

Isaiah 40

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon emphasizes the importance of waiting upon the Lord, trusting in His strength and power, and appropriating His promises to experience spiritual growth and power.

Duration: 39:15

Scripture: Psalm 37:4, Psalm 55:22, Isaiah 40:28-30, 1 Corinthians 15:58, Hebrews 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Renewal", "Faith And Trust"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of seeking strength and restoration from God. He shares a story of a man who experienced a deep sense of delight and rejuvenation after spending time meditating on the word of God and focusing on heavenly things. The speaker reminds believers not to let their spiritual vitality slip away through neglect, urging them to be careful and intentional in their relationship with God. He highlights God's power and ability to overcome difficult circumstances and encourages believers to have faith in His promises. The sermon concludes with the reminder that as members of God's family, believers have access to unlimited resources and should learn how to appropriate and draw upon them.

Transcript

I'd like for us tonight to open our Bibles to Isaiah chapter 40, Isaiah 40, a verse that I'd like for us to think about, a very familiar verse, one that has been often quoted, and one that sometimes we probably, like a lot of scripture that we know, we may quote it and quote it very accurately, and still not probably understand the full meaning and import of that particular passage. So, I thought tonight we'd read this and then think a little about it in depth, starting at verse 28 of Isaiah 40. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the 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 those who have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. The faith that waiteth upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles, and they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. Well, that last verse is the verse that I know I've often quoted it, I've often offered it to someone as encouragement in a time of difficulty in which it seemed perhaps physical strength had ebbed. I'm sated that it deals more in the area of that which is spiritual, and there's not one among us, I suppose, that

would not admit that we could stand to be just a little stronger spiritually.

Because, to be strong spiritually, it really requires that there's a daily feeding and sustaining of that new life that we have in Christ. To grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ requires constant attention. Any laxness on our part causes us to lose strength spiritually.

It can slip away sometimes because of our neglect of it, and we suffer the results. We can even be like Samson of old when he wished not that the power of God had departed from him. And it's just possible that when a Christian, cold of heart and out of touch with the Lord, they can be very weak spiritually speaking.

They need spiritual strength, and they're not even aware of it. But for those of us that, in a sense, are aware that there is a danger there, we like to know how to not only stay strong, but if we do fall in that category of losing some ground, losing some strength, how do we regain our position? How do we draw upon that resource that God makes available to us, his strength? Well, I think this particular passage carries with it some thoughts that will be valuable to us. When you read about waiting upon the Lord, I took note of this, that at least 86 times in the Old Testament there is a reference to this idea of waiting upon the Lord.

Twenty-seven times in the New Testament, waiting upon the Lord. This day that we live in, it doesn't promote that concept too much. We live in a world in which we don't have time to wait.

It's rushed. We're too busy. But, really, this idea of waiting upon the Lord doesn't necessarily mean idleness.

It doesn't carry with it that thought at all. I think the idea in the Hebrew is that it's a word that has some body to it. It has some body to it, and when that condition of heart is such that we're constantly aware of what we need from the Lord, and that he and he alone can provide it, there is strength, there's a resource there, we need it, and if he has it, we have to learn how to appropriate it.

Well, the key seems to be very simple. It's mentioned a number of times in Hebrew 11. By faith we reach out, we appropriate, we learn how to wait upon the Lord.

It's with expectancy. If there are 87 references in the Old Testament to how to wait upon the Lord, certainly we're aware that it's an important aspect of our Christian experience. Those that know the Lord, those that want to do his bidding, we have to learn how to wait.

How much time, as the psalmist says, do we spend in meditation and thought upon the Lord? We wait, and we meditate upon his words. Not this rush, rush, rush of every day in which we seem to be able to squeeze perhaps 10, 15 minutes. Perhaps that's being liberal in many instances, in which we spend some time in devotional thought upon the Word of God.

More than that, it bespeaks of an attitude of heart that is willing to wait and meditate and be in a condition of heart to recognize when God does indeed speak to us, when God does, in a sense, exchange our weakness for his strength. And that's really the weight of the word. The Hebrew word for renew means to exchange.

We exchange our weakness for his strength, and Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12, I think knows what is meant here very accurately, because out of his weakness he discovered that to admit that weakness and to

completely rely upon God, to wait upon the Lord, to provide what was necessary for that service that he had set before him, God would provide just what was needed. The sufficiency of his grace and the strength that was needed. And Paul responds in a way that almost shocks you.

He says, I glory in mine firmness. It seems he almost welcomed the opportunity to exchange his weakness for the strength that God would give him. So, as we think about the passage, being reminded at the very outset we're addressing ourselves to our need, a source that never grows weary.

God never grows weary. His eyes are never closed. He's ever aware of our every need.

Isn't it wonderful that he awaits with joy the response of a believer that cries out day by day for help, for that resource that he dispenses just as we need it. His strength, his grace. When we express our dependence upon him, he is delighted.

And so often we read words in the word of God, those that delight themselves in the Lord in his way. You know, he doesn't withhold any good thing from us. He knows what is best for us.

So, when we call unto him in our hour of need, when we express that dependence upon him, his response is a joy of the Father's heart. I will give it. I will dispense just what you need at that time.

Well, those that learn how to wait upon the Lord are given a promise. And, indeed, it is exciting to read that a Christian living in the world in which we live today, those down through the ages that have learned to wait and trust in the Lord, have a sure promise from the Lord. Not only shall strength be renewed, they shall mount up with wings like eagles.

Sounds pretty exciting, doesn't it? The psalmist, when he tells us that there are ways in which the believer learns how to mount and to have this experience of soaring in that heavenly realm, set free from the world in which we live, too often we are earthbound, too often we've nailed our tent pegs down too deep, we've settled down too much ease, too much enjoyment, too much satisfaction with this world, and we lose sight of our goals that we're just passing through. The psalmist would remind us that to learn how to mount up and have this wonderful heavenly experience that, indeed, has all of the marks of excitement in a realm in which perhaps not many Christians have experienced, yet it's a promise from the Lord. Psalm 104, verse 34, says, "...my meditation of him shall be sweet." Reminds us of precious times of holy meditation and worship of our God and our Savior, and this, indeed, can send the spirit soaring.

We've just had a time in which I don't think there's any experience in life that can be compared to it, when we, indeed, have proclaimed the Lord's death to this world in which we live. But the personal benefits to me as a believer in which I was afforded that wonderful grand privilege of coming back and remembering one that first remembered me, I waited upon him and I had a promise of his presence with us. The reward has already been received.

The joy that one experiences in his own soul when he knows that he has obeyed the Lord. His mother would tell those at that marriage feast in Canaan, whatsoever he tells you to do, just do it. The Word of God reminds us, are you if you do these things? The happiness and joy that's associated with obeying God's Word.

Holy meditation, time spent that is characterized as being precious and sweet times. These are the words of the psalmist, worshiping and meditating around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The psalmist can remind us that it requires that this desire, indeed, be a holy desire.

We have desires that are in keeping with the holy character and the righteousness of our God. Not worldly desires, not desires that only cater to self, but those desires that the soul finds itself fixed upon our God. The one that, indeed, can address himself to the needs of our hearts, can provide revival.

The one that can exchange for our weakness strength, that makes us victorious in our Christian experience. By holy affection, and the psalmist reminds us of this. I think of Colossians 2, that tells us that we are to set our affection upon heavenly things, upon things that are above where Christ sits at the right hand of God in the heavens.

The little chorus that we sometimes sing, turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full into his wonderful face. The things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and his grace. Indeed, there is a real warm and large place in the hearts of God's people for the person of the Savior that they know, the one that they have entrusted their soul into his eternal care.

I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. So, set your affection upon things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Holy affection for our God and for his Son, a fresh appreciation daily of all that he does for us.

He sustains us, he keeps us. It's the keeping power of our God to sustain us and strengthen us for the day in which we live. Psalm 34, verse 3, seems to express to me a holy design whereby we exalt him.

It certainly seems appropriate that those that have been recipients of so much at the hands of our God, we should respond and we should exalt him to the heights, the exaltation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's expressed, I think, in that first chapter of Colossians in which we're told, let him have the preeminent place, let him have first place, and that brings joy to the heart of the individual that recognizes, O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. God wants his people to be ever conscious of their body relationship.

There should be a consciousness of our relationship as believers in the Lord Jesus, an acknowledgment that accepts the responsibility that's incumbent upon each one of us as a believer to be mindful of the needs of the other members of the body. In so doing, we express our appreciation to our living risen head. As we serve others, we serve him.

Indeed, that's a lovely thought, and to be reminded that we exalt him even in our service. We seek to put him first. We seek to the world that we live in to prove without any shadow of doubt that we found that better way which is in the person of the Lord Jesus.

There are a lot of people that have perhaps looked at this passage, and they've gained insight into many of the things that are mentioned here. I thought about something that Van Tavenner had to say about the passage. He made a reference to eagles and hawks, and the fact that there are birds that soar up in the heavens.

That's their realm. That's where they seem to thrive best, and they look so majestic, and I think sometimes we look with envy at that bird wheeling around in the sky. Brother Havener talked about how sad it is sometimes you go down the highway, and perhaps you see one of these little roadside zoos or something like that, and you go over to one of those cages, and here's one of those soaring birds like a hawk or an eagle.

There he is in the narrow confines of perhaps some little cage. Brother Havener said, you know, I feel like sometimes going to the owner and said, how much do you want for that bird? Finding out and paying the price, and then just taking him and saying, you're free. I want to see you soar.

I want to see you in that realm where you belong, up in the heavens. That's true of Christians, too, isn't it? Vance Havener said, there are too many cooped-up Christians. In a sense, they have built for themselves cages.

They find themselves restricted on every side. The toleration of sin, unconfessed in the life of a Christian, cages him. Cooped up, unable to function in a way that would be well-pleasing to God.

Impotence, no power for God, with no thought of how to appropriate and have strength renewed, and to have the experience of soaring as upon the wings of eagles. It requires weighing upon God, and it indeed is a sad sight to see some of God's dear people, and their lives and their testimonies have been spoiled by sin. Maybe because of carelessness or indifference to the claims of Christ, taking lightly what we have in the Lord Jesus.

Whatever the cause, it's a tragic thing. It's a sad thing to have at one time had fellowship and communion with some of God's dear people in the cause of sin. To see that individual brought to a place where the things of God are no longer precious and dear, to assemble with God's people it no longer has meaning, and having long since forgotten how to refresh one's soul around the person of Christ.

This is indeed a sad picture that we have for us as we think about the provision that is made, and yet the laxness of so many to avail themselves of that wonderful provision. Christians in a coop. I thought of this.

You know, God saved us for some pretty high living. Have you ever heard a fellow say, I'm living high on the hog? I always associate that with perhaps eating the ham rather than the fatback or something like that, but at least it implies that prosperity has come his way. I'm living high on the hog.

I think God saved us for some high living. Probably on a much higher plane than most of us are experiencing at this moment. It's not God's will that we be there.

If we're in some place in which we're cooped in, we feel restricted, we're limited as to what we can do for the Lord. It's not by holy design. Too often we've placed ourselves there because of that carelessness, that indifference of heart that perhaps would say, I'm satisfied to be saved and on my way to heaven.

Not fully understanding that we've been bought with a price, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. I'm not my own. I'm God's property.

I belong to God, and He expects from me that performance that would bespeak of my appreciation and my gratitude for what He has done for me. So, any thoughts of indifference, any thoughts of not counting it as being important that I wait upon the Lord daily is foreign to the Word of God. I know for a fact that in reading my Bible that God wants the very best for me, the very best, and I'm not to be satisfied with anything that is very best, because that's what He wants, that's what He desires, that's what He has provided, and if I wait upon Him I can indeed rise above all of these vaser things and circumstances that sometimes so discourage the Christian along this pathway.

One brother said, when you bind yourself to God, brother, get ready to take off. So often we begin to weigh what the cost would be, and we settle for a whole lot less than God's best for us, and we

compromise, and we say, well, you know, I'm not one of those spiritual believers, and my gift, well, I'm just not a very gifted person, and you can go the round of all of those excuses that you have made and I have made, and we've heard from the lips of other brothers and sisters in Christ, that's just a cop-out, that's all it is. God wants us as His dear children to be strong daily, having strength renewed spiritually, and soaring in the heavens, fitted for all of the circumstances of life.

Not bogged down, not in some slaw of despond, not defeated by this world in which we live. It's something to feel that surge of spiritual power that God can provide. When you think, by example, of that experience of sitting down in an airplane, jet, a racing car, something that's going to generate a lot of power, and you feel that power, that surge of power when that engine begins to generate all of that thrust, and you feel your body being pressed back against the seat, you know there's power there.

Think about the fellow that's in the rocket that's fixing to soar out into space, and all of the g-forces that are brought to bear upon that body, and that power that's been generated is turned loose. No power that we've ever known anything about that can compare with the power of God. We're talking about ultimate power, omnipotence.

That's the power of God. And what we can experience in that spiritual realm is more exciting and more impressive than all of the power that is within the grasp of men, as far as rockets, and airplanes, and racing cars, and all of these things that excite and arouse the emotions of people that like those sort of things. Power of God upon an individual life, spiritual power.

I think about Enoch, man of God. He said that he walked with God. You think about Enoch walking with the Lord, close communion and fellowship, the intimacy of that relationship.

He walked with the Lord. One day, the Lord said, Enoch, why go back home? Just come on, go with me. He said, Lord, I'm ready, and he just went on with the Lord.

God made available to that man something that's available to us. There can be the intimacy of fellowship and communion with our God. He wants us to go on with him every day into a deeper and more meaningful spiritual experience.

You know, sometimes the real test is, do you want to go to heaven? Do you want to go to be with the Lord right now? Sometimes when you ask yourself that question, would I be willing to leave at this moment? If, by choice, I could say, Lord, I want to be absent from this body, and I want to be in your presence right now, and if I said that, it would become a reality. How many of us would say it? You even sense, as you say that, some reluctance to say that. We feel inhibited in some way as far as wanting to have that experience.

We may even say, you know, I just don't feel like I'm worthy of that right now. I want to live a little longer to attain to some position or standard whereby I will feel worthy the day that I'm brought into his presence. Well, that's foreign to the word of God.

You know, the moment that I was saved, I was made acceptable for God's presence. I'll never be any more acceptable in his presence than I am right now, or from the moment that I was saved, because I'm accepted in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God reminds us that we're already seated together in heavenly places in Christ.

You see, we need to think upon the value of the one that we're identified with, the person of the Lord Jesus, and when we think in those terms, of course, we're reminded of how great our God really is, the power that has been exercised to bring to us the salvation that we enjoy tonight, the salvation in its fullest scope that will afford us power beyond perhaps anything that we've ever experienced. Enoch walked with God, and God took him up. You know, our God has the power over even the circumstances of life that seem so difficult, so difficult to us.

There are no difficulties with God, for often we say, Lord, this is too hard. We limit God when we say that. No, there's nothing too hard for God.

The resource that we can draw upon is unlimited as to what it can do. Sometimes it's a test of our faith. Do we really believe God can do all that he says he can do, all of the things that he has promised? We have the assurance that he's never broken one of his promises.

He cannot lie. He says there's power available. Brother, it's there.

We have to learn how to appropriate. We'll have to learn how to draw upon that resource. Are we qualified? We should, as believers in the Lord Jesus, members of that royal family.

God is our father. Christ is our savior. We're in the family of God.

I will arise and go to my father's house. Oh, the resources that are there. I know what's there.

He arose and he went. Very often that has to be our experience. Not just the rhetoric, not just talking about these things.

We can say so many words in connection to things like this, and yet we never arise and go to the father's house. We never go to that banqueting table. We never let him clothe us in garments that are befitting our relationship to him as sons of God that ring upon our finger, choose upon our feet.

So often there are too many of God's dear children that live here in this life. They live like beggars. They live like the poor prodigal.

They're feeding upon the husk of this world, and there's available to them a banqueting table that God has prepared. Wait upon the Lord. Have your strength renewed.

Mount up upon the wings of eagles. Soar in the heavenly atmosphere. Have your soul thrilled.

Live in a realm that God has prepared for all of his dear blood-bought children, a realm in which there's a consciousness of his presence, and communion and fellowship with him are something that can be enjoyed at any moment during any day. They shall run and not be weary, and waiting upon God is essential for unwearied running. There are too many sprinters sometimes in God's service, not many of those that are able to sustain anything in the way of a long-distance running.

They sprint for a while. Certainly we all have our limitations, but perseverance, steadfastness. These are Bible words, and they speak to us, I think, of our condition of heart and our condition of mind before the Lord.

I think of the words of the Apostle Paul when he said this is 1 Corinthians 15:58, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Forasmuch as you know

that your labor is not in vain in the Lord, you say, Amen. We may grow weary in the Lord's work, but certainly we never grow weary of it.

And being in the family of God is something that should never, never, never become mundane. Every day should be an exciting experience in the Lord, occupation with those things that we've been talking about this evening. It shouldn't be just a rare occasion that we talk about these things and think about these experiences.

I'll have to mention this. I've mentioned it several times since I heard of it, and it's a rarity. I haven't heard of anything like it.

A man had some time coming to him at the place that he worked. He was told, Take this time or you'll lose it. I don't know if it was sick leave or something like that, and he went to his boss man, and he said, Well, really, I don't have anything to do specifically.

I was just going to let the time pass, but I got to think. I want to take that time, and I'm going to tell you why, and if you object, then I'll understand. But, I'm not sick of body.

I'm strong, healthy as far as I know, but as a Christian, I think that I could really enjoy some time in just being occupied with the Lord, just waiting upon God. He'll give me that six or seven days that are coming. I plan and purpose before him to spend it in complete occupation with the person of my Savior.

I think that I need renewing in my inner inward man. The spiritual man is weak, and I've recognized it. I want to do something in which I can have strength restored to the most important parts of my very being.

The request was granted, and that story says that that man by his own testimony said those were the most delightful six or seven days that he could remember spending in a long time over the Word of God in meditation and thoughts upon our great God and the provisions that he's made in the person of Christ. Occupation with things that are indeed heavenly and divine, a replenishing of strength that had been lost through daily activity, sometimes just sheer neglect. The writer to Hebrews reminds us, you be careful don't you let these things slip away from you.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, so often things that one day we valued and treasured, because of neglect we can let these things slip away. We pay a tremendous price for that neglect. It is said of John Wesley when he was 82 years old, he says, I am never weary in my service for God.

I understand that it was a man that he was an early riser and stayed up until perhaps nine, ten o'clock at night. I don't know, but a long day. He didn't have an automobile, rode on horseback, none of those conveniences that you and I enjoy today.

Yet, this man with every day of his life just chock full of activity, he says, I never grow weary. I think he learned what we're talking about in this passage. He learned how to have strength renewed day by day.

He learned how to mount up upon the wings of eagles and soar in the heavenly realm. He learned how to run and not be weary. Learned how to walk and to not faint.

The solution is very simple. I know you haven't missed it. It just means waiting upon God, waiting upon God with expectancy that he's going to provide just what you need for that day that lies before you to be refreshed spiritually from the hand that just delights to serve our needs.

Their pierced hands, the one that we have entrusted the eternal destiny of our souls into his hands, he delights even now to serve those that have trusted him with the eternal destiny of their souls. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. Shall we pray? Our Father in heaven, we bow in thy presence and thank thee tonight for the delightful privileges that we've enjoyed today as believers in the Lord Jesus, to treasure the moments spent with our dear people around the person of the Lord Jesus, to be conscious of his presence with us, to be able to open up our hearts and our souls, and to pour upon him that which we have gathered from thy word in sweet meditation upon him, to worship and praise him who is indeed worthy. We pray even tonight our thoughts upon the passage that you set before us will afford us some enlightenment into an area that so often we lose sight of.

Lord, your provisions are so many and so great. Grant, we pray thee, that we'll not be guilty of limiting thee. We need strength.

We can exchange our weakness for your strength. We can soar. We can run and not be weary.

We can walk and not faint, and we can give you all the glory for what you provide. O God, we pray thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, help us to be those that are wise and learn how to appropriate, learn how to quietly wait upon thee. For this we ask in the name of and for the glory and honor of the Lord Jesus.

Amen.

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