

## ***“Give Me Strength Like Samson”***

While preparing to visit Amish friends in Honeybrook, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 2024, I learned about the Ausbund—the oldest Anabaptist hymnal, first printed in 1564 and one of the oldest Christian songbooks used today. Amish districts across North America – 32 states - use it. The revered hymnal contains centuries-old Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Upon returning to Oregon, I promptly ordered a copy and found this gem:

*“I would like to sing and be hap-py, but to no avail. I am in distress and wait un-til my Comforter com’th...I am in deep sorrow and have no joy and only the Lord can give it back to me. I wait on the Lord, grant me... patience in this time, that I may not transgress in my sor-row. I am shattered that I might despair. That which I have... long ...confessed is put before my mind. It wants to afflict my conscience, although there is no sin. The affliction is...so hard upon me and it wants to make me stumble. But my sin is washed, why am I trou-bled by that which I have...regretted? But thy word saith that the affliction is a trial and we shall be refined by much suffering so...that I may be found as gold. The deceiver cometh as an angel cunningly to cause confusion. O Lord, keep...my conscience from the devil’s de-ceit and lead me into thy peace! Fight thou against the affliction then thou wilt not...suffer anymore but have joy! I am mere dust and a flower that withereth, **give me strength as Samson** and that...I may slay Goliath. When I die, give me a white robe! I tell thee in Christ my Son, if thou wilt have joy and rise...with him, thou must die and be par-taker of his suff’rings. Then thou wilt inherit my joy, my eternal kingdom. Lord God let me not become a proverb! Though wilt give it to me when thou pleases. O bles-sed be the Lord for his...mercy, if it be joy or pain, everything is thy gift, I thank thee heartily. Amen “ (#186 According to Ausbund 105).*

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In the not-so-distant past, I could identify with the author’s level of distress. Have you been there as well? I wonder if committing excruciating pain to words ushered in a measure of healing for the author. For myself, after fervent prayers and a season of being open to spiritual growth, I was made whole again. Praise and all credit to the healing hand of our mighty God and the Holy Spirit’s ministering efforts. While in distress, I found comfort in reflecting on the mighty God we serve. Are you open to joining me and reflecting on what a mighty God we serve?

Do strengths such as the following come to mind?

- Omnipotence
- Omnipresence
- Supernatural ability to create the galaxy, planets, stars, sun, and moons and heal all of creation.
- Sending Jesus to conquer sin, death, and Satan.
- Miracle-worker
- Healer
- Granter of Mercy
- Sinless
- Comforter
- Bestower of Grace
- Bestower of Forgiveness
- Bestower of Peace
- Gift giver
- Orator

*What other strengths come to mind?*

*By Remi Smith, founder and CEO of Compassionate Caring Ministries, whose mission is "To bring compassion, love, and support to parents whose adult child identifies as transgender."*