

# Explore the Bible: October 10

*Joy and Contentment • Philippians 4:10-20*

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“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13 KJV). This Children’s Bible Drill verse was always fun to study with the children. Do you know a third through sixth grade boy who is not excited about learning about strength? While somewhat less obvious about their interest, the girls wanted to know more about strength as well.

Some Bible Drillers memorized this verse from the Christian Standard Bible. It uses this translation: “I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.”

This morning I feel as though the Apostle Paul wrote this verse especially to me. Yesterday, Hurricane Ida hit the Gulf Coast and moved into Mississippi. It’s raining and the wind is blowing here at my house right now.

This was a strong Category 4 Hurricane hitting the coast exactly 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina. Since you’re reading this preview almost a month after I am writing it, you already know more than I do about the full damage from Ida.

I am glad to know my Lord is stronger than the strongest hurricane and I am glad Paul wrote about the help we will get

from this strong God.

Our Bible teaches us in Mark 4:35-41 that Jesus could completely control the storms. Read this passage again and notice the question asked by the terrified disciples: "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!" (Mark 4:41b CSB). The disciples were afraid and then surprised by Jesus' confident handling of the terrifying storm:

– Jesus was peacefully sleeping on a pillow in the stern of the small boat with winds and seas roaring terrifyingly loud.

– "He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Silence! Be still!' The wind ceased, and there was a great calm" (Mark 4:39 CSB).

– Jesus clearly answered the disciples' question – "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?" – by his decisive action.

– After totally removing the danger Jesus asks, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mark 4: 40 CSB).

With help from the Holy Spirit and God's word given to us by Paul, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13 KJV).

Unlike Hurricane Ida's landfall on which we can now look back, I find helpful comfort in Christ's gift of strength to deal with the yet unfinished threat of COVID-19!

What do you think the proud, rough, and tough Roman soldier tasked with guarding Paul thought when the prisoner chained to him said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." He had Paul under his complete control and he knew that (at least, he thought he knew).

We can safely assume the guard heard Paul say this to Timothy or whoever was writing his words for the letter to Philippi. That soldier must have thought, "This fool thinks he's not

under my complete control.”

Paul knew from experience that God could free him from that Roman prison at will. Read Acts 16:16-40 and note these details:

- The chief magistrates had Paul and Silas beaten with rods.
- Then the magistrates ordered the jailer to “guard them carefully” (Acts 26:23c CSB).
- The jailer put these severely flogged men into the inner prison and put their feet in stocks, because he dared not let them escape.
- “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns... Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose” (Acts 16:25-26 CSB).
- No one escaped and Paul was able to stop the jailer from committing suicide. Then Paul witnessed to the jailer and his whole household. They all immediately accepted Christ as Savior and Lord.
- Paul forced the magistrates to publicly apologize.

Paul understood that he was not chained to the Roman soldiers trying to guard him. Instead the guards were chained to Paul and forced to hear the Gospel. Many of the members of Caesar’s household became saints and believers in Christ, and joined in thanking the Philippians for their support of Paul so he could live in his own house as a prisoner.

Paul specifically acknowledged the support brought to him by Epaphroditus from the Philippian church. They had supported Paul as he left Europe and took the Gospel to other places.

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