

# An Awesome God

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning. My name is Jerry Shepard. I'm from Taylor Seminary, and I'm the guest preacher this morning and next week as well.
- While your pastor Kent is away, I was with you for a couple of Sundays last summer, and I'm happy to be with you. Good Saints at Braymore again for these next couple of times.
- We'll wish it could be in person, but we will deal with the exigencies of the situation and go accordingly. For these two messages, what I thought I would do is something along the line of our vacationing this summer.
- Maybe you're vacationing. Perhaps you're going to the Rockies at some point to deal with this whole COVID thing, get back to some nature as we sometimes say it.
- And so both sermons are going to have to do in some way with the greatness of our God. And both sermons are actually going to mention the Rockies at some point. So maybe this will enhance a bit of your vacation as well.
- [ 1 : 11 ]     So this morning, the sermon title will be An Awesome God. And we're going to be reading from Isaiah 40.
- So it's Isaiah 40 this week, Psalm 104 next week. Some fairly long passages of scripture. So don't hold my reading of the passage as part of my allotment time for the sermon itself.
- So bear with me on that. So if you have a Bible with you, you may want to turn to Isaiah 40 or you may just want to listen. So we'll read that first.
- Isaiah 40, the entire chapter. Comfort, comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.
- A voice of one calling in the desert. Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.
- [ 2 : 27 ]     Every valley shall be raised up. Every mountain and hill made low. The rough ground shall become level. The rugged places a plain.
- And the glory of the Lord will be revealed. And all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord is spoken. A voice says, cry out.
- And I said, what shall I cry? All men are like grass. And all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall.
- Because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall. But the word of our God stands forever.
- You who bring good tidings to Zion. Go up on a high mountain. You who bring good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift up your voice with a shout.
- [ 3 : 27 ]     Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah. Here is your God. See, the sovereign Lord comes with power. And his arm rules for him.
- See, his reward is with him. And his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms.

And carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those that have young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand?

Or with the breath of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket? Or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

Who has understood the mind of the Lord? Or instructed him as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?

[ 4 : 25 ] And who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge? Or showed him the path of understanding? Surely, the nations are like a drop in a bucket.

They are regarded as dust on the scales. He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires.

Nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are as nothing. They are regarded by him as worthless. And less than nothing.

To whom then will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? As for an idol, a craftsman casts it. And a goldsmith overlays it with gold.

And fashions silver chains for it. A man too poor to present such an offering. Selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman.

[ 5 : 26 ] To set up an idol that will not topple. Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth. And its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy.

And spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught. And reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted.

No sooner are they sown. No sooner do they take root in the ground. Then he blows on them and they wither. And a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. Lift your eyes and look to the heavens. Who created all these?

[ 6 : 30 ] He who brings out the story host one by one and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength. Not one of them is missing.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel? My way is hidden from the Lord. My cause is disregarded by my God.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God. The creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary.

And his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary.

And young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.

[ 7 : 31 ] They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will soar on wings like eagles.

Before we begin the message, let's commit this to the Lord in prayer. Our God and Father, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that you would be pleased with the words of my mouth and with the meditations of our hearts.

And I ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Amen. In 1973, InterVarsity Press published one of their most popular and best-selling books.

It was titled Knowing God and was written by the theologian J.I. Packer, who is now in his 90s, I believe, and Emeritus Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver.

I read the book and enjoyed it immensely. Out of all the good things that Packer says in the book, however, the thing I remember most about that book is the very first sentence of the book.

[ 8 : 55 ] In the foreword, Packer begins by saying, As clowns yearn to play Hamlet, so I have wanted to write a treatise on God.

Now, I don't know whether that analogy was original with Packer, but it certainly captures the essence of what theologians do when they attempt to write books about God, or what any of us do whenever we begin a sentence with the words God is, and then try to complete that sentence with adjectives that describe God.

One of the greatest theologians of the 20th century was Karl Barth. Over the course of 35 years, he wrote a 13-volume, nearly 9,000-page systematic theology, a work titled The Church Dogmatics.

After he had been producing these volumes for some 20 years, he said at one point this, The angels laugh at old Karl.

They laugh at him because he tries to grasp the truth about God in a book of dogmatics. They laugh at the fact that volume follows volume, and each is thicker than the previous one.

[ 10 : 25 ] As they laugh, they say to one another, Look, here he comes now with his little pushcart full of volumes of the dogmatics. Truly, the angels laugh.

Well, if Barth was right, and if indeed the angels do laugh at their, our feeble attempts to capture the truth about God, then the ones who were assigned to hear the sermon this morning must be doubled over in laughter.

For my announced topic, my title for the sermon is, An Awesome God. You might remember that in the Middle Ages, theologians actually had debates over how many angels could dance on the head of a pin.

I'd be willing to bet the angels themselves were in stitches as they listened in on those debates. But how much more, they must be busting a gut to listen to some preacher attempt to describe in a puny little 30-minute sermon, Don't hold me to that, by the way.

In a puny little 30-minute sermon, the awesomeness of Almighty God. I fully realize that I'm less qualified to preach a sermon about God, and I'm going to date myself here, than Jethro Bodine on the Beverly Hillbillies, that country bumpkin, was qualified to become, as he put it, a brain surgeon or a double-knot spy.

[ 12 : 01 ] Nevertheless, I'm going to try, and I'm going to attempt to describe God's awesomeness using the via negativa.

That is, I'm going to attempt to describe God by actually describing what he is not. Early on in church history, certain theologians believe that we can make far truer statements about God if, rather than talking about what God is, we instead talk about what he is not.

They carried this too far and went on to conclude that nothing positive could be said about God. It is also the method that Isaiah uses in this 40th chapter that we read just a few minutes ago.

What I wish to do this morning, based on the preaching of Isaiah in this 40th chapter, is first, to make five negatively phrased statements about the awesomeness of God.

And then second, to attempt to understand why what we can learn about God from these statements is important for our lives.

[ 13 : 17 ] So, the first statement is this. God cannot be measured. In verse 12, Isaiah asks the question, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breath of his hand marked off the heavens?

Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales, and the hills in a balance? Now, do you see here the absurdity of the picture that Isaiah paints for us?

Imagine a family that has gone to the beach for the day. While they are there, the father just wonders out loud how much water there is in that ocean.

And his little boy says, I'll find out for you, daddy. And then he goes down to the edge of the water, cups a handful, brings it back a few feet to a dry spot on the beach, pours it out, and then goes back for another handful, thinking that in some way he's going to measure all the water in the ocean that way.

Or imagine someone setting out for themselves the impossible task of collecting all the dirt and dust and sand on the face of the earth into a picnic basket.

[ 14 : 47 ] Or imagine a family taking a drive through the Canadian Rockies, and the mother remarks out loud, how many tons and tons of rock there must be in those mountains.

And her little girl calls out, Mommy, let's go back and get our bathroom scales and find out just how much the mountains do away. Now, as absurd as these examples seem, the absurdity becomes compounded even more when we remember that earth is only one of the hundreds of billions of planets and stars and comets, meteors and solar systems that God has created and placed in orbit in our galaxy alone.

And that besides our galaxy, there are hundreds of billions of other galaxies. Suppose you wanted to visit a star in the closest galaxy there is to our Milky Way galaxy.

Well, your first step would not be all that hard. All you would have to do is go out to your backyard, hop in your rocket ship, blast off, and head for that star.

There are two problems, however, that would tend to complicate things. First, you would need to travel at the speed of light, roughly 186,000 miles per second.

[ 16 : 24 ] Or in other words, you would have to travel so fast that you could get from here to the moon in one and a half seconds. That is approximately 670 million miles per hour.

The fastest we have been able to get any manned spacecraft to go so far is about 25,000 miles per hour.

Now, you could possibly overcome that problem. But the second problem is an insurmountable obstacle. By the time you got there, even traveling at the speed of light, and given that a normal lifespan for a human being is about 70 to 80 years, you would probably have been already dead for approximately 200,000 years before you got there.

And if you were to set yourself an even loftier goal, that of visiting a star in the furthest galaxies from us, and again, granting that you were able to travel at the speed of light, it is estimated by scientists that it would take you somewhere in the neighborhood of 16 billion years to get there.

Now, consider this. At one time, all those hundreds of billions of planets, meteors and comets and stars and galaxies, and all the space that separates them, existed nowhere except in the mind of God.

[ 18 : 07 ] As the great preacher S.M. Lockridge said in his famous sermon on the Lordship of Christ, God created the worlds out of nothing, hung them upon nothing, and then told them to stay there.

And then here we are. We can't even measure God's universe with our puny little instruments. How much less can we measure God himself?

But it's not just that we don't have large enough measuring devices. There's another problem as well. When I was in the third grade, the teacher introduced us to fractions and measuring things with a ruler.

One of our class time assignments was to measure two lines with a ruler, add the measurements together, write the sum down on a piece of paper, and bring it up to the teacher for her to see our result and provide us with instant gratification.

Well, I did the measurements, added them, wrote the answer down, brought it up to the teacher's desk, and heard her say, Jerry, you've got it wrong.

[ 19 : 28 ] Go back to your desk and try it again. So I went back, did the measurements again, added them together again, got the same answer again, wrote it down again, brought it up to the teacher again, and I was told that I had it wrong again.

Now, after this happened the third time, I could see the teacher was becoming somewhat upset. In fact, you're probably wondering how I ever got that PhD. But then she decided to come back with me to my desk and watch me do the measuring.

It was then that she noticed that the ruler I was using had actually been cut off a quarter of an inch on the left-hand side, so that no matter what I was measuring, I was always going to measure it incorrectly.

You see, the problem wasn't that the ruler I was using wasn't long enough, but rather that it was deficient from the very start. And we have the very same problem whenever we think that we can in some way measure God or one of his attributes.

It's not just that we don't have any measuring devices large enough to measure God, but the measuring devices that we do have are faulty ones.

[ 20 : 54 ] Our reasoning faculties have been damaged and even our ability to judge morality and the difference between right and wrong has been distorted by the fall that took place in the Garden of Eden.

That is why entire nations and societies and so-called civilizations have been so easily persuaded that morally reprehensible actions were necessary for the common good of society.

That slavery was able to be retained for so long as an institution in the southern United States that a whole nation could be persuaded that the death of six million Jews was necessary in order to maintain the supremacy of the super race.

The fact that our ability to judge the rightness and wrongness of actions has been seriously damaged is also the reason why even today ethnic cleansing of the type that took place in Nazi Germany, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda.

That's why those things could happen. And it is also the reason why two countries on the North American continent, two of the most enlightened countries of the world, have decided for reasons of convenience, economy, and personal choice that the proper solution for unwanted pregnancies is infanticide.

[ 22 : 32 ] can we honestly and realistically expect such societies to use their standards of morality as measuring devices by which the holiness of God can be gauged?

There is another problem with our ability to measure God. It's not just that the devices we have are not large enough or they are damaged ones, but perhaps most important of all, they aren't even the correct devices.

I'll give one example. Isaiah refers to God in this chapter as the Holy One. To us, the word Holy refers to ethical and moral purity.

Whenever the Bible describes God with this word Holy, however, it is almost certain that the idea of ethical and moral purity, though it may be involved, is not the main thing being expressed.

Rather, the word refers to the absolute separateness, the absolute uniqueness of God. God is totally other. God is wholly other.

[ 23 : 49 ] He is the transcendent God who is far above anything we can possibly imagine or any conception that we could possibly form with our finite minds.

I have never seen this idea expressed any better than by A.W. Tozer in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*. Tozer says, we cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely better. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unattainable.

You see, it is not so much that measuring God's holiness is like trying to weigh the earth on a five pound scale. or trying to measure the distance from earth to Jupiter with a six inch ruler.

But it's more like trying to weigh the earth with a yardstick, trying to measure the distance from the Milky Way to the next closest galaxy with a bathroom scale, trying to measure the wind velocity of a hurricane or tornado with a thermometer, water, or trying to measure the cold of an Edmonton winter with a Mickey Mouse wristwatch.

[ 25 : 25 ] It's not so much that any device we might use to measure God's holiness would not be big enough, as true as that is. Rather, it's that we have absolutely no clue as to what kind of apparatus could be used.

God is absolutely unique, utterly transcendent, wholly other, totally awesome.

In short, he is holy. The second negative statement that I want you to consider this morning is this. God cannot be instructed.

Look again at verses 13 to 14. Who has understood the mind of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor?

Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him? And who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

[ 26 : 39 ] When I say that God cannot be instructed, I am simply saying that there is nothing that God does not know. God has never learned.

He has never been taught. He has never been surprised, shocked, amazed, astonished, astounded, flabbergasted. God has never had to keep him informed.

God did not have to stay up late every night this week to watch the weather in order to find out whether he should carry an umbrella the next day.

Nor has he ever had to tune in to the psychic connection to ascertain what his next move ought to be. God never needs to watch CNN to find out what's happening in the world.

He doesn't have to surf the internet to go looking for sources of information. Nor does he need a 2.5 terabyte hard drive on which to store data.

[ 27 : 44 ] In other words, God is the ultimate cosmic know-it-all. As a good friend of mine back in Bible college one day asked me, has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurred to God?

Let me say that again. Has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurred to God? Think about it for a while. But again, the important point here is not just that God knows more facts than we do, but that even for the facts that we do know, God knows each one of those facts in infinitely greater detail than we do.

And indeed, it is certainly true that God knows us better than we know ourselves. You remember the words of the psalmist?

Oh God, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise. You perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out, my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways. before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely, O Lord.

- [ 29 : 06 ] There is a third negative statement that I would like for us to look at. Look again at verses 15 to 17. It says there, Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket.

They are regarded as dust on the scales. He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

Before him all the nations are as nothing. They are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. The third negative statement is this.

God cannot be impressed. We may have delusions of grandeur about ourselves, but God has no delusions of grandeur about us.

There is nothing we can do that will impress God. The tables can never be reversed. We may often be awed by God, but God is never awed by us.

- [ 30 : 16 ] And as awesome as they may seem to us, God is never impressed by great empires or superpowers, by test two babies or atomic bombs, by the latest scientific discoveries or the most recent space exploration.

To him, the nations are a drop in the bucket. A few years ago, well, nearly 20 years ago now, I guess, when we had been in Canada for a little while and my family went camping for the very first time in our very own tent.

We'd been camping one time before and we were in this small tent. It was called a four-person tent, but it was more like a tent that one small pygmy would have been comfortable in, I suppose.

In any case, I decided to get me a bigger tent. So, the week before we went camping this time, I had gone to a local department store and I bought a tent that measures 9 feet by 12 feet by about 6 and a half feet high.

I was so proud of that tent. It was called the Big Grizzly, sold by, you may remember, Zellers at one point. That tent seemed so big and spacious with enough room to move around in, I could stand up in the tent.

- [ 31 : 47 ] At the front of the tent, there was even about a three-foot canopy. And so, I was glorying in this wonderful tent that I had bought.

And then, one day, I was reading in Isaiah 40, shortly after buying that tent, and I came across verse 22. He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and his people are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the heavens like a canopy and spreads them out like a tent to live in. After I read that, it was almost as if I was in my tent, glorying in how spacious it was, when all of a sudden, God stuck his head in the door of the tent and said, Jerry, what a nice tent you've got here.

I'm very happy for you. Would you like to come out and look at my tent? And then, I go out and I look up at God's tent, that perhaps measures some 16 billion light years in every direction, and I realize that God is not impressed.

the people to whom Isaiah is preaching in this chapter were exiles. They were Israelites who had been carried away into captivity in Babylon because of their many sins and rebellions against God.

- [ 33 : 21 ] Many prophets had warned them that God was going to punish them by sending them into captivity, but they refused to believe that God would do it. After all, they had the temple, a place for God to dwell in, and connected with the temple, they had the sacrificial system in which they continually offered bulls and rams and lambs in their minds in order to keep God fed.

God needed that temple, and he needed those sacrifices, they thought, and because of that, God would never send them into captivity. But in Psalm 50, God says to them, do you really think that I need your sacrifices?

Do you really think that you are keeping me fed? The cattle in a thousand hills are mine, and if I was hungry, I sure wouldn't tell you about it. If you look at all the trees in Lebanon to use as firewood, and you used all the animals in Lebanon and offered them to me as burnt offerings, I would not be impressed.

And in Isaiah 66, God says, do you really think that I need this microscopic little temple to live in? Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool, and if I needed a place to stay tonight, I wouldn't come knocking on your door.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that you can do to impress God or to win his favor. A fourth negative statement about God.

[ 34 : 58 ] God cannot be equal. Look again at verses 18 to 20. To whom then will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?

As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold, a man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot.

He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple. And look also at what God says in verse 25. To whom will you compare me?

Or who is my equal? Says the Holy One. God has no equals. He has no counterparts. Isaiah says that the worship of idols is the ultimate absurdity.

A man goes out to the forest and he cuts down a tree. Half of the wood of that tree he uses for his fireplace. The other half he takes to the local craftsman to put it in a metal casting.

[ 36 : 08 ] Then he takes it to the goldsmith to put a thin layer of gold over the casting. Then he sets it up in his home or in his front yard or backyard and falls down and worships it.

Evidently forgetting that the idol is nothing more than half of the tree. The other half of which is right now burning in his fireplace.

And if the person is too poor to have his idol cast in metal and overlaid with gold, he has to take special care to make sure the wood he chooses to make the idol out of is wood that won't rot.

And then he has to be sure to have a pedestal made for it so that while he is worshipping it, it won't fall over.

Can such idols truly be considered as rivals for God's glory, as equals to him? If you ever have the opportunity to teach a children's class and would like to press on them the point that we are making right now, here is a good way to do it.

[ 37 : 22 ] Play the opposite game with them. You say a word and they have to say the opposite as fast as they can. In fact, I'll play it with you right now. You can play it at home.

I'll play it here and I'll provide the answers as well. So, here we go. If I say day, you would say night. If I say boy, you would say girl.

If I say sun, S-U-N, you would say moon. Light, dark, white, black, clean, dirty, brother, sister, man, woman, odd, even, God.

Well, now, this word gets tricky. Did you think Satan or the devil as the opposite? But that would not be right. God has his challengers, but he has no opposites.

He has no equals. Satan is only a created being, to be sure, a powerful one, but not all-powerful. A smart one, but not all-knowing.

[ 38 : 34 ] He gets around a lot, but he is not like God, omnipresent. He has lived for quite a long time, but he is not like God, eternal.



Satan has his opposites. It would be one of the archangels, Michael or Gabriel, but God has no opposites. And whenever we worship anything besides God, whether it be idols or houses or cars or jobs or rock stars or presidents or premieres or prime ministers or movie actors and actresses, we only show how stupid we are in not being able to tell the difference between the creature and the creator.

God cannot be equaled. And quickly, I'll make a fifth negative statement. Look at verse 28.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

The fifth negative statement. God cannot be exhausted. He cannot be emptied. His resources are limitless, for his resources are in himself, and he is in himself infinity.

[ 40 : 04 ] In the second chapter of this book, Isaiah tells the Israelites to stop putting their trust in man, in human beings. And the reason he gives is an interesting one.

he says, stop trusting in man, because man's breath is in his nostrils. In other words, don't put your trust in human beings, because none of them can even guarantee that they will be able to draw their next breath.

Rather, put your trust in God, the one who exists in himself, and depends on no one for his own existence.

God's presence. He is indeed the great I am. We are those who live and move and have our being in God and who exist at his good pleasure.

He is the one who lives and moves and has his being in himself and exists at his own good pleasure. God. So there they are, five negative statements about God.

[ 41 : 14 ] God cannot be measured, he cannot be instructed, he cannot be impressed, he cannot be equaled, he cannot be exhausted. But what do these have to do with us?

Well, let me give you the setting for this chapter. The Israelites being addressed in this 40th chapter, they're exiles in Babylon. they have been banished from their homeland for some 70 years.

And now Isaiah is telling them that God is going to do a great and awesome thing. The Lord is about to make it possible for them to return to Israel, to return to the promised land, the land of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

But the exiles refuse to believe the message. And everything Isaiah says in this chapter is for the purpose of persuading the exiles to put their trust in the God of Israel and his promise through his prophet that he is soon about to achieve their deliverance from exile.

The exiles say that their captors are too strong and will not let them go. But Isaiah says the power of God cannot be measured.

[ 42 : 39 ] And in some other places in the book, Isaiah reminds the exiles of what happened the last time some king said he would not let God's people go.

Just think back to the exodus and the Pharaoh. The exiles say that their lives and their sorry conditions in Babylon are hidden from the Lord and that God is not aware of their plight.

But Isaiah says that God cannot be instructed. His understanding cannot be fathomed and he knows all there is to know about their situation even better than they do themselves.

The exiles say their sins have caused them to be separated from God and that they have done nothing worthy to merit God's favor now. But Isaiah says they couldn't have done anything that was worthy anyway.

God cannot be impressed. And the very ones on whom he lavishes his love are those who have done nothing to deserve it. The exiles say that the Babylonian gods, the Babylonian idols are strong and powerful.

[ 43 : 56 ] Isaiah says that God has no equals. He has no opposites. There is no God or idol to which the Holy One of Israel may be compared.

And the exiles say that they are too old and weary. It would be impossible for them to go back to Israel now. They wouldn't even be able to make the journey.

But Isaiah says that the Holy One of Israel cannot be exhausted, that he has infinite resources on which the exiles may draw.

Look at that last part of the chapter again, beginning at verse 28. Do you not know, have you not heard, the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary, and young men stumble and fall. But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

[ 45 : 00 ] They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.

And what about you? Where are you at today? Have you been in exile from God, or at least you feel like you might be, and you are at a place now where you think it would be almost impossible to return?

Or are you living in a situation that seems almost hopeless? Or are you a young person who has already made mistakes that you believe are going to determine the course of the rest of your life?

Or are you an older person, and you're convinced that your life has been wasted, and you have passed the point of no return?

Well, I have some good news for you this morning. There is a Redeemer, Jesus, God's on Son, precious Lamb of God, Messiah, the Holy One.

[ 46 : 14 ] Son, I have an even better message for you than Isaiah had for the exiles. His message to them was that they were about to return to Israel because in their 70 years of captivity, they had already paid double for all their sins.

My message to you this morning is that God himself has provided the payment for your sins in the death of his own Son.

Do not say that he is unable to redeem your life, for his power cannot be measured. And the power with which he created this vast universe, the power which he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead, is the very same power with which he can make you a new creation, Christ.

Do not say that he does not know your situation, for he knows it even better than you do. Indeed, he knew all there was to know about you before he ever created the universe and loved you just the same.

As one of my good friends in Bible college put in verse, he said, the cross was carried in God's heart long ere there was a Calvary.

[ 47 : 43 ] The Lamb was slain, the altar stained, before the world began. And long before the angels ever sang his praise on high, he thought of me and all my sin and said he'd come to die.

Do not say that you have to get some things right before you come back. God will not be impressed with anything you do. indeed, his redemption is for those who cannot pay for it.

His grace is for those who cannot earn it. His love is for those who are unlovely. And his help is for those who cannot help themselves.

And do not say that there are too many obstacles to prevent you from coming back. for God has no equals.

He has no opposites. There are no obstacles that can stand in his way. And do not say that you are too tired and weary and weak to make a go of it, this living of the Christian life.

[ 48 : 57 ] For the everlasting God does not grow tired or weary, and you cannot exhaust his resources. You will soar on eagles' wings.

You will run and not grow weary. You will walk and not faint. Praise the Lord, O my soul, all my inmost being.

Praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, who forgives not all his benefits, and forget not all his benefits, excuse me, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

God has. Let me pray for you and for myself. Our God and Father and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we acknowledge and confess this morning that you are awesome, and that all those negative statements that we find in Isaiah about you are such positive statements as we attempt to utilize them in our lives.

Oh, Lord, I am so thankful that you are an awesome God, and I freely confess that neither I nor those who are listening to the sermon this morning, none of us are awesome.

[ 50 : 51 ] we are sinners, we are weak, we are unholy, we seem insignificant in the light of this huge universe, but we also confess that our identity and our being is in you.

Oh, God, please reveal to us your majesty, your holiness, your greatness, your awesomeness.

and may we put our trust in you, which is what faith is, which is what believing is, what trusting is, committing ourselves into your care.

Be with us, oh awesome God. And we ask this through the strong name of your Son, Christ Jesus. Amen.

My brothers and sisters, next week we'll take a look at Psalm 104. May the Lord's richest blessings be on you. ■ kids boleh con tumb fountain