***The Strength of Jesus Christ

RV106-01***

We are studying Revelation 5:11-14 dealing with the universal adoration of God. This is segment number seven. John is observing this adoration in his heavenly vision. All of heaven joins in praising the Lord Jesus Christ as John the apostle watches and listens in awe. The praise of the God-man Jesus is very specific in Revelation 5:12.

**Power**

There they have proclaimed the Lamb worthy of power. Power, in the case of the Lord Jesus, is omnipotence. Jesus Christ has shown His worthiness of such total power by His obedience to the Father in going to the cross. Those who are obedient to the will of God can be trusted with power. The word "power" means the capacity to make things happen and to accomplish things. Those who are subject to the will of God, as the Lord demonstrated by His going even to the cross, are worthy of being trusted with power.

**Riches**

Secondly, he is proclaimed to be worthy of riches. That means, as we have found, material wealth. The Lord Jesus Christ uses material things to the glory of His Father, and His death on the cross again makes Him worthy of all possession possessions. That kind of obedience to the will of God makes Him a person who is trustworthy to have material wealth. The same holds for us. Those who are untrustworthy relative to the principles of doctrine and to the principles of the Word of God are not trusted by God with wealth. They may possess wealth indeed, but it is not a wealth which will benefit them in the blessings of rewards for eternity.

**Wisdom**

Third, we found that He was declared worthy of wisdom. Wisdom means divine viewpoint insight and values. The Lord Jesus Christ, in His humanity, learned the doctrines of Scripture from his parents and from his synagogue instruction. Thus He gained a total divine viewpoint wisdom. With that capacity, He was a human being who was out in front of every other human being by an incomprehensible distance because His value system was right. So, again, with us, when our divine viewpoint value system is sound because we know the Word of God, we are out there in front of the rest of humanity. We know what's going on. We know where we should be going.

**Strength**

Now we pick up the next item of praise: power; riches; wisdom; and, then strength. The word "strength" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "ischus." This is a very interesting word to apply to the Lord Jesus Christ, because what it means is "physical strength." We find a little bit of the meaning of this word if we checked the meaning of the associated verb which is "ischuo." The word "ischuo" means to be strong in body – to be in good health. So, "ischuo" connotes muscle power. ... This is an amazing word to relate to the Lord Jesus Christ – that He has strength. And it means the kind of powerful, muscular ability such that you could grab a person who has fallen off a cliff and is about to be propelled into a deep canyon, and you reach over and you grab him. You save him because you have the muscular strength to do that.

Well, the Lord Jesus Christ had physical strength. In the Word of God, the nature of this physical strength is very illuminating. The Lord Jesus Christ, we are told, for example, has this kind of strength over external things. In Ephesians 1:19, we read, "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe according to the working of His mighty power?" The word "power" in verse 19 is the word that we had for "power" in the first characteristic we studied about the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the word "dunamis." "Dunamis" meant "the ability to perform something" or "the ability to get something done." So verse 19 says, "What is the greatness of His ability to accomplish something toward those of us who believe?" That means to accomplish something through those of us who believe "according to the working of His mighty power." And His mighty power is our word "ischus;" that is, His muscular physical capacity. Jesus Christ, in His humanity, plays a vital role because of His physical capacity in what He enables us to accomplish on earth – what He accomplishes through us by his personal strength.

An example of the Lord Jesus' possession of this kind of mighty strength of muscular capacity over external things is illustrated so aptly in Mark 11:15-18. The Lord Jesus has walked up to the temple. As you remember, the temple in the Old Testament was quite different from this auditorium in which we meet this morning. In the Old Testament, the temple was really where God dwelt. Because there was the presence of God in the temple, it was a holy place. This auditorium is not the temple of God. The temple of God are all those bodies sitting out there who have God the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. This auditorium is not a holy place. It is holy only to the extent that there are believers in it in whom dwells God the Holy Spirit. When the last believer walks out of this auditorium, it has no holy quality whatsoever. However, in the Old Testament, it was very different. When you walk onto the precincts of the temple, you were walking on genuinely, truly holy ground.

The Lord Jesus Christ walked up to the temple. He was a virile strong, muscular, short-haired, 30-year-old young man. He is big. He has just begun His ministry. He has fought Satan to a victory in the wilderness. He has received the baptism of John. Now, He is ready to come on the scene of human history to present His credentials as the Messiah that had been promised to the people of old, and He is now ready to fulfill the promises that were associated with the Davidic Covenant to establish the rule of God on earth with God Himself here present ruling in the form of the God-man Jesus Christ.

The first thing that He does is to start straightening out the religious confusion relative to the Temple of God which represented the very presence and the dwelling place of God. Mark 11:15: "And they (Jesus and His disciples) come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple and began to cast out those that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those that sold those doves; and would not allow that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. He taught, saying unto them, 'Is it not written?'" His justification for the muscle that He's using here is a principle of doctrine. So, He quotes the doctrinal principle which is involved which justifies what He's doing: "Is it not written My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer. But you made it a den of thieves.' And the scribes and the chief priest heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him, for they feared Him because all the people were astonished at His doctrine."

What did the religious leaders fear from Jesus? They feared the fact that He had proclaimed a truth of doctrine, and the people heard the ring of truth. They realized, "He's right. That is what the Bible says. That is the mind of God." What these people are doing was very, very wrong on the precinct (the holy ground of the temple). So, the leaders who wanted to continue in their evil were frustrated in trying to come to grips with this Man whom even the general populace recognized as a good man who was speaking to them.

John 2:13 has this same incident recorded with a little more variation. It tells us a little more of how Jesus used His muscle on this occasion, and how He proceeded to do it: "And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. When He had made a scourge of small chords." He formed Himself a switch – a whip. That's what He used: "And He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the ox, and poured out the changers' money and overthrew the tables. And He said unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things from here. Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise.' And His disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of your house had eaten me up.'" The disciples remembered another biblical doctrinal principle.

You must picture this. Put all this together in your mind's eye. Here is all this babble of voices going on as people are carrying on business; selling animals for the sacrifices; doing it in the sacred and the holy precincts of the temple itself, instead of outside away from it; and, carrying on business. They had really set up a full business enterprise. It was an old-fashioned bazaar. That's what they were running. And in comes this strong, capable, manly-looking, young teacher. He was recognized very quickly as indeed being a rabbi who knew what He was talking about relative to the Word of God. He has a whip in His hand, and He starts down the line, kicking over the tables with all the money that's on them; snapping his whip at the animals; getting a stampede going; and, He scatters and scurries them out of the temple grounds. He just goes right through, smashing things left and right, and saying, "Get out. Take your stuff and don't come back."

That takes somebody with "ischus:" I guarantee you, because there were an awful lot of people that could have ganged up on Him, and one wonders why they didn't, and why they didn't say, "Wait a minute." When you are touching an economic advantage of people, they can become very ferocious. Yet, nobody dared step up and attack Him, or to try to resist Him, or to try to physically stop Him. He was irresistible. The reason for it was that He was a totally righteous man who was acting in total righteousness. His anger was the kind of anger that the Bible says that Christians are supposed to have: anger that is a righteous anger; anger when injustice has been performed; anger when the Word of God is violated; and, anger when evil is dignified. And Jesus Christ had the anger, and He demonstrated it with the muscle that He had.

So, as you look at this picture here, it is quite clear that Jesus Christ is not a wimp with girlie hairstyle and flabby muscles. That is how Jesus is portrayed in the pictures that I hope you don't buy. I have several of them in my office that people give me. When they want to give me a present, what do you give a preacher? Well, you give him a picture of a girlie-haired Jesus. ... Well, obviously, Jesus Christ did not look like this. He was a man who had physical strength, and He used it in behalf of divine viewpoint righteousness – not human viewpoint righteousness. So, the Lord Jesus Christ clearly has physical strength over external things. He has that capacity. John heard the angels in heaven saying, "He is worthy to have that kind of supreme physical strength.

Furthermore, Jesus Christ uses His strength in behalf of Christians. That is a very precious truth for us to remember. Note Philippians 4:13. People who like to select a verse in the Bible that they view as a summary of their viewpoint and their life, and they call it their life verse. They often take this one Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." In the Greek, "I can do" is the word "ischuo" – the verb form of being strong in body. It means, "I can do" "I have physical capacity." That is fantastic. I have physical strength. I have physical capacity that Jesus Christ gives me. I have physical capacity through." The word in the Greek is "en," and it means "by means of:" "I have physical capacity by means of." The word "Christ" is actually not in the Greek. What it says is, "By the one who strengthens me." And that's this Greek word: "endunamoo." You see that "endunamoo," is related to that word "dunamis," the word that refers to capacity to get things done and to achieve things. This is a stronger expression of that same word. "En" means "in," and "dunamis" means "power." So, you've got the idea of "in" plus "power" put together.

What we literally are saying is: "The one who strengthens me," or "by the one through whom I'm inwardly strengthened:" "I have muscular physical capacity by means of the one who strengthens me inwardly, so that I have that external capacity." He strengthens me inwardly. How? Through the functioning of your body, for one thing. He makes all of the parts work, and all the pieces function, so that you have capacity physically to do what you choose to do. He inwardly strengthens. It's a fantastic word: "endunamoo" – "I have muscular capacity through Him who strengthens me inwardly, and who gives me the inward capacity to have that kind of physical well-being so that I can do all things. I can accomplish. I can make things happen." The idea is, "I have physical capacity for all things by means of the one who infuses me with inner strength – the kind of strength by which one can accomplish something.

**Jesus Christ Gives us Physical Capacity for Christian Service**

So, what are we saying? This verse means a lot more than appears on the surface. And it means a lot more than what people usually mean who take it as a life verse. They just think that it means, "Well, the Lord is going to help me, and He's going to accomplish spiritual things." Well, it may imply that, but it's more direct. It is talking about your physical capacity, and you don't too much Christian service without physical capacity. When the physical structure breaks down, the capacity for spiritual service is increasingly limited.

If you think back of some times when you've been sick, and put out on your back, you might relate to that. Usually, until people are old enough, or they're debilitated enough, they don't relate to that fact –that your capacity are your halcyon days. The days of your physical capacity are your halcyon days for storing treasures in heaven, and for exercising Christian service opportunities. And you may confidently expect that it will pass in time. The spiritual believer is physically enabled by Jesus Christ to accomplish anything – all things, through an inward strengthening from the Lord.

We have this same idea in Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." In the Greek Bible, the words "my brethren" are not found. It simply says, "Finally, be strong." What is the Greek word? It is that same word "endunamoo" again – inwardly strengthening: to make me strong inwardly, through some inward action of God, upon my physical being to enable me to accomplish something: "Be strong in the Lord." Again, the word "in" is that Greek word "en," meaning "by means of the Lord:" "Be strong in the Lord and in the power." This is the word "kratos." This refers to physical strength: "Be strong (to be inwardly empowered by the Lord so that you have physical strength) through His might." And we have our word "ischus" again; that is, through *His* physical strength. The Lord's physical strength provides capacity to our physical strength through what He does through the internal structures and functioning of our bodies. Christians are made capable of accomplishing something by the inward empowering of Jesus Christ through the physical strength which His physical capacities, in some marvelous way, provide to us.

In Acts 17:28, we read, "For in him (in Jesus Christ) we live and move and have our being."

**Old Age**

One of the things you want to learn, if you haven't already caught on to it, is that as we grow older, we face the debilitation of age. We become more aware then of how much our physical capacity and well-being is a provision of the Lord Jesus Christ. You'll notice you're getting up in the years when your doctor starts making remarks to you that are prefaced by such words as: "As we grow older, we need to," and then he tells you what you need to do. And I notice that my doctor has been slipping in that expression. And I tell him, "I hope you are paying attention to your advice," just to remind him that he is no spring chicken either. But he's aware of the fact, from a medical point of view, that this is what happens. As you grow older there, there comes a time when physical capacity starts diminishing.

One of the most amazing descriptions of that in a grand and poetic way is in Ecclesiastes 12. This is a book which was written by Solomon to describe the agonies of his days out of fellowship, and his functioning on all kinds of human viewpoint which brought him nothing but grief. But when he gets to the end of the book, he comes back into fellowship, and he is anchored to the fact of where all the values lie – back to the Word of God that he started with. As he closes down this book (this piece of wisdom literature), he realizes perhaps that he has wasted a lot of his life. The place that he becomes sensitively aware of the waste is the fact that he sees himself growing old, and he sees the effects that age is having upon him. And he knows what ultimately is going to be down the line for him.

So he says, "One of the smartest things I can tell people (one of the most precious pieces of wisdom I can give them) is to remind them that someplace down the line, the old tent they live in is going to start getting worn and tattered, and it's going to begin to come apart, and that they should look forward and be aware of that, so that in the days of their youth, they're capitalizing on their "ischus" – their capacity (their physical ability) to serve God, and not to find themselves down at the end when they can't do it anymore, and wish they had, or somehow try to make up for it, which they never can.

**Lack of Pleasure**

Ecclesiastes 12: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you shall say, 'I have no pleasure in them." The word "remember" is a call to youth to acquire a godliness which will provide them with an inner strength and a capacity to meet the breakdown of age as they grow older. "Remember your creator in the days of your youth." One of the ways that is going to be necessary for you to meet the debilitation of old age is to have a spirit and a capacity of godliness. You have to have the spiritual capacity to meet what comes with old age. You have to have the spiritual capacities to suddenly discover that something is not working right anymore, and maybe never will again. And it may cause everything else in the physical structure to come apart because it's a vital piece.

Without spiritual capacity to meet that, you will act with human viewpoint reactions. You'll be looking to the healers. You'll be wondering what Oral Roberts can do for you. You will descend to the lowest imaginable degradation in your life. Remember to build godliness when you have the physical capacity. When the time comes, and when the days draw near, you will say, "I don't find pleasures in them." What he means here is the days of one's life in old age which bring problems. Nobody is particularly interested in you. Nobody wants to invite you out. Nobody cares about you. You're struggling to manage things on your own. You're carrying on. You have a lesser circle of activities that you can engage in. Things just aren't as much fun as they used to be. You do not have the mobility that you had. You find yourself restricted in so many ways. They are not the years that you view as you did past years with great pleasure.

**Loss of Youth**

Verse 2: "While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars are not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain." The heavenly bodies here are used in their full functioning as an illustration of youth at the time of physical capacity. When they are darkened is a symbolic, poetic analogy to the time of old age: when things are not so bright; when things become dreary; and, when life is not as exciting as it once was. Again, this is because the erosion of age has begun to take place.

**Trembling Hands**

Then it gets very specific and very poetic in verse 3: "In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble." The house is the physical body. What are "the keepers of the house that begin to tremble?" Something begins to indicate a little trace of palsy. That may be when you pick something up for the first time and you begin to discover that your hand is shaking, and that that thing is wobbling in your hand. He's talking about the hands here. When the hands that maintain the physical body begin to tremble:

**Weak Legs**

"And the strong man shall bow themselves." The strong men are the foundation of the life, which are the legs and the knees. He is talking about the legs beginning to give, and the foundations of that body are beginning to crack. So, now you begin to walk with a little bit of a stoop:

**Fewer Teeth**

"And the grinders cease because they are few." What are the grinders that cease because they are few? If you have a fine dentist, you may have fewer grinders, but he knows how to replace them. So, you end up with the whole 36 horses. I had a great piece of entertainment when I was a teenager. I used to wow my compatriots and peers by giving them this riddle: "36 white horses on a red hill, now they are dancing, and now they are still." What are the white horses? They are the teeth in your mouth dancing on your gums – dancing while you talk, but still when you're silent. I used to wow them with that, but sooner or later there are only 35 white horses dancing on that red hill, and then 34, and they start jerking them out, and the fall out.

That was one of the great things about Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer who founded Dallas Seminary. Every week, he would go to his dentist, and have his one tooth cleaned. All that he had left when he died was one tooth. The rest were all artificial to replace those that had fallen out.

But this is a very clear poetic description that the grinders cease grinding, because they are few, and that causes problems. For some people, it causes the distress of how they look, and their appearance, and so on. And you can get the wrong set of teeth. I talked to a lady recently who had a wrong set of dentures for a long time, and finally she got a dentist who knew what he was doing. Over a careful series of many months, he restructure her gums, to put in the kind of proper dentures that she should have. She looks like a different lady. This is a distress of old age.

**Poor Vision**

Then he says, "And those that looked out of the windows are darkened." The windows here, of course, are the eyes of the soul. You start looking out the windows, and it becomes blurry – windows that you can't see through. Your eyes become incapacitated. Now, that's a distress. That's a frustration when you look down and you can't read anymore. You're having to forever reach for the spectacles to read. You get in your car at night, and you can't drive at night unless you put your glasses on. ...

**Loss of Hearing**

Verse 4 says, "And the doors shall be shut in the streets." The doors here are referring to the ears. The ears close, and you don't hear what's going on around you anymore. "When the sound of the grinding is low." The sound of the grinding means the activities within a home: the social activities; the hum of conversation; and, the household chores. The ears become dull, and you don't pick up what's around you anymore.

**Early Rising**

"And he shall rise up with the voice of the bird." This is something very often that older people fall into – getting up at the break of dawn because night is a fearful time for them. So, they move into a pattern to maximize their daylight hours when they can have some freedom; some mobility; and, some security.

**Lack of Music**

"All the daughters of music shall be brought low." What do you think that means? That is the degeneration of the voice so that you can't carry a tune. Some of you say, "I'm already there." You can't carry a tune now. But wait till you find what old age does to the vocal chords. Boy, you will sound like a screeching little crow then. If you're bad now, it's going to be terror later on down the line, because that is what happens. The chords weaken; their flexibility weakens; you can't carry a tune; and, you can't hold the pitch: "The daughters of music are brought low.

**Fear of Being in the Streets**

Verse 5: "And when they shall be afraid of that which is high." This is the obvious reference to the tottering caution exercised by the aged in the presence of heights: "And fears shall be in the way." They are afraid of being in the streets, which, of course, is very characteristic of older people. They are fearful of being in the streets, and being fearful of driving in the traffic.

**White Hair**

"And the almond trees shall flourish." The almond tree has the characteristics of producing blossoms that are absolutely snow white, and they burst out in such a position that you can't see any of the green leaves. The blossoms cover the whole tree, and all you see is this totally white structure of the tree when the blossoms come out. So, the obvious reference here is that the hair is beginning to turn white. And, of course, the darker your hair is; the greater this problem is; the more evident it is; and, it's more easily seen. These are the Nordic blond types get away with murder with this white hair stuff because you can't see it. These silver threads among the gold hair is not as easy to see as silver threads among the black horsehide hair. So, this is a turn. The hair turns, and pretty soon you notice the white. The almond tree is turning white. This is a sign of the old age.

**Physical Weakness**

"And the grasshopper shall be a burden." This is physical weakness. You can't carry things. You can't hold things. This means that a grasshopper is a burden. The physical strength is rapidly deteriorated.

**Dulled Senses**

"And desire shall fail." The sensual activities are diminished. The senses are diminished. The senses are dulled. All of these things then that once were a source of pleasure are no longer a source of pleasure. It's no longer so much fun to go out to a gourmet meal because your senses have been diminished. Sexual activity is diminished. The whole quality of the sensual breaks down as age goes on.

**The Physical Body is Broken Down**

"The desire shall fail because man goes to his long home." The Hebrew there's actually "his eternal home." The long home is very poetic because it does almost suggest the grave. But it is more than just the grave. It's more than just the long home of the grave. It is actually the home that is eternal where there is a spiritual body that God provides after death, when the physical body is broken down. This is the same thing that we have referred to in the 2 Corinthians 5:1-3 where Paul says, "For we know that if our earthly house (the physical body) of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This is some intermediate spiritual body until you get back to your physical body: "For this we groan (that is, in this present body) earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Paul is talking here about his desire. He would rather go to heaven, and move into his intermediate spiritual body right off the bat, because he had some trouble, and apparently it was with his eyes. He began to experience the physical deterioration of the "ischus" of his body: "If so be, that being clothed, we shall not be found naked, and so on.

**Mourners**

So, man returns unto his eternal home, and it says, "That the mourners survive." The mourners go about the streets mourning (the grieving survivors) when he has gone to that eternal home.

**Physical Death**

Verse 6 says, "Or ever the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." All of these analogies: silver cord; broken bowl; broken pitcher; and, broken when are symbolizing physical death. The silver cord snaps, dropping the bowl to the floor so that it shatters. The water pitcher is smashed at the well. The wheel that draws the water out of the well is broken. All of these are poetic descriptions of physical death. The machinery stops working. Solomon has let us step-by-step through the various processes of our losing our "ischus" – our muscular and physical capacity step-by-step until the whole thing stops. You move to the point of death.

**The Body Returns to Dust**

Verse 7 says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was." This is an obvious reference to the body deteriorating and decaying back to dust: "And the spirit shall return and to God who gave it." In this case, a believer is being described. His human spirit and soul lives on after the body dies.

So, this a very fascinating description with which Solomon closes this evaluation of the deterioration of physical capacity. And it is the course of wisdom to realize that that is what is down the line, but to thank God for the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ uses His physical capacity in behalf of believers, and He provides that physical capacity to us.

**Unbelievers will be Punished with Eternal Destruction**

Another point that we may add to this is the Bible says that unbelievers are to be punished with eternal destruction and removed from the presence "Of the helping physical strength of Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 1:9 stresses that it is physical capacity of the Lord that they're losing: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power," – the glory of His muscle, or the glory of His capacity.

**Christian Service is in the Strength of God**

Christian Service is in the strength of God that gives that He gives the spiritual believers. That is what, of course, we've been implying. 1 Peter 4:11 says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God. If any man minister, let him do it as the ability which God gives." Here you've got the word "ischus" again: "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ through whom be praised and dominion forever and ever. Amen." It is the Lord Jesus Christ who gives this capacity to keep going in Christian service, and He gives it to us for Christian service – not for wasting in other things. There are many Christians who very easily have all kinds of capacity to do the things that they like to do: the entertainment; the fun things; and, the things that appeal to them. Young people have this problem as much as anybody else. But then when it comes to doing the things of God, they find that a chore, and they like to elude that. That becomes a drag to them. They leave that for someone else. Christian service is in the physical capacity that God provides, and He does provide it for that. Don't abuse it for something else.

We find that the saints of the Old Testament received from God physical capacity to fight the enemies of God. Notice Hebrews 11:34, concerning these who are the saints of God of old: "They quenched the violence of fire; escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness, were made strong; became valiant in fight." The word "valiant" is our word "ischus" again. They became physically powerful in the fight: "They turned to flight the armies of the aliens." It was the physical capacity that God gave to do the battle. That is exactly what we may count on the Lord to do – to give us the physical capacity to do the job of service that He has called us to.

This same principle is in Joshua 23:4, where we read, "Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea in the west." The point is that God is telling him, "You're going to have it all because I am going to give you the capacity to do it, because I am going to enable you." So, the saints of the Old Testament actually had the capacity of God provided.

Of course, physical muscle can be abused. 1 Timothy 3:3 is a warning against such abuse of those that have had it provided by God in terms of the local church ministry. Speaking of the pastor-elder, it says, "Not given to wine; not violent; nor greedy of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler." The Greek word for "brawler" is "plektes," which means "a striker," or a guy who punches. Very clearly, here is a warning against taking God's "ischus" and using it in an improper way. It is speaking specifically about the pastor-teacher in this passage. If you look back up in verse 2, it says, "A bishop," singular, because there is only one bishop – one elder in every local church. Then when you get down, of course, to verse 8, it says, "In like manner must the deacons" (plural). Don't forget that singulars and plurals are enormously important Scripture. The whole argument about Abraham and the future of the Jewish people was all structured on a singular and plural in that debate that Jesus had with the Pharisees. He pointed out the difference of the singular and the plural.

And this is the way it is in the Bible, and this is in the Greek. It is very clear here that he's talking about *a* bishop. He's talking about *a local church* context here. So, he talks about *a* bishop-pastoral-elder, but multiple deacons in the ministry. And that person, who is singular because he carries the responsible authority of the chief executive, must not descend to being a brawler (a striker), and using his muscle.

The believer is told to love God with all his physical capacity. Mark 12:30: "And you shall love the Lord you God with all your heart (that's the mentality); with all your soul (with all your mind); and, with all your strength. And there you have "ischus" – loving God. Isn't that interesting? "You are loving God with your physical capacity – not just your emotional expression.

Every now and then in charismatic meetings someone will stand up and say, "Oh, let's express our love for the Lord." What they mean is, "Let's get all excited, and emotional, and express our love for the Lord in those emotions. But here, Jesus says, "If you want to express your love for God, do it with your physical capacity. Get out there in the battle. Lead out; follow; or, get out of the way." That's the battle plan. That's the order of battle. Here He says, "Use your physical strength (your physical capacities) to love the Lord.

So, when we have these work projects, some of you so readily turn out and say, "Hey, I have the skill. I can do that." And you come out here with your muscle power and your physical capacity. Next time, remember that you're expressing the fact that you've fallen in love with Jesus Christ. That's what you're doing with your muscle. It is the finest expression of love.

You have in in verse 33: "And to love him with all the heart; with all the understanding; with all the soul; and, with all the muscle, and to love his neighbor as himself is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifice." God says, "I don't want your sacrifices. I don't want your rituals. I don't want your expression. I don't want your promises. I don't want anything from you. I want your expression in these ways," that He has mentioned, among which is physical capacity put on the line for Jesus Christ.

We do use our youth in the Lord's service. We do use the days of our lives, which is our physical capacity, and we use it forever. We can never get it back again. We invest it forever in the Lord's service. That's what Jesus Christ has done with His physical capacity. He took His physical capacity, and He put it on the cross, and He bore enormity of that suffering, and He did it so that we could have eternal life. He loved God. He expressed His love for God by the draining of all that was physically in Him to the point of death.

That is real love. It is not up here on the mouth, but in the use of the time of your life – using your youth; using your middle age; and, using your old years to the extent that your capacity has. The Word of God says, "As your years, so shall your strength be. And it does diminish. But whatever you have, that physical capacity is to be invested as an expression of love for God.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of personal strength to the degree of omnipotence. He will not bully anybody because He has this kind of muscle power, but He will tear into the evildoer with all that physical power. That is how He's going to tear into the evildoer in the end times.

We will look at two passages in closing. Revelation 2:27 is a repeat of what Jesus Christ did in the temple: "And He shall rule them (the nations) with a rod of iron as the vessels of the potter they shall be broken to shivers, even as I received of My Father." Jesus Christ will rule with the muscle described as a lot of iron, and He's going to rule in such a way as could be described by somebody coming up and shattering a pot by hitting it and smashing it with a rod of iron. That's muscle power.

Revelation 19:15: "And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword (Jesus Christ), that with it He should smite the nations who have gathered in rebellion against Him. And He shall rule them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." And there you have the double-image of His striking with the rod of iron that He holds, and the muscular power in His feet as He tramples them down like somebody who is in a vat full of grapes, and is trampling the juice out of the grapes with his feet.

The Lord Jesus Christ is praised, and is glorified by these angels with their chant that He is worthy of personal, muscular strength to the degree of omnipotence, because He is so compatible with the will of God, as He demonstrated on the cross, that He can be trusted with this kind of force. He will not abuse it.

He will give it to us, and we should use it in the same capacity (in the same way), and invest it with the same eternal consequences.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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