

Isaiah Ch40v27-31 - God Will Strengthen You

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, last Sunday evening, Kirstie and I left Ennis. We'd been up there for the weekend and we were making our way home. As you heard in the news, as we did, there'd been warnings of snow, rain and ice.
- But I assured Kirstie with great confidence, we're going to be all right. Don't you think we should wait until the morning?
- No, we'll be fine. Just a bit of snow. With promises made, we took off. Not long into the journey, snow got heavier and deeper.
- Two hours later, there we were stuck five kilometres outside of Charleville in a queue of traffic getting cold. My promises of getting us safe home were beginning to look in doubt.
- And as it got darker and we weren't moving, we prepared for a long night. You see, sometimes what is promised is different from our reality.
- [1 : 1 1] Sometimes there's this massive gap between what God says and what we actually experience.
- Well, that was the situation for God's people in Isaiah 40. Isaiah the prophet was forewarning God's people that they would be in troubled times.
- Just go back to chapter 39, verse 5. The prophet forewarns the people that troubled times lie ahead.
- Isaiah speaks to the king, verse 5. Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord Almighty. The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon.
- Nothing will be left, says the Lord. Well, it wouldn't be just his possessions, but if we were to read on, we would discover that Babylon, the up-and-coming superpower, would take all God's people off into exile.
- [2 : 2 8] But with this word of warning came a wonderful word of promise. Chapter 40, verse 1. It's almost a don't fear, don't worry.
- Comfort, comfort, my people, says your God. Troubled times may come, but I'm going to rescue you and deliver you.
- Chapter 40, verse 10. See, the sovereign Lord comes with power. And he rules with a mighty arm.
- See, his reward is with him. And his recompense accomplishes him. There will be blessing. Don't worry. Don't fear.
- Our sovereign God is going to come and he will bring you back home. Well, promises may have been made.
- [3 : 2 9] But reality told a different story. What God says and what we experience can seem to be far apart.
- You see, when these difficult days came, when the exile became a reality, the people lost all hope. Now, the situation of God's people then is really a picture of God's people like us today.

Because we're living in some sense in spiritual exile. We're far away from our true home. Our eternal home with God in his eternal kingdom.

And we long for that home. And when troubles come, we begin to doubt. Am I going to make it?

Can we trust God to do what he says? Will he comfort, care for his people? Is he going to bring them home?

[4 : 40] Well, let's now turn to the end of Isaiah 40, which we read. And we're going to look at this. Three simple words can summarize what we're going to look at.

Forgotten, assured, and strengthened. So here's the first one. Forgotten. Forgotten by God.

Verse 27. Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord?

My cause is disregarded by my God? Has that been your experience over the last year? That sometimes it seems that God just doesn't care.

That my life is hidden from God. Or that God has run out of all his comfort. And my life is disregarded by my God.

[5 : 46] What God says, and what we seem to experience, are worlds apart. If God is so loving, then why do I have to deal with so many trials in my life?

And if God were so sovereign and so powerful, then why doesn't he intervene now? And end all the heartache and all the trouble.

We feel abandoned. We begin to doubt and wonder. We stop seeking God.

We stop praying and reading our Bibles. And, well, what's the point? My way is hidden. My cause is disregarded.

God no longer sees me. He no longer hears me. Like the writer of Psalm 42, we cry out, I say to God, my rock, Why have you forgotten me?

[6 : 55] You see, sometimes the dark realities of life seem to cover over the bright promises of God.

Will God ever be my helper again? Can I trust God to keep me in 2025?

Will he bring me home? Well, God answers us because he does see and he does hear.

So second, assured by God. Look at verse 28. God responds to the questioning and the complaints and says to us, Do you not know?

Have you not heard? Do you not remember all that I have said to you? Just listen to my words again.

[8 : 04] It's not that God has forgotten us. It's we who have forgotten what God has said. So what does God say to us in our doubts?

Well, we're presented with four wonderful truths, four wonderful assurances that will enable us to trust God in what lies ahead.

First, God is everlasting. Verse 28. Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God.

No one made God. You and I were all made. We're all created. But God? Well, God simply exists.

The very first verse in the Bible tells us, in the beginning, God. There was never a time when God was not. God is and God always will be.

[9 : 09] He is the everlasting, the eternal God. Now that means His word is everlasting.

Just look back to verse 8. Same chapter, verse 8. The grass withers. The flowers fall. Everything will rot and decay and become no more. But the word of our God endures forever.

God is everlasting. everlasting. And that means His word is everlasting. His promises are eternal. He will not fail any one of you.

He will do exactly what He says. He will comfort you. He will care for you. And He will strengthen you.

[10 : 16] So God is everlasting. Next we're told that God is Creator. Follow on in verse 28. He is the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He made this vast universe in which we live. Go outside. This is an exercise for us to do on a clear night. A rare night when it's clear.

And look up at the skies. The nearest planet or star to us is the moon. It reflects the sun's light to earth.

It takes about 1.3 seconds for the light to reach earth. Now if you were to look further beyond you might remember Orion's belt.

You know those three stars in a row. Just below that is another star called Nebula. It takes 1600 years years for the light of that star to reach earth.

[11 : 23] Extraordinary. Beyond that there is a cluster of stars. It's almost kind of just like a just a mess. You can't really work out what they all are.

Well it's a galaxy called Andromeda. Somebody counted. I'm not sure how. 300 billion stars. You know how long it takes for the light to reach from there to here?

2.5 million years. The world is big. Look at verse 25. To whom will you compare me?

Or who is my equal says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes. Look to the heavens. Who created all these?

He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name because of his great power and mighty strength not one of them is missing.

[12 : 41] You see this God who designed and ordered the universe in all its fastness made you. And if he knows the stars by name how much more does he know you?

And if his mighty power and strength holds this universe in existence with all those stars and planets spinning round how much more is his mighty power got a grip of you?

God is everlasting. God is creator. And God is self sufficient. Look at verse 28.

He will not grow tired or weary. God doesn't need me time. or down time. He doesn't switch off or go out or disappear.

He doesn't need help or assistance. He never yawns or tires or rests or sleeps. He is utterly and completely self sufficient.

[13 : 53] He depends on no one and needs nothing. But us oh how we need God.

How dependent are we on him. He is always there. Always attentive. Always listening.

Always watching. Always knowing. Never ever wearying in his attention towards you.

Your words do not get lost in the midst of all the cries of the world's population. He never tires of hearing what you have to say.

God the all sufficient one loves you deeply. He's everlasting. He's creator.

[14 : 57] He is all sufficient. And look at the end of verse 28. His understanding no one can fathom. God is wise.

There's so much we just do not understand. Why does the war rage on in Ukraine and Palestine? why are these fires raging in California?

Why are thousands upon thousands of people having to leave their homes in South Sudan and Ethiopia? Why do we have to walk through times of loss and grief?

Why do we seem to have to face one struggle after another? We don't understand because we are not God.

Look back at verse 14. Verse 14. Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him?

[16 : 18] Who taught God the right way? Who of the world's people taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

No. God is all knowing and all wise. He orders and determines everything and everyone according to his plan and purpose.

This wise God is over your life. There's no chance, circumstance, no random event.

In his wisdom, he works all things for our good. No, I struggle, I cannot fathom his ways.

I do not understand what God is up to. But I can trust him. You see, God's word gives us assurance.

[17 : 30] When troubles come, when the darkness of reality seems to cover the brightness of God's promises, listen, again to what his word says.

I am the everlasting creator. I am the all sufficient wise God. I care for you. I will keep you.

I will not let you go. I will bring you home. In fact, he will give you the strength that you need day by day.

So forgotten? Not at all. We are assured by God and third, we are strengthened by God. Verse 29.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Weary is when we're overwhelmed by life.

[18 : 41] And weak is when we are unable to do anything about it. The perfect storm, weary and weak.

Maybe you're weary of work. The pressure from those around you never lets up. And in your weakness, you can give no more.

Perhaps you're weary of a relationship. It just seems to get worse. Nothing's changing. And in your weakness, you're at a loss.

Maybe you're here today and you're just weary of church. All the serving and all the helping. And in your weakness, you've reached your limit.

You see, life hits us, doesn't it? Leaving us mentally exhausted, emotionally drained, physically wrecked, and spiritually broken.

[19 : 51] Will we make it through another year? Well, remember, we are not forgotten. God gives us strength.

strength. Verse 29. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

What good news for people like us today. God is not hidden from you. He's not disregarding you. Graciously and generously, our almighty God will give you strength.

But what kind of strength can we expect? What's the strength he's going to give to me? Is he going to give me strength so that I'm never going to be tired again?

Am I going to have this power so that I won't get sick again? am I going to be able to run fast? Because I'm only able to walk slow right now.

[21 : 04] What strength are we going to be given? Well, look at verse 30. Even youths grow tired and weary.

Young men stumble and fall. Even those with boundless energy. If you like, the fittest athlete, the strongest soldier. Little kids who seem to have that inbuilt Duracell battery.

They all need to, at some stage, stop and rest and sleep. They all crash and burn and stumble and fall. We all need to rest.

And if they need strength, how much more do we who are weak and weary need it? Verse 31. So those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

Our hope is in the everlasting God, the self-sufficient wise one, the covenant God who comes to his people, who makes his promises and keeps his promises, the God who came to us in person, in the person of Jesus Christ, the God who says to us, come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

[22 : 40] For I am gentle and humble in heart, and I will give you rest rest for your souls. Hear the invitation to come to Jesus who knew true weakness and comes and gives us strength today.

So what is this strength that we can expect? Well, four simple applications that I hope we can take away and ask the Lord to give us.

Here's the first one, strength to accept your weakness. You see, we're not immune to tiredness or sickness. Our bodies and our minds break down and slow down.

And we're all only fooling ourselves to think that we can keep powering on. rather than assume we are strong, the Bible teaches us to accept our weakness.

The apostle Paul was reminded of this. You can follow on the screen. God said to him, my grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.

[24 : 03] And Paul responded, therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me for when I am weak, then I am strong.

You see, there is a strength that comes from God when we collapse into him in our weakness. Second, there is a strength that is experienced by prayer.

How are we to get this strength? Well, we are given that strength as we ask God for it. Listen to how we should pray. This is to the church in Colossae.

We continually ask God to fill you because you are empty. being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience.

All that we need to keep following on. Strengthened with all power. You see, through humble, prayerful dependence, we receive from him his mighty strength.

[25 : 35] Third, a strength which waits on God. Yes, we're promised strength, but it's strength for each circumstance, a strength that God gives, not all at once, but moment by moment as we daily wait upon the Lord.

Again, the Apostle Paul knew this and puts it like this. I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.

I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation.

I can do all this through him who gives me strength. Notice it's not a strength to do whatever we desire or just because you write it on a little wristband that you win the match.

Whether we are sick or well, fed up or fueled up, falling down, or going on. His strength is given to you each moment.

- [26 : 59] A strength that will be sufficient for that time to do what God calls you to do. A strength that waits on the Lord.
- strength. And fourth, strength that will get us home. Here's where the strength comes to in all its reality.
- A strength that will bring us home to our eternal rest, God's kingdom forever. Listen to this prayer.
- prayer. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his holy ones.
- The one who calls you is faithful. will. And who's going to do it? He will do it.
- [28 : 10] You are not forgotten. Your strength will be renewed. He will bring you home. As Kirsty and I sat waiting in the snow, we longed for home, to be safe, to be warm.
- And then I saw in the mirror strange lights, orange flashing lights, snow plows and gritters to the rescue.
- The way was cleared. We got home. I told you so. Well, our powerful God has come to us and he has cleared the way by his son.
- And he through his son will give us all the strength we need moment by moment through every obstacle and every trouble and every hurdle that we will face.
- Verse 31 God comforts you God will keep you and God will give you the strength.
- [29 : 52] Let's pray. pray. Father, we confess to you we so often feel weak and weary.
- overwhelmed and powerless to do anything about it. What good news you have given us today in your word.
- Father, please renew our strength. Renew our trust. Give to each person here all that they need to face everything they go through.
- Grace and mercy and all that is required. We trust you, our everlasting creator God, our self-sufficient and wise God.
- We trust you and we thank you. Amen. We're going to sing an old hymn, not too old, for those of you who might consider themselves old.
- [31 : 34] If you know it, sing it out and help those who don't. But we trust in you, our shield and our defender. We don't fight alone against the foe, strong in your strength, safe in your keeping tender.
- What a great song. Let's stand together and encourage one another in these words. And We trust in you, our shield and our defender We do not fight alone against the foe
- Strong in your strength, safe in your keeping tender We trust in you and in your name we hold Strong in your strength, safe in your keeping tender We trust in you and in your name we hold In your name, O captain of salvation In your dear name, all other names above Jesus, our righteousness, our sure foundation
- Our Prince of Glory and our King of Love Jesus, our righteousness, our sure foundation Our Prince of Glory and our King of Love We go in faith, our own great weakness feeling And needing more each day your grace to know Yet from our hearts, a song of triumph, healing We trust in you and in your name we hold
- We trust in you and in your name we hold We trust in you and in your name we hold We trust in you, our shield and our defender Yours is the battle, yours shall be the praise When passing through the gates of dazzling splendor Victors we rest in you through endless days Our Father God, we thank you that you are mighty

[36 : 32] In strength and power You will not give up on us, you will not fail us You will bring us home
We praise you, we thank you Amen Please take your seats I want to welcome you all to
the Lord's Supper Bread and juice, food and drink are provided to strengthen you today
What's this meal that renews our strength?

Well it's a meal we come to where we remember ultimately Jesus and his death for us
Because when we eat the bread together We are remembering Jesus His body broken for
us Dying in our place Where we can come and confess our sin And receive forgiveness
And as we drink So we come in faith Remembering his great promises to us Which are
sealed by his blood For us forever Who is this food and drink for?

Well those who are weak and weary For those who stumble and fall Those who know they
have failed And have not followed the Lord as we should So can I welcome you To the
table Where today we remember Jesus Bring your weakness And your weariness To him
Why?

Because those who hope in the Lord Will renew their strength If you are trusting in him If
your hope is in him today Then eat of this bread Remember him Drink of this juice And
trust his promises afresh He will keep you He will watch over you He will not fail you A
table Of his commitment And loyal love To us today When Jesus was with his disciples He
took bread And he broke it And said this is my body Which is given for you As we take the
bread

We take a piece We'll hold on to it And then we will eat it Together But as we wait Use it
as a time Of personal confession To bring your sin Before the Lord And ask for his
forgiveness Afresh Thanks Nick and Trish Thanks Thank you.

[41 : 23] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Father, we do not hide from you, but we simply
confess our sin before you.

And thank you that where there is confession of sin, there is forgiveness of all of our sin.
So let us eat together now in thanksgiving.