**Be Strong in the Lord**

**August 16-17, 2012**

**I. WELCOME, 15 mins.**

Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

**II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.**

Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God’s presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of **strengthening, encouragement, and comfort** they have received for the **cell group, the church and nations**. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for:
1. the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts
2. the church ministry needs
3. blessings for new comers, the sick.

**MISSION ORGANIZATION:** ___________, their needs: ____________

(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

**CHURCH MINISTRY:**

1. **Equipping Class:** Power of prayer @ 1pm every Sunday, room G5
2. **English Committee Meeting:** 8/13 @ 6:30pm, Conference room
3. **Leader/Coworkers Retreat:** 10/12-13
4. **Mission Conference:** 10/19-21, Cindy Jacob

**III. WORD, 45 mins.**

A. **Sharing from last Sunday’s message.**

1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. **Discussion Topic:** “Be Strong in the Lord”

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**Foreword**

We all know that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Albeit those who are saved understand that they have gained freedom in Christ, some believers crumble under the pressure of difficult times. This is exactly as what Paul said in Romans 7:24, “What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” In today’s verses, Paul reminds all the disciples in Christ: Adversity can be an overwhelming burden, but with the revival power of Christ in us, instead of weakening us, trials can make us stronger as we learn to depend more fully on the power of the Holy Spirit. Following are three things we can do to become strengthened in the Lord.

**I. God provides supernatural strength in our weakness (2Cor. 13:1-4)**

A Christian’s life should not be weary or discouraged, without joy and peace. Neither should his life be powerless. The awesome power of the Lord is available to equip, transform, and carry us through any suffering. Jesus chose to become weak like us. He even died for our sins on the cross. The same awesome power of the Lord resurrected Jesus from death will also give us strength to proclaim the truth in difficult times: that “we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” (2 Cor. 4:7)

While the Corinthian are trying to seek for proof that Christ is speaking through Paul, Paul declares that Christ is the powerful one in him who causes everything to work together. This is a great example that shows God’s tremendous power working through what His servant says. The power is not from us or based on our ability and understanding, but the power of God, which turns the weak to the strong.

**II. Self-examination for he who is strengthened in the Lord (2Cor.13:5-10)**

1. The true faith: We can examine and test ourselves to see whether we are in true faith, or in intellectual understanding? True faith allows Holy Spirit’s power to work through our lives. Even a weak Christian knows “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want”, but he is having an issue to fully rely on the Father and count on His provision. The self-examination of our true faith helps us to truly rely on God.

2. The never forsaken one: Note that we will never be forsaken as long as we allow Christ to reside in us. When the almighty God is in us, He will be with us forever. (John 14:16)

3. The righteous: Paul is most concerned about the Corinthians spiritual well-being. He set the bar for the Corinthians so high that they can’t even do one wrong thing! His prayer for them is for the almighty God to reside in them.
and help them to do only good to please God. Accordingly, in order for us to entering into God’s truth, we should always follow the guidance and comfort coming from the Holy Spirit who resides in us.

4. The defender of truth: Paul didn’t care about being misunderstood or condemned by the verdict of the public; his only goal is to guide the Corinthian into the truth of God. It is so true that the Lord prioritizes character development over comfort. He not only built up Paul, but bless the Corinthian through Paul.

III. Characteristics for those who are strong in the Lord (2Cor. 13:11-14)

1. Rejoice: Joy is said to be the spiritual thermometer. True joy is the stimulus to greater closeness with God. True faith will bring the ardent joy, for the Lord is in presence.

2. Made Complete: Rather than being perfect, the “made complete” refers to a mentality that is willing to be shaped and pruned. Only when we humbly accept God to adjust us, will we become more like Him.

3. Comfort one another: Our ability to receive comfort is equally important to our ability to give. If we are unable to accept comfort from others, it may mean that our heart is hardened. Likewise, we may not be able to forgive, or to let go. An old wound can never be healed because of this status of mind. A strong person in the Lord recognizes how important it is to accept the comfort from God. If we dare to let go of our burden, God will sure to catch it for you.

4. Be like-minded, live in peace: You and I are strong in the Lord, for the Holy Spirit resides in us. Let’s submit to one another for our Lord’s sake and experience “How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.” (Psalm 133:1)

5. God be with us at all time: The trinity of Heavenly Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit is pleased to bless and be with anyone who is strong in the Lord.

Questions:

1. Why would Paul determine to visit the Corinthian church for the third time even after they treated him so unfriendly? What do you think Paul’s purpose is?

2. What does it mean by self-examining faith? Do you have true faith? Could you give us an example?

3. What are the blessings Paul say at the end of the epistle? Would you need any of these blessings?

4. Can you share with us what the personal helps you’ve experienced through Jesus Christ? How did you look at this experience?

5. If you were to bless your cell group or family members by using what Paul prayed for the Corinthian, which prayer would you want to say the most? Why?

6. Apply today’s verses to bless each other in your cell group.

Prayer:

The true God of Trinity, we thank you and praise you. Thank you, Lord Father, because of your love, we receive our eternal lives. Thank you, Jesus, because of your love, we obtain the gracious salvation. Thank you, Holy Spirit, because of your love, we gain strength in our lives. We pray that the God of Trinity would help us to rely more on you, and turn us from the weak to be strong and the poor to be rich. We thank you that you make us to be blessings to others. May all your sons and daughters experience your abundant richness and become strong -- in Jesus victorious name. Amen!!

IV. Work (Pray for each other), 10 mins.

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.

Prayer:

The true God of Trinity, we thank you and praise you. Thank you, Lord Father, because of your love, we receive our eternal lives. Thank you, Jesus, because of your love, we obtain the gracious salvation. Thank you, Holy Spirit, because of your love, we gain strength in our lives. We pray that the God of Trinity would help us to rely more on you, and turn us from the weak to be strong and the poor to be rich. We thank you that you make us to be blessings to others. May all your sons and daughters experience your abundant richness and become strong -- in Jesus victorious name. Amen!!