time on your knees, and spending time with your kids in a spiritual sense. Speak it to them about the bible. Praying with them. God's calling us to this this year because the truth of the matter is there is a famine in the land. And you don't have to look very hard to see it. There's a spiritual famine and there's a generation that's starving to death. The way that generation is going to be reached is by a father reaching to his children. And by parents reaching to their children. The scripture I had is in 2 Peter 1:3 "Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and excellence." God has by his divine power granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. The food is there and if our children aren't getting it, it's our fault.

Duane Rupp (Elder)

Because of all the blessing in your life, you don't think you need God as much. If your business, your home, your church....if everything is going well, you don't think you need God as well. I have blessed you with much, If you sat ,you are going to see the greatest things I have go right by you. You can be in the midst of the greatest things but if you're not part of them you feel empty. Pursuing God is tough. That's why he tells us, "He will reward those that diligently seek him." He has to remind us that it takes an effort to seek after Him. And when you choose to do that, the blessings come. I feel like that there is a place where you want to say "Thank you God for all that you've given me. I think this is a poker tournament, "I'm going to cash my chips in now. I like where I'm at. This is good enough. Thank you for what you've done in my business and my home. But you know I'm kind of tired of pursuing you." And you can cash out . You can quit pursuing God and rest in those. You can leave with a good thing right now. If you continue to pursue me the difference is, Do you want a good thing or a God thing? If you want to cash out with a good thing, you're going to have to continue in your own strength. And that will falter. Eventually it will falter. If you continue to pursue me.... diligently pursue me. Go where I tell you to go and do what I tell you to do then I will take care of these things for you. That is a word of encouragement. Don't cash your chips in. If you haven't even stepped up to the table, put your hand down. It's time to get in with God. He is going to do some tremendous things this year. I don't believe this is just our church. This is everywhere. God is moving more powerful than he ever has before. This is the time we've got to stay in the game.

Marlo Miller (Elder)

My people are being pruned. Many in this place are wondering what's going on in their lives. Why does the battle seem so intense? It's because I'm preparing a bride for their soon coming King. There's a battle to be won before he returns and I'm preparing my people to engage in that battle. It's not for the weak or faint-hearted but for those that have been diligent and preparing in disciplining themselves to engage in that battle. Don't think it's strange concerning the fiery trials that are before you. They are designed to purge and refine. The purest gold went through the greatest fire. That's why it has the highest value. Are you willing to be purged and refined? There's a price to pay to participate in what I'm doing in the

earth. Be of good courage. You are well able to be the warrior I've called you to be. As we are going through Praise & Worship this morning, God there is a P.S. to this.... Encourage the people. Tell them. If you will stay hooked up with me in 2008 and go through and do what I've called you to do. Allow me to be a part of your life..the refining and purging, you will stand in this place a year from now and you will look back and you will see the marvelous hand of God in what He has done in you and through you. And it will be that platform that you will speak from and minister from in 2009. God is preparing you for greater things. Your ministry today from what you've gone through in life and been willing to let God mold you and refine you in, that's all that He's going to do more of in 2008. And He's preparing you for greater things ahead.

Pastor Neil Burum

1. **A year of listening, a year of faith!** Since **reading** requires total **concentration** on your **minds part**, **listening** requires **attentiveness** on your **spirits part**. This is a year to **saturate your spirit with listening**. You can listen ten times more and it is ten times easier to listen than to read. While reading you have to put yourself in an undisturbed atmosphere without distractions. When listening, you can be shaving, driving, walking, working, even cleaning house. Without the right atmosphere we often procrastinate our time with God, looking for the right moment of seclusion can be costly to your faith.

"The secret of your future is hidden in your daily routine." -Mike Murdock

But listening is a different story than reading. It can happen at anytime and anyplace. This is a year to not only read the Word of God but to "hear" the Word of God.

"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

Romans 10:17

I think this will be a great year of *active faith* simply because we will position ourselves in *active listening*. Without active listening there can not be active faith and we are doomed to try to do in our logic what can only be released through faith through spiritual awareness given by the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

"We live by faith, not by sight."

II Corinthians 5:7

If you are not listening, you are not living fully in your faith and you are doomed to try and achieve in your logical understanding the things that can only be done in the spirit realm. Not listening results in little faith. As E. M. Bounds once coined:

"To be little with God is to be little for God." - E. M. Bounds

"You can only activate your faith in direct proportion to how much you have yielded your ears to the listening of God's Word!"

No one can do this for you. You cannot gain the benefits of listening God's Word by any other means than parking your ears at the voice of God's Word being spoken.

Your faith is the benefactor of your listening.

Your world is a benefactor of your faith.

I have no reason to believe that my present faith will be adequate enough to face the insurmountable challenges that will be required of me when I challenge the present and influence the future. I may dive in with all the logic and education that I can acquire, but my faith is a reflection of how I have listened to the Word of God. I know that this will be a year of change if I am convinced that I have to dive head first into the Word of God and saturate my mind with the spoken Word of God. The challenges I face cannot help but respond to the Word that resides in my spirit.

You don't have to have "great" faith when you have "accurate" faith!

You can be more accurate when the Word of God permeates your inaccurate thoughts.

- <http://www.audio-bible.com/bible/bible.html>
- <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>
- <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/yggt/abq/>
- <http://www.talkingbible.com/>
- <http://www.audiotreasure.com/>
- http://biblesources.bible.com/bible_niv.php
- http://biblesources.bible.com/bible_nlt.php
- http://biblesources.bible.com/bible_kjv.php

1. **A year of listening, a year of faith!**
2. **A year of speaking, a year of life!**

"From the fruit of his lips a man enjoys good things..."
Proverbs 13:2a

This year we will speak differently by the power of the Holy Spirit. We will go beyond the logic of kind and positive words to speaking with authority empowered by the Holy Spirit.

1. One reason this will be a year of speaking, a year of life is because of being saturated by the **Word of God** and **good teaching**.
2. Another reason it will be a year of speaking, a year of life is because of the awareness of the **Holy Spirit** and His direction not only in the decision making process of your day but in the speaking process of your mouth.
3. A third reason that this will be a year of speaking, a year of life is because you are **making a conscience decision to respond to a Supernatural urging**. Right now in your Spirit, this Word is a confirmation that you know that you not only need to respond to to this word but you want to respond to it. You WANT to respond to this, and more than anything else in your heart you are saying within your Spirit, "**LET IT BE IN ME LORD!**"
 - Your words this year will be the difference between a growing increase or discouraging decrease.
 - Your words this year will determine what your eyes will see or what your spirit will know what it could have seen!
 - Your words this year will either open doors or create walls.

- Your words this year will bring hope and freedom or it will contribute to confusion, division and failure.
- Your words this year will either build bridges or construct barricades

"An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble. From the fruit of his lips a man is filled with good things as surely as the work of his hands rewards him."

Proverbs 12:13-14

Every sentence you enter into is a partial payment of what you will be filled with in the future.

You may look at your life and say, "I didn't bargain for that! That is not what I desired!" No, it may not be, but it is what you have been paying for over the stretch of time with your words. Jesus said,

"For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matthew 12:37

Until I value what comes out of my mouth I will not value what comes into my life.

My mouth is the true indicator of my heart, my dreams and visions. My words will always counteract my call and convictions. No matter what I believe I have been called to or encountered with God, my words will determine their reality and destiny in my life. Active faith cannot coexist with active words that make God less and critics His vision for my life in logical doubt.

I must speak in direct proportion of the harvest that I desire in my life

I cannot spend my words at the dollar store and hope to get a purchase at Neman-Marcus. I cannot spend all my time talking to friends who have no eternal interest and hope to reap a harvest of souls. I must speak where my words can be planted as seeds. I cannot spend all my time speaking to individuals who cannot contribute to my direction, my understanding or my future if they have no direction, understanding or future to their own life. I must speak in direct proportion of the harvest that I desire in my life. I will not talk to my doctor about my car and I will not talk to my mechanic about my financial investments. Many people remain directionless, without understanding or hope for the future because they are not talking to people who are successful, experienced or focused in those outcomes.

1. **A year of listening, a year of faith!**
2. **A year of speaking, a year of life!**
3. **A year of passion, a year of fruit!**

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Matthew 22:37

Our passion for God draws man to God and God to man. Our greatest challenge is not the measure of the fight ahead of us but the measure of passion within us. There is no greater accomplishment than having spent a whole day, a full week a total month

in a heart, soul and mind adequately pursuing God.

Mike Bickle writes in his book, "Passion for Jesus",

"No one can come face-to-face with what God is like and ever be the same."

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Matthew 5:6

The lack of the presence of God and the display of the Holy Spirit is primarily dependent on the passion of those who look for Him. The question is not, "Is God here?" The question is, "Is God welcome?"

Do not make these mistakes:

- **Don't mistake the desire to see the spectacular of the miraculous for the awesome presence of the Most High.**
- **Don't mistake being passionate to seek more to God rather than more of God.** It is possible that we look for more out of God than the He will ever be, not because our expectations are too high but because He will never stoop to our limited, human, selfish expectations of Him. Our greatest joy of knowing God can only be matched in our accurately pursuing God.
- **Don't mistake the filling of your spiritual hunger to satisfying your spiritual hunger!**
- **Don't mistake a mild request to God as a hungry request to God. Hungry people do not make mild request, they make violent demands!**

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it."

Matthew 11:12

- **Don't mistake a religious activity for spiritual preparation.** There is no substitute for Spiritual preparation, this means passionate prayer, praise and seeking God.

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