Weekly devotional: Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Rooted in Scripture

Scriptural focus: Judges 15:14-15

14 When he came into Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. And the Spirit of Jehovah rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax when it burns in fire; and his bonds melted from off his hands.

15 And he found a fresh jawbone of an ass; and he stretched out his hand and took it, and struck a thousand men with it.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today, I want us to pause and reflect on a question that quietly challenges many of us in our walk with God: *Are we truly building our lives on the unshakable foundation of Scripture, or are we letting experiences and feelings overshadow God's Word?*

Think about Samson for a moment. The Bible tells us that the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him and he was empowered in ways that were miraculous. He even used a dead donkey's jawbone to defeat a thousand enemies. That's incredible! Yet, Samson also made choices that led to his downfall. He chose wrong companions, pursued fleeting pleasures, and mingled with a culture that pulled him away from God. In the end, his eyes and his strength were taken because he let the wrong influences dominate his heart.

Isn't that a powerful reminder? Even when we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, the choices we make—who we sit with, what we indulge in, what we prioritize—determine whether we walk in true victory or stumble. King Saul experienced this too. The Spirit was with him, but his distractions, impatience, and poor choices destroyed his fellowship with God.

Things like pornography, alcohol, tobacco, hatred, and anything else that is not from the Lord God will destroy our spiritual growth. Even more, if we dwell in worldly pleasures while neglecting God, we risk losing the power of the Spirit in our lives. But there is hope. Just like Job, we can make a covenant with the Lord God—a commitment to honor Him, obey His Word, and live according to His principles. This covenant protects us from the influence of worldly pleasures and keeps our foundation firm.

Now, let us bring it home. Jesus Christ, our perfect example, never allowed anything to pull Him away from God's will. Before He began His ministry, He prayed, fasted, and studied the Scriptures. The disciples did the same. They devoted themselves to prayer and Scripture in the upper room before they were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Their foundation was strong because it was rooted in obedience and Scripture.

So, here's the challenge for us today: As Christians, we have accepted Jesus Christ, left the worldly ways behind, and embraced a new life. But the question is: will we make choices that honor God, or will we sit with the wrong influences, pursue the wrong pleasures, and let worldly culture shape our decisions? Ask yourself:

- Is this thought, this action, this relationship rooted in Scripture?
- Would Jesus Christ approve of it?
- Is it pleasing in the eyes of our holy and righteous God?

Church, the Spirit empowers us, but He never replaces obedience. Obedience though is our choice, is still mandatory. Empowerment follows obedience and discipline. True victory comes when our lives are built on God's Word, when our foundation is unshakable, and when we let the Spirit guide us through Scripture. That's how we experience transformation, freedom, and eternal satisfaction.

So, today, let us encourage one another to stay rooted in the Word, to be empowered by the Spirit, and to separate from fleeting worldly pleasures. Let Samson's story challenges us. Great power without the right foundation and choices can lead to downfall. But power combined with obedience, prayer, Scripture, and godly fellowship leads to true victory as children of the King of Kings.

Reflection for Today

Today, I'm reminded that true strength and victory come from a life rooted in God's Word and guided by the Spirit. Just as Jesus prayed, fasted, and studied Scripture before His ministry, I need to prioritize time with God to build a strong foundation. I must examine my thoughts, actions, and relationships, asking if they honor God and align with His Word. The Spirit empowers me, but I am responsible for obedience and making choices that reflect His will. Samson's story warns me that great potential without a godly foundation can lead to downfall. By seeking Scripture, prayer, and godly fellowship daily, I can experience true transformation and freedom. Today, I choose to stay rooted in God's Word, to allow the Spirit to guide me, and to resist fleeting worldly pleasures.

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, I come before You. Thank You for the Word, for the blood of Jesus Christ, and for the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Lord God, you made me in Your image. Help me to live in that image, to grow closer to You, and to be a light to those walking in darkness. Many times, I did not understand the value of what You have given me. Like the prodigal son, I have traded what is eternal for things that are temporary. Forgive me, Lord God,

for not treasuring Your gifts. I know I am not worthy to be called Your child, but I give myself to You as a slave. Let me serve You faithfully all the days of my life, doing only what pleases You through Jesus Christ. Search me, Lord God. See if there is anything wrong in me. Lead me in Your ways - the everlasting ways, in Jesus Christ. Lord God, accept my tears, my heart, and my full surrender. Refine me, strengthen me, and make me a tool for Your glory, in Jesus Christ. I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

This Week's Takeaway

True strength comes from being rooted in God's Word and guided by the Spirit. Obedience, prayer, and godly fellowship are essential for making choices that honor God. Without a solid foundation, even great potential can lead to downfall, but with it, we experience true victory and transformation.

(Devotional Reflection written by Rev. Immanuel Ebenezer Paul on behalf of Hear Matthew 11:28 Ministries, published on 17 January 2026. All Scripture quotations are from the Recovery Version of the Holy Bible (Living Stream Ministries)).

Announcements:

1. If you are seeking support in your discipleship journey, we warmly invite you to join our weekly discipleship sessions held every Saturday at 6am (IST).

Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81144235750pwd=RG4veEdLQkJNS1NxYW1ZWmNnb3EvQT09

(Meeting ID: 811 4423 5750. Passcode: 12345).

2. If you wish to receive personal counselling, kindly use this link to make an appointment. https://scheduler.zoom.us/rev-immanuel-paul/appointment

3. We welcome you to join our WhatsApp group to receive updates and Communication about our ministries and meetings https://chat.whatsapp.com/EokMFGuZdgb23Sg8BsHzas

We look forward to walking with you in faith and fellowship.