

## Words

I have always loved poetry or words that have strengthened me. It has been something that has brought me comfort, helped me question life, brought me identification with the author many times. It has been with me through the times of sorrow and joy, through depression and times of peace. The Bible is an excellent source of words that strengthen our faith and words that bring us peace and joy. I love Isaiah and find much comfort in the words found there. Like Isaiah 40:31 But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Or in Isaiah 41:10 Do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed; for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. When I went into Nurse's Training, I had no confidence but knew I wanted to be a Nurse. I needed to leave a home that was unhappy and a job which was not bad but not what I wanted for a lifetime. I had wanted to be a nurse since I was small. Recently my granddaughter was going through a tough time. Her life had suffered a deep hurt. I had a plastic bubble on a chain in which was incased a Mustard seed. It was something small but meaningful to me and I truly believed God had helped me with that tiny mustard seed. I sent it to her with a note. When I next saw her, she was wearing it and it had helped her get through an extremely hard time. Matthew 17:20 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible to you." Another of my favorite life strengthening quotes comes from Longfellow. A Psalm of Life, "Tell me not in mournful numbers life is but an empty dream, for the soul is dead that slumbers and things are not what they seem. Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not it's goal, dust thou art to dust returnest was not spoken of the soul." Words can inspire, words can comfort, words can hurt and kill a soul, words can defeat a child, words used wisely can move a mountain. Franklin D. Roosevelt's words and Winston Churchill's words inspired people to resist and overcome, Hitler's words inspired people to hate and to kill and turned brother against brother. Let us use our words to lift others up, not to make us a doormat but to encourage and inspire others and especially those we love and those who serve us especially our pastors, our doctors and nurses, our teachers, our children's teachers and coaches, especially all those in our children's and grandchildren's lives who touch them with love and learning whether it's good sportsmanship or the Gettysburg address (do they still have to memorize this?). The end of the school year will be coming soon, remember to thank those who have touched your children's and grandchildren's lives even a neighbor. I remember an elderly neighbor who took my son fishing. My son loved that man, he was the grandfather he had lost, the one he needed. He is gone now but I know that he was there for my son, and I thank God for the love he showed him. Keep them all in your prayers.

Lord, hear our prayer. We thank you for the day, for the warmth of our houses, for the food on our tables, for our clothes and for all we take for granted. Be with us each day and may all our days honor you. Be with our Pastor and his family, bless them and keep them safe. Be with our staff and leaders, grant them vision and hope for our church and keep them safe. Be with our church, may it be your church and may all we do, be done in your name. Our world is in turmoil, and we need you to be with us in our kindness to each other, in our interactions with each other, in our service to those who need help. May those at war find peace. May those who hunger whether for food or for you find sustenance and peace and you in their lives. May we be your hands and feet in this time, in this place. Thank you, Lord, for the neighbors and teachers who touch our children's lives. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson