

*“Have I not commanded you?*

*Be strong and courageous.*

*Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

*Joshua 1:9*

If strength is defined as the quality or state of being strong and courage is defined as the ability to do something that frightens one what happens when you put the two together? It would seem to me that you would find someone who is able to acknowledge their fear, to face it and push through it even in the midst of grief or pain. It's someone who doesn't say things aren't hard but rather fights through the tough stuff knowing that they will get through it.

Strength comes from somewhere, a reserve deep inside that allows you to push through, to continue on in the midst of stress and strain. As Christians we believe our strength comes from the Lord. This belief comes straight from Scripture. We can read countless passages which speak to God's strength lifting us and moving with us.

*Isaiah reminds us “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 faint.” (Isaiah 40:31).*

*Likewise Paul speaks of Christ's faith in our lives when he writes to the Philippians “I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13)*

These passages remind us that God goes with us through all things, in good times and in bad. It's hard to see this sometimes, especially when living in difficult seasons. It's been tough lately in this world. I sit writing this in the shadow of the great loss felt in the city of Toronto. The memory of Humboldt is still present and alive in our country. When we look beyond our borders we see asylum seekers struggling to make a new start in unknown countries. Terror still haunts citizens world wide. It's no wonder the people of this planet feel unsettled, unsure and frightened.

It's tempting to think of hiding, isn't it? To huddle close with those we love and take comfort in the people and things we hold most dear. This though is not the life to which we have been called. As Christ Followers, God draws us in and sends us out to be beacons of light in the world. We have been called in and sent out to live a different way of life, a transformative servant people who make a difference in the world with how we live, with how we serve.

As St. Giles we see that way of life lived out daily. With our many mission projects active outreach into the community we are living out a different way of life. When we feed the hungry, visit the shut in, reach out to the lost and seek to share the Good News we can impact and change the world around us. This work is only part of the picture though. As we do this work we must remember to build strength, to fuel our reserves. As with our body, so too does the soul require training. We build strength in faith through community involvement. We build strength in studying the Word, worshiping together and be present here with the Spirit each week. As we gain strength to live our own lives we will be equipped with the strength to serve others.

This world needs Christ. Needs the transformative life-giving way of living that Christ calls us to. These are uncertain times where hope feels lost and nothing sure. As Christians there is one thing we are certain of and that is this, God is with us. God goes with us always, wherever we are. This truth is our certain hope and that hope is something we can share.