



**SUMMER DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**

**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**

*August 11, 2022*



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## STRENGTH TO LET GO

*[The everlasting God] will not grow tired or weary.*

Isaiah 40:28

**READ Isaiah 40:28-31**

Once known as the World's Strongest Man, American weightlifter Paul Anderson set a world record at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, despite a severe inner-ear infection and a 103-degree fever. Falling behind frontrunners, his only chance for a gold medal was to set a new Olympic record in his last event. His first two attempts failed badly.

So, the burly athlete did what even the weakest among us can do. He called on God for extra strength, letting go of his own. As he later said, "It wasn't making a bargain. I needed help." With his final lift, he hoisted 413.5 pounds (187.5 kg) over his head.

Paul, the apostle of Christ, wrote, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Paul was speaking of spiritual strength, but he knew that God's power was "made perfect in weakness" (v. 9).

As the prophet Isaiah declared, "[The Lord] gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak" (Isaiah 40:29).

What was the path to such strength? Abiding in Jesus. "Apart from me you can do nothing," He said (John 15:5). As weightlifter Anderson often said, "If the strongest man in the world can't get through one day without the power of Jesus Christ—where does that leave you?" To find out, we can release our dependence on our own illusive strength, asking God for His strong and prevailing help.

By **Patricia Raybon**

### **PRAY & REFLECT**

**All-powerful God, my life's burdens feel heavy and overwhelming, but abiding in You gives me Your strength to carry on and overcome. Amen.**

When you depend on God's strength, and not your own, what's the outcome? How does abiding in Jesus give you strength?

### **SCRIPTURE INSIGHT**

The people of the Bible repeatedly found strength through their relationship with God. In Exodus, after the Israelites miraculously crossed the Red Sea, Moses sang, "The Lord is my strength and my defense" (15:2). When David's men talked of stoning him, he "found strength in the Lord his God" (1 Samuel 30:6). Later, after God delivered him from Saul, David declared, "It is God who arms me with strength" (2 Samuel 22:33; see Psalm 18:32). Likewise, Asaph proclaimed, "My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:26). The prophet Isaiah declared, "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense" (Isaiah 12:2). We too can find strength in God, who assures us, "Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you" (41:10). - By: **Alyson Kieda**

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