

**Victory of the Lamb – Prayer is Powerful – Bill Limmer**  
**Strength Finder 3.0 – 2 Kings 19:14-19**

Do you know what your strengths are? Do you realize how much easier life would be if you did and then lived by your strength? To help people uncover their talents, Gallup introduced the first version of its online assessment, StrengthsFinder, in 2001 which ignited a global conversation and helped millions to discover their top five talents. In a former national bestseller, *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, Gallup unveils the new and improved version of its popular assessment, language of 34 themes, and much more. While you can read this book in one sitting, you'll use it as a reference for decades. Loaded with hundreds of strategies for applying your strengths, this new book and accompanying website will change the way you look at yourself--and the world around you--forever. So says the brief synopsis of the book on amazon.com. Friends, today I want to help you find your strength which will change the way you look at yourself and the world around you forever.

And to do that, I want to begin by telling you a true story of something that happened back in history. It begins with a King named of all things Hezekiah. The full-blown story of Hezekiah's is found in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and also in Isaiah. Hezekiah is getting ready for battle against the world's most dominate force, Assyria. Under the kingship of Sennacherib, Assyria is steam rolling one country right after the other. Hezekiah knows that Assyria's day to attack Jerusalem is not too far away. So he begins to make preparations. He blocks off the springs outside of the city of Jerusalem and stopped the flow of water throughout the land wherever he could, he repaired the walls of Jerusalem, built towers on it, built another wall, and made weapons and shields. In addition, Hezekiah painstakingly dug a 1750 tunnel, that is almost 6 football fields long through Lannon-like limestone to Jerusalem to bring water into the city. He was preparing for a long siege. Even after all this, his heart is deep in conflict, as he considers the likelihood of his army winning the battle, so he also offered Sennacherib this (in 2 Kings 18:14): **So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me."** The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. <sup>15</sup> So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace.<sup>16</sup> At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and gave it to the king of Assyria. The result is Jerusalem is plundered from the inside out and while there is a small relief there is also humiliation. And that is the end of story . . . Except not quite. It gets worse for Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem.

Sennacherib with the gold and silver in hand comes back with intimidating rhetoric. He sent three of his leaders to reason with the Hebrew people. And here is his reasoning to them. 1. Don't trust in your king's military strategy. He hasn't fought near the battles I have, let alone win. You can imagine those in the crowd trembling, bankrupt and cowering in doubt and fear. 2. By the way, they continue, don't trust in other kingdoms to help you out. Egypt is more powerful than you but compared to us it is a splintered reed. And everybody else we have faced, we have smashed. 3. Your God won't and can't help you. The Assyrians thought the more gods you had the more powerful you were and since Jerusalem only one God, this battle wouldn't last long. 4. Your military is outnumbered and out skilled. Sennacherib taunted them by saying I could give you 2K horses but you don't have enough trained men to ride them in the first place. And finally, the coup de gras: 5. Your God has sent me. In this speech, what the Assyrian King had done was he mixed truth with lies and that created doubt and fear. The Assyrians were walking by sight, their power, their might, their conquests and not by faith.

Hezekiah with this huge problem of the Assyrians knew exactly what he had to do in this day of distress, rebuke and disgrace. Turn to the LORD his strength. The name Hezekiah means “my strength is in the LORD.” And so he prays: 2 Kings 19:14-19 **14 Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15 And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: “LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God. 17 “It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. 18 They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 19 Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God.”** In Isaiah’s version of this: he calls on God, the Lord of hosts, the Lord of armies, the Lord of Almighty strength! His pray in the midst of horrific circumstances is his praise to God, his request, and his trust in God’s name. Hezekiah said, Lord I am going to do this with the gift and strength you have given me. But if we are to survive, you will have to use you hand to strike down this enemy. H recognized that military defeat would represent spiritual defeat in the eyes of the world.

The Lord responds to Sennacherib and says that the weak daughter of Jerusalem, daughter of Zion will defeat you. The little girls will be on the victorious side. You have insulted me. You have relied on your own power and you will be cut down. You will be a slave. The Lord responds to Hezekiah be patient. I know you want this to be over now. Tough times are still ahead. I will protect you. Your enemy will not enter into Jerusalem. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this. And as the Assyrians are camped outside of Jerusalem getting ready to make their attack, the angel of the LORD, the pre-incarnate Christ kills 185K in one night and Assyria is left to flee and go back home. The war, the problem, the issue was not Hezekiah’s. It was the Lord’s, the God of angel armies.

What is fighting against you now? I know for some here you have relationship struggles. Some of these are at home with your spouse, your kids, your parents, for some these relationship battle are at work or in the community, for some your relationship battle is with yourself, from perfectionism to workaholism to control to stress to anxiety. The battle is real. For some it is a financial battle. The bills keep coming but not so much the money. For some there are health issues, either for yourself or for someone you love. For some it is one thing after another and you feel you just can’t catch a break. For some it is two or more of these things or even something else. Add to that, that inside all of us we have hidden place in our hearts that says, “God you are dropping the ball. You aren’t doing a good enough job. Why does God let people suffer? Why is this happening to me? We are persuaded by Satan’s lies and half-truths to us: if God really loved you this wouldn’t be happening. We worry about our resources – our money our ability our control. And these things all lead to hopelessness. In hopelessness we doubt God, his power, his name, Lord of hosts, angel armies.

Suffering and failure are a part of this life sinful life. Satan will attack you at your weakest point. What are the lies that cause you to doubt God presence, promise, power in your life? Satan’s purpose for the trials in your life is to get you to focus on you. His ambition is to instill fear and to get us to trust in our own strength because he knows that has limited supply and scope. And since we are weak God must be weak too. The devil plants doubt and unbelief by twisting the truth. When he says we are weak he is correct. But when he talks about God, he always lies. Truth plus a lie is a half-truth and is often more insidious than just a bold-faced lie. Because it causes doubt and fear. When suffering is high and the threat of defeat is immanent our sinful nature cries out My God, My God why have you forsaken me.

Ever been there? Me, too. And in so doing we doubt God's goodness, provision, blessing upon us, and leadership for our lives.

There is a remedy to all of this. God's purpose for the trials in your life is to get you to focus on God. We walk by faith not by sight. 1 John 4:4 **Greater is he that is in you than he who is in the world.** The God of angel armies has the power over your enemy. Pray to God who is your strength, the God of angel armies. While the pre-incarnate Christ struck down 185K enemy soldiers in one night, Christ has won a much greater victory, he defeated sin, death and Satan on the cross. God will deliver you not because you are so good, that is too heavy a burden for us to try and carry in the first place and is impossible. God will deliver you not because you haven't messed up, not because you are innocent, but because of his powerful name, his grace for his glory.

When the enemy infiltrates our lives, our families, our relationships and tries to conquer us by lies, spread out the matter before God and acknowledge that he is the Supreme Lord of hosts. 1 Peter 5:8 **Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.** God has victory over your enemies. Like with Jerusalem, you may be delivered in time, be patient. God has you. He is God Almighty, the God of angel armies.

Satan wants us to think the world is ego centric not theocentric. As you go through the difficulties in life this is really an attack on God not you. We have serious problems when we see it as an attack on ourselves instead of an attack on God. We lose hope. We become angry. We feel lost. But when it is an attack on God, God is so much bigger, the Victory is a piece-of-cake. We need to lay out everything before God. Before we tell God how big our problems are, we need to tell our problems how big our God is. Proverb 3:5 **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.**

Naki story.

With the Lord as our strength we do look at ourselves and the world around us differently! Your greatest strength is the Lord, the God of angel armies is always by your side.