



# Spirit of Grace Herald

The Ministry of Dennis  
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## Spirit of Grace Ministries

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### “Be Strong!”

Many Christians and pastors have noted that God says to His people again and again, "Do not fear." But there is another admonition God gives His people when they face life's severe challenges, and that is the charge: "Be strong." In the Book of Haggai, we read:

**‘Yet now be strong, Zerubabel,’ says the LORD; ‘and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,’ says the LORD, ‘and work; for I am with you,’ says the LORD of hosts. (Haggai 2:4)**

There are three "be strong" in this single verse. And if God tells His people to be strong there are several conclusions we can draw from this: First, God obviously sees the importance of us being strong while facing challenges, and second, God must feel that it is possible for us to be strong. It would make no sense if God told us to be strong, knowing full well that we could not possibly be strong. Third, in the verse we just read, God gives the reason why these people could be strong – He declared that He was with them. They were not on their own. Fourth, God tells them that they need to get to work building His temple. He doesn't just say be strong, but "be strong and work." In other words, "do not let fear and intimidation keep you from doing what I have called you to do."

One of the most famous exhortations to be strong found in the Bible was given to Joshua. God tells Joshua:

**Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you... (Joshua 1:6-7)**

Later in the chapter God repeats Himself so that Joshua cannot possibly miss it, saying, **"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."** (Joshua 1:8,9). Once again God tells Joshua what to do and why to do it. What do you do? Be strong! Why do you do it? Because God will be with him.



God wanted His people, the Jews, to be strong in the face of enemies and adversity. Don't be intimidated, don't get weak in the knees, don't be a wimp. Be strong, be courageous and do the work God has commanded you to do. But what about us today? Are there ever times when we need to hear this for ourselves?

Being strong is not just for ancient heroes of the faith like Moses and Joshua – it is for men and women like you and me. And for this reason, the command to be strong is repeated in the New Testament. Paul writes to believers: **"Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong."** (1 Cor 16:13). To the Ephesians he writes:

**"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (Ephesians 6:10).**

When God tells us to be strong, He is saying that this is something that *we* must do. God promised Joshua that they would inherit the land, but He had to also encourage Joshua again and again to "be strong." In other words, He was saying, "Joshua, you've got to do this; you must be strong. I'll be with you, I'll help you, I'll fight for you and with you – but you, Joshua, must be strong."

## “Be Strong!”

Fear normally leads to paralysis. When fear wraps its icy fingers around your soul, the last thing you want to do is move forward. You just want to maintain the status quo, or maybe even retreat backward, but the idea of going forward scares you to death. And that is precisely the time you need to hear: "Be strong, move forward, I am with you."

It would be nice if God always led us in pleasant, safe, secure paths. But sometimes He calls us to take scary paths, paths that involve risk and danger, paths that could wipe us out if we are not careful, or maybe even if we are careful. And this is why God often tells His people Old Testament and New Testament, in Moses' day and in our day: "Be strong, go forward, I am with you."

Jesus Christ is our Immanuel. He is the ultimate "God with us." And He is our Good Shepherd. As we follow Jesus, sometimes our paths will be sunny with blue skies and chirping birds. But sometimes they will involve black nights when we can barely see our hand in front of our face, with howling winds and scary voices threatening to destroy us. But whether sunny or stormy, it makes no difference. When Jesus is our Good Shepherd, the words of David apply directly to us: "**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me...**" (Psalm 23:4). When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord by faith, we receive the gift of eternal life and we also gain Jesus as our Good Shepherd. And His word to us, today, tomorrow, and for the rest of our lives is this: "Be strong, for I am with you."

**This Month: Mission Kenya**—Please be in prayer for our Kenya mission this month, which will include a four-day "Jesus Conference, featuring teaching videos by Dennis & Benedicta, along with a free medical clinic and distribution of food to the local widows.

## We Need Your Support in 2025



As we move into 2025, and begin to plan on African missions, free medical clinics, feeding African widows, writing devotionals and producing videos, we need your help. Any and every gift of support is important, but we are especially in need of friends who will regularly donate to SOGM throughout the year.

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