

**I am Given Strength and Rest**  
Series: God Keeps His Promises  
Ephesians 3:16; Matthew 11:28-30  
September 4, 2022

Welcome again to worship.

We are nearing the end of our series “God Keeps His Promises.” So far, we’ve looked at 6 promises that God makes to us.

He promises Forgiveness and Freedom, Assurance and Hope, a Called and Giftedness. If you’ve missed any of the previous messages, you can always find them on our website: [germantownchurch.com](http://germantownchurch.com).

We have two more today, then our final two next week.

Promise #7: Strength.

Let’s look at Ephesians 3:16:

*I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.*<sup>1</sup>

There are a couple of Greek words that are of interest in this verse. First, Paul uses the word *doo'-nam-is*<sup>2</sup> which is translated “empower” or simply “power” in the various translations. *Doo'-nam-is* is the word from which we get our word “dynamite.” Paul is saying that God will give you dynamite kind of power. Imagine that: dynamite power.

The second Greek word comes from the word *krat-ah-yos*<sup>3</sup> which means strength. And not just any strength, but mighty strength. It’s Superman strength. It’s the incredible Hulk kind of strength.

So, Paul prays that the Ephesians will receive dynamite, mighty strength from God, who is all powerful and Whose resources are never ending.

I have a friend of mine who is praying for me. He learned about what is happening in the United Methodist Church and what we were going to potentially do, and he said, “Pastor Gary, I’m praying for you.” And every week, he sends me a text, in part a reminder of that promise to pray.

And to be honest, I need it.

THIS WEEK.

Some of you are in the midst of a strength draining period. There is a lot on your plate right now, and you are starting to wear out. You are tired. You are weak. You are not sure you can make the finish line.

God promises strength, but that strength comes from only one source. Not out of our own reservoirs, but out of His.

Verse 17 says:

*Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong.*<sup>4</sup>

And not just strong, but extra-strong. Mighty.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 3:16 (NLT2)

<sup>2</sup> δύναμις

<sup>3</sup> κραταιός

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 3:17 (NLT2)

So, if you are in need of strength, remember God has promised it. Maybe you need to take a post-it note and write a Scripture verse on it. Ephesians 3:16 maybe, or another one, from Philippians 4:13

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*<sup>5</sup>

Put that reminder on your bathroom mirror or on your computer monitor. Stick it on your Bible or the dash of your car. Take God's promise of strength with you. Draw upon His inexhaustible resources.

The 8<sup>th</sup> promise is this: Rest.

PREACHER NAP.

I need that nap at the beginning of another busy week. Myra needs a nap because she now has 29 cases. Having 18 is bad, but 29.

Tim Kreider, in an article he wrote for The New York Times called The Busy Trap put it this way: "If you live in America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, you've probably had to listen to a lot of people tell you how busy they are. It's become the default response when you ask anyone how they're doing: 'Busy!' 'So busy.' 'Crazy busy.' For some, it is a boast disguised as a complaint. And the stock response is a kind of congratulation: 'That's a good problem to have,' or 'Better than the opposite.'"

Then Kreider goes on to say, "Busyness serves as a kind of ... hedge against emptiness; obviously your life cannot possibly be silly or trivial or meaningless if you are so busy, completely booked, in demand every hour of the day .... [We're] busy because of [our] own ambition or drive or anxiety, because [we're] addicted to busyness and dread what [we] might have to face in its absence."<sup>6</sup>

For some, busyness is a self-defense mechanism, but for others, busyness is a reality of life.

In times like these, we need these words of comfort from Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 11:28-30:

*"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*<sup>7</sup>

Some people like going to events called Tractor Pulls. This is when they cover the floor of an arena with dirt and guys in souped-up tractors compete to see who can pull the heaviest loads. That's nothing new because long before the internal combustion engine, farmers were competing with animals to see which one was strongest. They still have competitions in which workhorses compete. The beautiful Clydesdales breed has always been one of the strongest horses. Long before the Budweiser wagon, Clydesdales were pulling heavy loads. In these competitions, competitors made an interesting discovery. A single horse could pull a heavy load, but when yoked with another horse, together, they could pull more than the sum of the amount that each horse could pull alone.

For instance, let's say a single Clydesdale can pull a sled holding two tons of weight. And another Clydesdale can pull three tons. You would think that when yoked

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<sup>5</sup> Philippians 4:13 (NKJV)

<sup>6</sup> Tim Kreider, "The Busy Trap," The New York Times, 6-30-12. From a sermon by C. Philip Green, Cure For Weariness, 8/17/2012, downloaded from sermoncentral.com

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT2)

together, the most they could pull would be five tons. But in reality, when these two horses are yoked together, they can actually pull seven tons! You may think that's not possible, but this phenomenon has been proven many times. It's called synergy. Two pulling together can accomplish more than the sum of the two parts.

Now apply that principle to the yoke of Christ. You can try bearing the heavy load yourself, but Jesus invites you to join Him inside His yoke. Think about how much strength He has! He's the strong One and I'm the weaker partner.

Remember that first song you learned as a child? "Jesus loves me, this I know; for the Bible tells me so; little ones to Him belong, they (we) are weak, but He is strong!"<sup>8</sup>

Today, God promises us strength and rest. Strange, isn't it, but that's our God, giving us what we need when we need it.

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<sup>8</sup> From a sermon by David Dykes, Taking His Yoke is No Joke, 8/16/2012, downloaded from sermoncentral.com