



## The Lord, Our Strength

Text: Proverbs 14:4

Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox.

An oxen is an adult male steer (formerly a bull) that is used to pull loads.

If you have a stall with no oxen, then the crib or the stall is clean.

Who wants to clean the stall?

(I have cleaned stalls, and I have worked in and around stalls and they are a mess, period.) So the unwise person would think that the way to solve this problem would be to get rid of the oxen, that way you wouldn't have the mess.

This logic would sound real nice to some who just don't like oxen, except that is not the end of the verse:

He went on to say that ***much increase is by the strength of the ox!***

**Everybody has problems. Everybody!!!**

There is no such thing as a human being who does not have issues, problems, hurts, fears, cancers. There is no human being who does not struggle with sin in their lives from time to time. Everyone struggles.

If you take away people, you have less mess, but you also have less increase and strength.

Now you may be wondering right now why I am preaching such a message. If anyone thinks that I have not felt the impact of what our church has been through, they are not correct. I have felt the impact in many ways. I am not addressing this issue to focus so much on the past. What good is there in being stuck in the past?

God wants us to know that he is going to fill the crib! God wants us to know that the people are going to come in due time. We must be patient, but it is going to happen!

I am preaching from this verse because it is vital for us to understand that when we have brand new people, they will have problems in their lives. We must not and cannot expect people who have never been through the mill.

We are not living in the 1800's. We are not living in the 1900's. We are living in the 21st century when most people have been shattered by life in one way or another.

How will people know that we love them?

They will know by our friendly greeting.

When is the last time that we made somebody feel important?

They will know by our warm kindness.

They will know by the fruit of the Spirit.

When guests come, how about all of us saturating them with multiple welcomes. I would to God that a guest would get so many handshakes and ***"We're so glad you are here with us today's!"*** that when they walk out to their car they would say, "Now those people made me feel welcome and important!"

We must become more people conscious in terms of friendliness.

Growing churches are friendly churches. They are friendly to every person they meet! At church, at home, at work, at the hospital, everywhere!

Proverbs 14:4 again : Everyone, look at our text again and say it with me with gusto : Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox!

Now consider it with me from this angle, because God wants to minister in our hearts:

Consider this verse in light of the trap of thinking that we can only start serving God after all problems are gone out of our lives. If you wait until all problems are gone away, we will be waiting for eternity!

We must give our lives to Him when our lives are full of problems. Don't wait until your life is part way there, come while your life is a mess! Come while the stall of your life is a mess.

Let God take care of your problems! God is not expecting you to take care of your problems, but God is expecting you to come to Him and let **Him!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Mathew 11:**<sup>28</sup> says Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

There is only one place where we find strength: that is in running continually to Jesus Christ!

He is our source, He is our refuge, He is our peace, He is our comfort!

Psalm 22: <sup>19</sup> But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling<sup>d</sup> from the power of the dog. <sup>21</sup> Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

<sup>22</sup> I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. <sup>23</sup> Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. <sup>25</sup> My praise *shall be* of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. <sup>26</sup> The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.<sup>[1]</sup>

**The more we worship, the more strength we find.**

The last aspect of our text that I want you to see is that the presence of the Lord is our strength.

Samson grew over confident and thought that he could do it without the Lord, but just as soon as the locks of his hair were shorn, his strength went from him and he became as other men. The issue was not his hair, the issue was his obedience! When we obey the Lord that is where we find the strength we have been looking for.

<sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>d</sup> my darling: Heb. my only one

<sup>[1]</sup> The Holy Bible : King James Version. 1995 . Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA

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