

# The Secret of Strength

by Chuck Smith

---

*The sermon emphasizes that true strength comes from waiting on the Lord and relying on His power rather than our own abilities.*

**Duration:** 30:36

**Scripture:** Isaiah 40:21-44

**Topics:** "Strength"

---

## Description

In this sermon, Pastor Skip takes the audience through chapters 38 to 40 of the book of Isaiah. He emphasizes the greatness of God and His mighty powers. The sermon highlights the fact that there is nothing that can be likened to God, and therefore, making graven images or likenesses of Him is forbidden. The sermon also discusses how God is the creator of the universe and has complete understanding and power. Additionally, Pastor Skip reassures the audience that God gives strength to the weary and promises to be with them.

---

## Transcript

Let's pray. Father, we ask that you would help us to learn to wait upon you. It seems to be our nature, Lord, to want to get things done, to move ahead of your schedule.

And so often, Lord, we find ourselves in deep water because we didn't wait on you. We thank you, Lord, for the promise that as we wait upon you, you will strengthen our heart. Bless now, we pray, the message this morning, Lord, may it speak to us and to our relationship with you.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. You may be seated. Tonight, we will be continuing through the Bible, Isaiah 38 through 40.

Chapter 38 brings up a very interesting kind of a question situation. Hezekiah was told by Isaiah to get his house in order. He was going to die.

Hezekiah instead began to seek the Lord, praying all night, crying unto God to give him more time. And so the Lord promised that he would give Hezekiah another 15 years. But was that really God's will? Was that really God's best, that God accommodate the cries of Hezekiah? In those next 15 years, two events took place that doomed the nation.

You wonder, would it have been better had he died for the nation? I'll leave you to decide that, but read it through and think about that. In chapter 39, of course, we read of one of the two things that transpired in that 15 years that again spelled the doom of the nation. So look it over and think about it.

Pastor Skip will be talking to us about this tonight as he takes us through chapters 38 through 40. When we get into chapter 40, we get into a new section, a section where we are being told of the greatness of God. Several chapters now will deal with the awesomeness of the God that we serve, His mighty powers, His mighty acts, who He is, His nature.

And thus, we've got some exciting times ahead of us as we move from chapter 40 on through the next few chapters here in Isaiah. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to chapter 40, beginning with verse 28, where the prophet said, Have you not known, have you not heard that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, He faints not, neither is He weary. There's no searching of His understanding.

He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increases their strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary. The young men shall utterly fail.

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. In this chapter, Isaiah declares to us the greatness of the God whom we serve. Have you not known, have you not heard that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, Francis Schaeffer, before he died, said that the time has come when we cannot use just the word God in talking about our God, Jehovah.

He said there are so many gods and so many concepts of God in the minds of people today that we need to sort of define the God that we are talking about. Certainly, that's what Isaiah has done here in our text. He describes Him as the everlasting God, or the eternal God.

He calls Him by His name. The name of the God that we serve is Jehovah. It's not Allah.

It's not Buddha. It's not Elohim. It's not Mammon.

It's not Molech. It's not Ashtar. It's Jehovah that is the name of our God.

In Isaiah 44 verse 8, as we're dealing with the subject of God and the greatness of God, God Himself asked, is there a God beside me? He declares, there is no God. I know not any. There are many false gods, but there's only one true and living God who is the creator of heaven and earth, and that is the God that Isaiah is talking about here in these chapters.

Now going back to verse 11 of chapter 40, we are told of His compassion and His tender care for us. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young.

The Bible tells us that God knows our frame. He knows that we're but dust, and He knows how desperately we need help, shepherding. And so He will lead His flock like a shepherd.

He will gather His lambs in His arms. He will carry them in His bosom, gently lead those that are with young. In verse 12, Isaiah speaks of the vastness of our God that we serve, who has measured the waters

in the hollow of His hand, meted out the heaven with a span, comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in balances.

He holds the waters or can hold the waters in the palm of His hand. I have flown over the Atlantic. I have flown over the Pacific.

I was just in awe of the vastness. And though I only saw such a small part of the Atlantic or Pacific in flying over them, I was totally impressed with the vastness of these great oceans, the vastness of the waters that cover the earth. God can hold all of the water of the oceans and of the seas in the palm of His hand.

Now that's a pretty big God. They can hold all of the oceans. I sailed once from Honolulu to California and several days out there on the vast ocean.

And to think that God can hold all of that in the palm of His hand, but even more. He measured out the heavens with a span. The universe, how large is it? We don't know.

There are many estimates and guesses that are being made. But as far as God is concerned, when He decided to make the universe, He decided to make it one span wide. Now, the span is the distance between the tip of the thumb and the little finger when stretched out.

So can you think how big God's hand must be if the whole universe He measured out with just the span? Incomprehensible, the vastness of our God. He's comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, like in a teaspoon. It is estimated that there are 10 to the 25th power grains of sand here on the earth.

It is estimated that the earth weighs 6.6 times 10 to the 19th power tons. I don't know who figured that out, but I'll accept that. I found it in World Encyclopedia.

Six septillion tons, the weight of the earth. And yet He weighs the mountains in a scale and the hills in a balance. Before Him, the nations of the earth are like nothing.

He is so vast. In verse 13, Isaiah speaks of the omniscience of the Lord. He asked, who has instructed the spirit of Jehovah, or being his counselor has taught him? With whom did he take counsel and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgment and taught him knowledge and showed to him the way of understanding? Who did God seek advice from? He has never sought advice from me.

However, there have been many times in my earlier Christian experience when I sought to advise God. I sought to advise him about how I thought he should be running things. I look back now upon those early days of youth and sort of laugh at my own folly in thinking that I could advise or instruct God in what he should do.

Who taught him knowledge? Have you ever sought to help God understand your situation? Have you tried to explain to God, you know, the things that you were feeling and the issues that you were going through and so that he could thoroughly understand? You know, we do chuckle because we realize, yes, we have and how foolish that is. He knows completely. He doesn't need any counsel or advice from us.

He doesn't need for us to explain things to him. And yet we often do. Verse 18, he speaks of how he is incomparable.

To whom then will you liken God? What likeness will you compare unto him? If you should seek to carve an image to represent God, which is a very common practice in the world, as people have carved out little

images to represent their gods. If you would seek to carve out an image to represent God, what would it look like? If you tried to liken God to anything, what would it be like? Now I have seen some of the grotesque images that people have carved and they worship as their God. But what kind of a likeness could you make of one who can hold all of the waters in the palm of his hand? One who is so vast that he can measure the universe with the span.

To what can you possibly liken God? What appearance or form would your little image take? No wonder God said you're not to make or try to make any graven image of me, any likeness of me. Forbidden because there is nothing that we can liken unto God. Don't you know how vast and great God is? Verse 21.

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundation of the earth? It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, he that stretched out the heavens as a curtain and spread them out as a tent to dwell in. Looking at the vast heavens, he stretched them out like a curtain. I love the way the Bible seems to describe the creative powers of God as far as the universe is concerned.

As David said, when I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you should visit him? Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the beginning of the earth? He sits enthroned on the circle of the earth. The inhabitants of the earth are like grasshoppers. He stretches the heavens like a curtain.

What possible comparison can be made between infinity and the finite? The limited area of the finite, there is no basis for comparison with infinite. It defies any comparison. You're talking about the infinite God and you're talking about finite man or finite creation.

What comparison can be made between the creator and the creation or who can equal him? Look at the vast universe. More and more, the scientists are recognizing that it is created, that there was the beginning of time for this universe. Who created the distant galaxies with their billions of stars? Who set them into orbit? Who set it all in motion? One scientist, Sir Herschel Jeans, said that the universe is like a giant clock that was wound up and is slowly winding down.

But who wound it up in the beginning? Isaiah declares that God calls the stars by name. It's estimated that there are as many stars as there are grains of sand upon the earth. The estimate is 10 to the 25th power stars.

Now, can you imagine memorizing the names of all of those stars? He calls them by name. And I don't think they're Joe and Sam. Hey, Joe.

Oh, the vastness, the greatness of the God that we serve so incomprehensible by man. But yet, man often makes mistaken notions of God. In verse 27, Isaiah said, Why do you say, O Jacob? And why do you speak, O Israel, saying, My way is hid from Jehovah, and my judgment is passed over from my God.

How is it that you can think that you can hide from God? That was the mistake that Jonah made when he was called to go to Nineveh. He went down to Joppa to catch a ship. And twice we are told that he was seeking to hide from God.

Later, when Jonah wrote of his experience of being swallowed by the whale and so forth, he said he learned an important lesson. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies. Or if you are believing a lie, you're going to make it tough on yourself.

He was believing a lie that he could hide from God. He found out that he couldn't. He thought that he could escape from God's presence.

He found out he couldn't. And it cost him a miserable trip to find out that information. Why do you say, O Jacob? My ways are hid from Jehovah.

God will not judge me for my sin. My judgment is passed over by God. Have you not known? Have you not heard that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth, he does not faint, neither does he get weary.

There is no searching of his understanding. He is an omnipotent God. He is an omniscient God.

There is no searching of his understanding. What will this great God do for you? What does he pledge to do for you? Verse 29. He gives power to the faint.

To them that have no might, he increases their strength. Do you sometimes feel like you're losing it? Is the load heavier than you can bear? Do you feel sometimes like you're going under, that you've reached the limits? In the very next chapter, he's going to say to us, fear not, for I am with you. Be not dismayed, for I am your God.

I will help you. I will strengthen you. Yea, I will uphold you by my right hand of righteousness.

Isaiah tells us that even the youths may faint and be weary. The young men shall completely fail, but they that wait upon the Lord, he will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings as eagles.

They will run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. The secret of strength is waiting on the Lord.

So often we want to do things in our own energies. We want to fix things ourselves. We're not willing to wait upon the Lord.

They that wait upon the Lord, they are the ones whose strength will be renewed. The load often is too heavy for me, but it's not too heavy for him. The river, the torrent is too swift for me to cross, but not too swift for him.

Paul had a great problem. He called it a stake in his flesh, a tent stake. Someone drove like a tent stake into his flesh.

Constant pain, weakness as a result. Paul called it, it was as a minister of Satan that was constantly buffeting him. He said that he asked the Lord three times to remove this painful experience.

The third time the Lord answered and said, my grace is sufficient for you. My strength will be made perfect in your weakness. It is in the area of weakness that we learn to discover the strength of the Lord.

Where I realize that I am not capable, I discover in those areas God's capabilities. The old statement, man's extremities is God's opportunity, certainly is true. When I've come to the end of my limited resources, I find that God's resources are inexhaustible.

When I am weak, then am I strong because I'm relying upon his strength. And so Paul, when the Lord said, my grace is sufficient for you, my strength will be made perfect in your weakness. Paul responded, therefore, I gladly glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I gladly glory in my weaknesses and I take pleasure in my infirmities and in the reproaches and then the necessities and in the persecutions and in the distresses for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then am I strong. My place of personal strength, those areas that I am personally strong in are the places of my greatest spiritual weakness.

For in those areas where I am personally, innately, genetically strong, I have a tendency to rely upon my strength. When an issue comes along that is one of my strong fortes, I say, well, Lord, don't need your help on this one. I'm able and capable of handling it.

Watch me, Lord. Watch what I can do. And invariably, in those places where I have self-confidence and I'm strong, invariably, those are the places where I fall.

But when the areas of my own personal weaknesses, I know that I am weak. I know that this is a weakness in my character or in my life. Those are the places where I am very strong.

Because when the enemy attacks at one of those points of my own personal weakness, I'm prone to say, oh, Lord, help. I can't handle this, Lord. I'm not able to deal with this, Lord.

You know how weak I am. Help me, Lord. And I'm relying upon his strength.

And thus, I am strong because he is strong. It's interesting that most people do fall at their place of strength, not at their place of weakness, because it's in our place of strength that we're prone to rely upon our strength. I believe that the Apostle Peter was a very rugged, brave individual, a big fisherman ready to take on anyone or anything.

He was willing to get out of the boat and try to walk to Jesus. I mean, he'll take on anything. When they came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, he'll take on the whole band of soldiers that have come to arrest Jesus.

He pulls his sword, begins to swing. He'll take on anything. He's a strong man.

But as he was standing outside of the court of Caiaphas, the high priest, as Jesus was being tried, a little maiden came up and said, Aren't you one of his disciples? This big, rugged, strong man willing to take on anybody or anything said, No, I don't know him. She came back a little later and said, I'm sure you're one of his disciples. I've seen you with him.

And again, this big, strong, rugged man ready to take on anybody, anything says, No, you're wrong. You're mistaken. I don't know him.

The place of strength was the place he fell. His strength, it wasn't sufficient for the test. And you'll find that your strength isn't sufficient for the test.

But if you will wait upon the Lord, he will renew your strength. When you feel like you've exhausted your abilities and all that you can do, and you feel so weak, he will renew your strength that you might mount up with wings as eagles. That you might run and not be weary, that you might walk and not faint.

You feel today like you've reached your limits, like your strength has sort of ebbed away, like the issues are too heavy for you to bear. Like you don't see how you can go on in the condition that you are in. The secret is to wait upon the Lord.

Let him fight the battle. Let him go before you. Let him dispel the enemy.

He will renew your strength. You will mount up as an eagle. You can run and not be weary.

You can walk and not faint. O Lord, help us. O Lord, teach us to wait upon you.

Father, we thank you for the help that you've promised to those that will wait upon the Lord. And Lord, we do pray that today those that are facing difficult situations, those who feel like it's all over, they don't know where to turn. Lord, teach them this day the strength that will come as they wait upon you and just leave these issues in your hand and find, Lord, your help and your strength.

Bless now, we pray, Lord, as we go forth to face the issues of this day. May we experience, Lord, your help, your deliverance, your power, your strength working in us. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8766.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/the-secret-of-strength/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**