



Bethel Sunrise Sermon Notes – “*Support & Struggle*”

Speaker: Ps Preston Dobbins

Series: Awesome God

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:9, Romans 8, Mark 6:45–52, Genesis 32

Main Idea

The fear of the Lord keeps us spiritually awake and makes pleasing God the aim of our lives. When our hearts are fully His, God promises His **strong support**—but His support does not mean the absence of struggle. God often uses struggle to strengthen us, mature us, and shape us into who He has called us to become.

The Fear of the Lord Keeps Us Awake

There are moments that shake us awake and cause us to recognize what truly matters. But over time, it is easy to drift back into normal routines and become spiritually asleep again.

That is one of the dangers of everyday life: **we can become comfortable while drifting in the wrong direction.**

The fear of the Lord keeps us awake.

Fearing God means we:

- **Turn away from evil.**
- **Take sin seriously.**
- **Refuse to become spiritually complacent.**
- **Make it our aim to please Him.**

We cannot afford to spiritually “sleep at the wheel.” A healthy fear of the Lord keeps our hearts alert and responsive to God.

The Ultimate Benefit: God's Strong Support

2 Chronicles 16:9 says that the eyes of the Lord search throughout the earth to **strongly support those whose hearts are completely His.**

When we choose to fear God and surrender our hearts to Him, we can live confidently knowing that **God is for us.**

Romans 8 reminds us:

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Accusations do not have the final word over our lives. We can live with confidence because our security is found in God and His support.

God Will Provide What You Need

Living under God's support means trusting Him as our provider.

One of the sources of frustration and bitterness in our relationship with God can be confusing our **wants** with our **needs**.

We can begin believing that because we want something badly enough, God owes it to us.

But there is a difference between bringing God a request and making a demand.

God promises to provide what we truly need. We can bring our desires to Him honestly while still trusting His wisdom when His answer doesn't look like what we expected.

Bring your wants to God as requests, not demands.

Support and Struggle Can Coexist

Having God's strong support does **not** mean we will never struggle.

Spiritual maturity is learning that **support and struggle can coexist**.

God can be completely for us while allowing us to walk through something difficult.

Struggle isn't necessarily evidence that God has abandoned us. Sometimes, struggle is the very environment He uses to develop us.

God uses trouble to:

- **Shape us.**
- **Test us.**
- **Strengthen us.**
- **Mature us.**
- **Prepare us for what is ahead.**

Instead of always asking God to immediately remove the struggle, we should also ask what He wants to develop in us through it.

Sometimes God Lets You Row

In Mark 6, the disciples were struggling against the wind in the middle of the night.

They were rowing hard, trying to make progress, when Jesus came toward them walking on the water.

The passage says Jesus **intended to pass by them**.

Jesus saw their struggle, yet He wasn't panicked by it.

Sometimes God allows us to keep rowing because the resistance is building something in us.

You need to row to build your spiritual muscles.

We can become so accustomed to asking God to rescue us from every uncomfortable situation that we never develop the strength He wants us to have.

Sometimes what feels like drowning is actually an invitation to **stand up**.

God wants us to stop allowing anxiety, fear, discouragement, or difficulty to keep us spiritually passive.

He wants us to learn how to fight.

Learn to Engage in the Struggle

Genesis 32 gives us the story of Jacob wrestling with God.

Jacob was facing one of the greatest crises of his life, and he wrestled through the night.

He refused to let go.

“I will not let you go unless you bless me.”

Jacob's struggle resulted in transformation.

God changed his name from Jacob to **Israel**.

His struggle wasn't merely about changing his circumstances. God was changing **him**.

Sometimes we are waiting for God to fulfill a promise while God is preparing us to become the person who can carry that promise.

Before the promise comes, there may need to be an identity change.

And transformation requires participation.

Stop Being Spiritually Lazy

There are areas of spiritual growth that cannot be developed from the sidelines.

God wants us to engage.

That means learning to:

- **Pray when prayer feels difficult.**
- **Fast when our flesh wants comfort.**
- **Seek God when answers don't come immediately.**
- **Keep believing when circumstances haven't changed.**
- **Continue fighting when quitting would be easier.**

Spiritual strength is developed through resistance.

If we avoid every struggle, we may also avoid the very process God wants to use to mature us.

Everything Is Sifted Through God's Hands of Love

The presence of struggle does not mean the absence of God's love.

Everything God allows into our lives is sifted through **His hands of love**.

Even temporary pain can be used to produce something eternal in us.

God isn't wasting the struggle.

He can use what we are walking through to produce a glory that far outweighs the difficulty—but we have to participate in the process.

Learn to love the fight.

Not because struggle itself is enjoyable, but because of what God can produce in us through it.

Keep Asking, Seeking, and Knocking

Don't stop because the answer hasn't come yet.

Don't stop because the struggle is difficult.

Don't stop because growth is uncomfortable.

Keep asking.

Keep seeking.

Keep knocking.

God's strong support doesn't always mean He removes the resistance. Sometimes His support is what gives us the strength to keep fighting through it.

Final Challenge

Take an honest look at your spiritual life:

What area of your spirit is underdeveloped?

Where have you become spiritually passive or lazy? Where are you waiting for God to do something that He may be asking you to actively engage in?

Get off the sidelines and step into the fight.

Wrestle with God in prayer. Fast. Seek Him. Refuse to let go simply because the process becomes difficult.

God is for you, and His strong support is with you.

Engage in the struggle and allow God to build you into who you were meant to be.

Discussion Questions

1. **What does it practically look like for the fear of the Lord to keep us spiritually “awake” in everyday life?**
2. **How does knowing that God strongly supports those whose hearts are His change the way you approach fear, uncertainty, or opposition?**
3. **Why do you think we sometimes interpret struggle as evidence that God isn't supporting us? How does Mark 6 challenge that perspective?**
4. **What do you learn from Jacob's willingness to wrestle with God until he experienced transformation?**
5. **What area of your spiritual life currently feels underdeveloped, and what would it look like to actively “step into the ring” through prayer, fasting, seeking God, or**

perseverance?