

He Giveth Power

by Carl Armerding

God gives power to the faint and to those who have no might, increasing their strength and enabling them to overcome their weaknesses and challenges.

Duration: 32:23

Scripture: Genesis 29:27, Isaiah 40:27-31

Topics: "Power Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the questions raised by the enemy concerning God. He refers to the four questions asked by God in the previous portion of the scripture. The preacher emphasizes the importance of walking with God and highlights the expectations and benefits associated with it. He also mentions that the path of the just is like a shining light that gets brighter as one progresses. The sermon concludes with the assurance that those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength and be empowered to overcome challenges.

Transcript

I should say, by way of announcement, that tomorrow morning we'll be working in Chapter 41. Another message along the same line of words of hope, comfort, and cheer, but this morning's message, we hope, will give you to see that Chapter 40 is really a section by itself. It comes to a wonderful climax, as we shall see in the last verse.

Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God? Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, That the everlasting God, the Lord, Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might. He increaseth strength.

Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. The earthly career of a child of God has always been a difficult one, and that is because of two things.

In the first place, a child of God in this world is in a hostile siege, even a siege that is contrary to him. And strange as it may sound to some of us who've always lived in what we call a Christian country, the children

of God have always been in the minority. We are plainly in the minority today.

We are hopelessly outnumbered by those who do not know God. You take the so-called professing Christian population of the world and compare it with the total population, and you will see exactly what I mean. If we are to win out simply because of sheer force of numbers, we may as well give up, because we can never win on that basis.

And then the second reason why the career of a child of God is a difficult one is because it is an upward climb. It is an upward trend, an upward path. It leads up, and therefore he can never move under his own momentum.

It's not like going downhill where all you need is a push and you'll keep on going. That's not true of the child of God. His path is an upward one, and he requires fresh spiritual impulses to keep him going.

That's one of the real purposes of a conference like this, of our church services as well as of our personal devotions, every day that we need these fresh spiritual impulses in order to keep us moving upward. Otherwise, we'll drift like the world. Now, I say these are the two reasons why the path or the career, the earthly career of a child of God, is a difficult one.

And it is because of these things that we are frequently discouraged and departed, even to the point where we question God himself. And that is where we begin this morning in our studies in verse 27, where God turns to his favored nations, addressing them under the name of the patriarch Jacob, and says to them, Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, my way is hid from the Lord? Now, that's a strange statement, isn't it? For anybody to think that there's anything hidden from God, that there's anything that he doesn't know. In other words, to charge him with ignorance.

That's what it means. If you and I say in our hearts, God doesn't know what I'm going through, we're actually charging God with ignorance. My way is hid from the Lord.

And there's something even worse than that in the latter part of the verse, and it says, My judgment, or my justice, is passed over from or by my God. Think of that. Charging God with injustice.

And you say to me, that sounds terrible, and it does. It sounds very terrible. But I believe these are the implications of these two questions that we have here in verse 27.

That these people, either in their very words which they use, or otherwise in their actions, they have charged God with ignorance, and what is worse, with injustice. Now, I've only to put it that way, dear friends. And I believe that if you're honest with yourself, you'll say to yourself, yes, and I believe I've done that more times than I dare to confess.

I have actually charged God in my teaching with this, that He does know what I'm going through, and what more He hasn't done right by me. Especially when I compare my luck with other people in the world and see how prosperous they are. And you get a perfect illustration of that in the 73rd Psalm, don't you? Where the psalmist was through just as inexperienced as I. He sees the prosperity of the wicked, he sees how healthy they are, and so on.

And he wonders whether he's made a mistake in taking the side of God. He says, lo, I have washed my hands in vain and innocently, and so on. All my faith is for nothing.

And there's nothing the enemy would delight more in than just that, to get you and me to the point where we mistrust God. That's how he began in the Garden of Eden. He didn't come with a direct denial of God's Word.

He comes with a question. If you remember, he came to you, he said, yea, half God cares. He doesn't say God didn't care.

I'm merely asking, raising the question, such as we can instill doubt in the heart of anybody by raising a question about it. I remember when I was just a little fellow at school, we were learning our two-time table. And there was one little fellow there who was never sure of himself on his two-time table.

He would pound his fingers whenever the teacher would try to teach him that two and two make four. But she made him put his hands on the table where she could see them. She says, now, tell me this, how much is two and two? Two and two, two and two is four.

He wasn't too sure of himself. And in order to press it upon him, she said to him again, I don't know if it's good pedagogy or good psychology, but she says, how much is two and two? Five. Just by receiving questions.

And so the enemy raises questions in our minds concerning God. Now, what is God's answer to all of this? I believe we have it now in the verses which follow. There God asks some questions which are similar to the questions which he raised in the portion which we had before us last night.

Remember last night in studying verse 21, we noticed there were four questions which God puts to those who doubt him. He says, have you not known? That is, you should know by intuition that I exist. Have you not heard? There is a communication concerning me.

Has it not been told you from the beginning? What about these traditions concerning me? And have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? By studying creation around you, you should have come to conclusions that I do exist. But you'll notice in addressing his people, he raises only two questions. He says, hast thou not known and hast thou not heard? And here was a people who rarely did direct revelation from God.

Of all the peoples in the world, they were the most inexcusable. And Saint Paul, you remember, in his epistle to the Romans, he makes a point of that. Because what advantage, then, has it to be wise that people, much every way, but people, because of them were committed to the articles, that is, the spoken words of God, they had this communication.

And so God doesn't have to ask more than two questions here. Hast thou not known and hast thou not heard? Surely if anybody had reason to know, if anybody had reason to hear, it was Israel. But now notice what God says in connection with it.

And this is something he didn't say in the questions which we were considering last night. But he's dealing now with the people who should have known. And here you get four important facts concerning God.

Four important facts. The first fact is that he is the one who is everlasting. And if ever there was a people under the sun who had death, both of them it was Israel.

Remember Moses, in that wonderful song of his, he includes this wonderful thought. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Here is a God who never had a beginning.

Here is a God who is not like the gods of which we were hearing last night, who were made of gold and silver or wood that would not rot. Here is one who is everlasting. As Moses puts it in his psalm, the 90th psalm, from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Oh, you say that sounds like theology. Right? It is theology. But beneath this fact that our God is the eternal God, the everlasting God.

The one who never had a beginning and who will never have an end. Something that you and I with our poor finite minds can't even conceive of is there nevertheless. God has given us this great thought concerning himself that he is eternal.

Then the second great thought is included in that name, the Lord. You'll notice if your Bible makes a distinction in the printing that the word Lord is spelled in all capital letters there. That means, indeed, the translation of the Hebrew word, and I give it the old pronunciation.

I know the modernists would use the pronunciation Galway, but I give it the old pronunciation of Jehovah. And I believe it has been well stated that the definition of Jehovah, or shall I say an equivalent statement is, it's the one who was and is and is to come. The self-existent one.

The one who alone had the right to say, I am that I am. I will remember how when a certain man on the West Coast took unto himself that right, and he was the great I am, then one day the news came that he had died. The late president, Dr. Houghton, president of Moody Bible Institute, commenting on the death of this man, who had taken the title the I am, and said the great I am is now the great I ain't.

And that was true, and yet he's got followers in Chicago right down in the loop. He still has some of his followers, Saint Germain. But there is only one who has the right to say, I am that I am.

Not only that, but this was also the covenant name of God. This was the name by which he revealed himself to his world as the covenant-keeping God. Not only is he the eternal God, the self-existent one, but he is the God who keeps his word.

And friends, that's an important thing for us today, is that our God is the God who keeps his word. If he's made any promises, you may be sure that he'll keep them. If he's made any threats, he'll carry them out.

The one side is just as true as the other. The threats, the awful threats of punishment and the word of God, are just as solemn and just as irrevocable, just as immediate as any promise that God ever makes, because he is Jehovah. Then we come to the third great fact concerning God here on this earth, that he's the creator of the ends of the earth.

And here we get something of his omnipotence. Here is the one who brought everything into being, and immediately you find that you are face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said in the first chapter of John that all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Here is the creator of the ends of the earth, who neither fainteth nor is weary.

He not only made everything, but he sustains everything. He keeps it moving. That's why this whole world has been moving along at such a terrific speed, why you and I are sitting here upon it, walking upon it.

God keeps it moving, and this creation moves on, because he not only brought it into being, but he also maintains it in all things, all sustained by the word of his power. And then we come, lastly, in this 28th verse to his omniscience. There is no searching of his understanding.

Or, you say, these are all theological terms. Yes, but they are terms that I believe every intelligent Christian ought to be conversant with. We ought to know something about the eternity of God, the omnipresence of God, the omnipotence of God, the omniscience of God.

These ought to be terms that we are fully conversant with, that we know the meaning of them, and rejoice that we have a God of whom all these things can be said. What a God we have, haven't we? But now you notice that he's introduced in an entirely different way in the verse which follows, and this is the burden of our message this morning, and which justifies our title that these addresses should be called Words of Hope, Comfort, and Peace. But in the next verse you'll notice, the 29th verse, God is introduced as a giver, as if.

And this we find is so true of him all through the word of God. In that marvelous text which Dr. Ayer is teaching from time to time in his hours of study, God so loved the world that he gained his only begotten son. That's how we're introduced to God, he did.

St. Paul, speaking of him in that marvelous sermon that he is on Mars Hill, he says, he's giver to all life and breath and all things. God the giver, he's a giver. Not only does he give us life and breath and all things, and give us his beloved son as our savior, but he's given us his blessed Holy Spirit.

Think of that, God the giver. And then James tells us that he's giver more grace. God the giver.

And the psalmist tells us in Psalm 84 that he will give grace and glory. He's God the giver. Never think about that.

God, a generous giver. One who hasn't anything to sell, as it were, but who's given without money and without time. He's giver.

But in this particular text of Scripture, you notice it's the gift of power. He says he's giver of power. And who is there that hasn't at some time or other, perhaps even now as I speak to you, he said, oh, that I had that gift of power.

Oh, that I had the power to be this, and I had the power to be that. And it may be that you haven't qualified for this gift. I remember some years ago, speaking to a lady about the wonderful doctrine of election.

She said, oh, if I could only know that I was one of the elect. I said, that's very simple. Very simple to know whether you can qualify as one of the elect.

Oh, she said, is that so? I said, yes, very simple. So, I took you to the first chapter of 1 Corinthians, where you have the word God chose, and you could easily substitute the word God elected. And you read in that chapter that God chose, or elected, people that had no strength.

They were weak. They were foolish. They came for the honor.

I said, you see, ladies, it's a question of qualifying. Are you dumb enough? Are you weak enough? Are you poor enough? Do you want to be that? That's all it takes. That's all it takes.

And so, here in this passage that took you this morning, notice that God gives His power not to those who claim that they've already got some, and all they need is a little bit more in order to get over the top. He gives power to the faint. And to them that have no life, He increases strength.

Do you feel of it what it takes to qualify for this gift? To come into the presence of the Lord as one has to come again and again and say to Him, Lord, I can't go on. I just can't do this in my own strength. Lord, I'm nothing but a defeat weakling.

I come to Him, and He loves to have me just leaned on the arm of His head. So, exactly how simple it is, isn't it? If you would omit those words which are in italics in my Bible, at any rate, in verse 29, it would read like this. He gives power to the faint and to no life.

To no life, He increases strength. I grant you that the pronouns should be there if you want to fully translate the Hebrew, but I thought it was rather interesting to drop out those words in italics there and to see that it's to no life. I remember some years ago I was standing alongside of an old medicine man out on the Navajo field.

He is now a Christian, and his name in the Navajo meant many folks, Abraham Manyfolks. We were having our picture taken, and somebody said to me, What are you going to call this picture, Armandine? Well, I said, we'll call this picture Many Folks and Few Folks. So, this medicine man, this converted medicine man, wanted to know what had just been said, and they told him that they were looking for a title to this picture, and that I had suggested we call it Many Folks and Few Folks.

I was clearly using the word few as an acronym for many, you see. So, he said, Abraham, what would you call it? He said, they call it Many Folks and No Folks. He said, we have not folks.

You see out there, a man's wealth is measured in the number of folks he has. I didn't have any of that, for I was a man with no folks. And, friends, when it comes to the presence of God, I'm a man with no friends, no money, but it's to that kind of people that we give props.

We give props. But you say, how do you get it? Well, in the first place, let's notice that God eliminates all human strength. In that courteous verse, he says, even the youth, that man of his age, shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, or as it is in the Hebrews, stumbling they shall stumble.

In other words, it isn't a question of serving the Lord in your own physical strength. Are there many of us who wish we had more physical strength? I can remember the first day the doctor told me, you're not running for any more training. He said, you're taking it easier from now on.

And I didn't like that, because I was a man, and still am, who likes work. I love work. He said to me, now you can't do as much as you used to do, and that is hard to take.

But maybe, dear friends, that's the way the Lord has it teaching me, that it's not by my small power, but by my privilege that the Lord. So, he rules out even young men with all their strength in the flower of their youth. He rules them out.

But in the last verse, he tells us how we get it. He says, but say that word upon the Lord, shall we use their strength? Not only does he give it and give it in greater measure, but he also renews it. He says, but say that word upon the Lord, shall we use their strength? Now, this is an interesting expression, but say that word upon the Lord.

This might have been translated, but say that word for the Lord. Or, we could take the English word upon and just separate it into a syllable, and I think we'd have a pretty good colloquial way of expressing this. Say that word up on the Lord.

You ever wait up on somebody? Saint Paul uses exactly that word in the first chapter of 1 Thessalonians, where he's speaking to the Thessalonians how they turn to God for might, or to serve the living and true God, and to wait. The word in the Greek really means to wait up for the Lord, like somebody waiting up at night for a loved one to come back. Oh, how one's own heart has thrilled at this when he's been off on some ticket, ticketing a sick person late at night, and you come back in the wee small hours of the morning weary and body and mind.

Perhaps you've already helped to close the eyes of this one who has closed his eyes for the last time upon this world, Carl. Now, you come back weary, and you get right into the backyard and you see the light is still on in the kitchen, and you say, isn't it wonderful she left on a light for me? But when you put your feet in the door to unlock it, you found the door opening of itself on the inside, and there she was. Looking at you tired as you were, you said, would you like a cup of tea before you came? Friends, that's what I mean by waiting up.

You know, waiting up for our blessed Lord to have our home on the last day of his sleep when he comes back again. And I don't know of anything that totally means my friend has to be engaged with the truth, the glorious truth, that he's coming back again. While a lot of Christians are wasting time these days arguing about this and that particular point, some of the dear brethren actually getting into the darkness of waiting for the tribulation instead of the Son of God.

I just go on my simple way, waiting for God's Son from heaven. I ain't waiting for the tribulation, friends, I'm waiting for God's Son from heaven. Amen? Just for you.

I'm waiting up on the Lord, and it is that that is the secret of the renewal of one's son. Now I want you to notice three ways in which this is manifested in the close of this chapter. You know, some of the commentators, at least one of them I should say, tells us that what we have here is a descending climax.

A descending climax? In other words, the thing goes slower and slower and finally peepers out at the end, as though there was any comfort in that. No, friends. What we have here is not a descending climax.

What we have here is three different modes of action. Three different modes of action. It's not a question of pace.

The question is place. I'll show it to you. The first thing it says here about these people of great upon the Lord who are waiting for him to come is that they live on a higher plane than other folks.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles. And that's exactly what St. Paul is exhorting us to be with. For example, in 2 Thessalonians, he's a typical to the Colossians.

Set your mind on things above where Christ is at the right hand of God. That's how you mount up with wings as eagles. And dear friend, unless that has been your experience this morning, unless it is one of the results of being here at Maranatha Conference, that you and I will learn to live on a higher plane and to breathe a heavenly atmosphere.

That's it. The reason why some of us never seem to enjoy good physical health, spiritual health, is because we're constantly breathing the vitiated atmosphere of this wicked, sinful world through which we move. You can't expect to prosper spiritually if you're breathing the vitiated atmosphere of the things that come over the radio and the television and through the magazines and the newspapers.

That's not the way to enjoy good physical health. Granted that we have to have a certain amount of that in order to keep up, as it were, keep abreast of the times, but don't let that be your breakfast in the morning. I well remember the remark of a young man down in New Zealand, a very fine Christian young fellow, who was looking over my shoulder one morning as I was reading the newspaper.

The chief newspaper there was printed like they are the chief newspapers in England. The advertisements, the advertisements, are on the front page. The news is inside.

You have to buy the paper to see. They don't put these big, flashing headlines on the better papers in England, nor do they in New Zealand. And I had opened my newspaper, and this young fellow was leaning over my shoulder to share the news with me, and this is what he said.

He said, what's the devil been up to overnight? And I never heard a better summary of the news than that. You know, that's just about it, isn't it? Whether you have it in the headlines on the front page, or whether you have it inside as the British do, nevertheless, it's pretty much what the devil's been up to overnight. That's a poor spiritual practice, that.

If you and I are going to mount up with wings as easily, dear friends, as those who are like men and women waiting for our blessed Lord to come back again, we're going to have to be occupied with things above for Christ's sake. And there is no better way of doing that than to read the Holy Word of God, and have your mind framed, as it were, to think again about things above the store that you see through which you move. Oh, how refreshing it is, isn't it? To get occupied with those things which abide and those things which are pure, as St. Paul puts it in the last chapter of the disciple to the Philipians.

Then notice what comes next. Faith shall run and not be weary. You see, having mounted up with these wings as eagles, and having spent time in the presence of God, now they're ready to go out and run and do his bidding.

You can't run from your banner. There's no descending climax or a peak. These things are in their proper dependency, dear friends.

If we are going to run to do the Lord's work, and run without weariness, without just thinking, as it were, we're going to have to spend time in the Holy Spirit. That's it. These things are in their proper order here, in their proper sequence.

And then, lastly, we say they shall walk and not walk. And this, probably, is the most difficult of all three of these things, is this matter of walking. It so happens, in the original language of the New Testament, we have two words for walking.

We have one word, *St. Pateo*, which means to walk around. That's the daily round of things. But, we have another word, *Sorteho*, which means to keep step with somebody else, and probably that's the more difficult of the two.

Or, it's easy enough to keep running around and walking around, but to keep step with the children of God, that's something else of an ignorance. How much discord there is among the people of God, simply because they're not in step with each other. He's a man who's never in step with anybody.

But, when you call your attention to it, why, he says, they're all out of step with me. And, I think that's what the trouble with most of these people who have not become adjusted, who don't know what it means to have real fellowship in the things of God. Friends, these, I believe, are the results of breathing on the Lord.

That we shall renew our strength as we mount up with wings as eagles to spend time in his holy presence. To be occupied with the things that he has provided for us. To express it with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

So, run and not be weary. Oh, to be energetic in the service of the Lord. And, that leads me to make this remark.

Sometimes people say that we who are waiting for God's sons in heaven, that it kills all missionary enterprise and endeavor. Nothing is further than the truth. I've been around the world.

Not as often as Bob Jones, either. But, I've been around. But, friends, I'll tell you this.

I've been around the world, and my observation has been that the most energetic people that I know anything about are those who are waiting for God's sons in heaven. And, when it is a civic matter of walking, how many exhortations we find connected with that in the epistles, especially in the epistles we receive them. You've got to read through that epistle and underline the word walk, and you'll see how important this stuff is here.

But, to say it isn't a rather difficult task. You started out by telling us that the task of the child of God was a difficult one. Yes, but the beauty of it is, dear friends, that it gets brighter as you go along.

Proverbs 418, the path of the just is as a shining light. It shines us more and more unto the perfect day. And, the perfect day is not what Harry Jacobs Bond said it was.

His son said it. The end of a perfect day is high noon. It's evening.

That's what the Lord is leading you and me on today. He says, You want the light of God shining on your path. Wait for him.

Spend time in his presence. Run unto him and walk and step with his spirit. I believe you have discovered that your path, even though it is a difficult one, is brighter every day.

Let it shine. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that it is possible for us to encourage each other's thoughts as we move along this upward climb. Up, up, up, and still up.

Higher and higher yet. Leading that same life flood. Knowing that grace that knows no limits.

We thank you, Our Father, for such resources. Now we pray that you would let us in the further part of this service. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.

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