

God Will Strengthen You

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[0 : 00] Isaiah 40, starting at verse 27. Why do you complain, Jacob?

And why do you say, 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, young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint. Let's pray. Amen. Knowing you, Jesus, is the greatest thing.

[1 : 22] We thank you that you have not left us in the dark, but that you have given to us your word, your truth, a word which has power to change us and transform us as we see the wonder and the greatness of who Jesus is.

So by your spirit, would you lift up Christ today and may our gaze be fixed upon him that we may leave strengthened in our spirits today to go on living for you and serving you and perhaps for some for the first time trusting you.

Please help us. Amen. Amen. So is anyone feeling weary and weak? Weary is when we're overwhelmed with life and weak is when we're unable to do anything about it.

Maybe you're weary at work. The pressure never lets up and in your weakness, you can give no more. Perhaps you're weary of a relationship.

It's getting worse. Nothing's changing. In your weakness, you want out. We could be weary of church. The serving and the helping week by week.

[3 : 03] And in your weakness, you've reached your limit. And of course, we all get weary of temptation, our following of sin's desires.

And in our weakness, we give in again and again and again. Life hits us, leaving us mentally exhausted, emotionally drained, physically wrecked and spiritually broken.

Well, for those who are weary and weak, there is good news. You see what it said in verse 29? He, that is God, gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

weak. Well, that's a great promise, isn't it? And if it's true, why is it that we keep feeling weary and weak?

Because sometimes the dark troubles of life can cloud the bright promises of God. That was certainly the situation for God's people in Isaiah 40.

[4 : 19] Just for a bit of context, look back to chapter 39. Here, Isaiah the prophet is warning God's people that troubled times lie ahead.

And those troubles are described in verse 5, chapter 39, verse 5. Isaiah said to Hezekiah, who was the king of Israel, 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. Babylon, which was the up-and-coming world superpower, was going to take God's people into exile.

The nation would be removed from their place. The city would be destroyed. The temple would be destroyed. But with this word of warning also comes a word of promise.

[5 : 29] Chapter 40, verse 1. God says, comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Well, what will be the comfort for them when they've been taken off into exile?

Well, go to 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 accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arms and he carries them close to his heart.

He gently leads those that have young. Trouble will come, he says, but I promise that I will come with my strong, mighty arm and will rescue you and deliver you.

And I will take you like lambs into my arms and I will carry you home. I will strengthen the weary and I will give power to the weak.

[6 : 39] well, these promises have been made, but when exile actually happened, reality told a different story. All hope was lost.

They felt God had forgotten them completely. Now, the experience of God's people then, way, way back, is a picture of God's people now.

Because if we're Christians today, we're living in spiritual exile. This world is not our true home. We are longing for our eternal home.

But here's the question. Can we trust God as we wait? Will he give us the strength? Will he give us the power to keep on going?

Will God bring us home? Well, let's turn now to the closing section that we read in Isaiah 40 verses 27 to 31.

[7 : 42] Three words summarize this short text that we're going to look at. Forgotten, assured, and strengthened. Forgotten, assured, and strengthened.

So first, forgotten by God. Verse 27. In the midst, this is them in their exile. Israel, why do you complain, Jacob?

Why do you say, Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord, and my cause is disregarded by my God? Now, isn't that so often our experience?

It seems that God doesn't care. My life is hidden from God. It seems that there is no comfort. My life is disregarded by my God.

What God says and what we experience seem to be worlds apart. If God is loving, then why do I have to deal with so much struggles?

[8 : 44] And if God were so powerful, why doesn't he intervene and end all the heartache? We can feel abandoned and we can begin to doubt and wonder and we stop seeking God, we stop praying, we stop reading the word.

What's the point? End of verse 27. My cause is disregarded by my God. He no longer sees me and he no longer hears me.

You see, sometimes the dark troubles of life cover the bright promises of God. Will God ever be my helper again?

God's answer to God. Can I trust God to strengthen me? Will he keep me? Will he bring me home? Well, God does answer because he does see and he does hear.

So, second, assured by God. Look at God's response to the complaint in verse 28. Do you not know?

[10 : 01] Have you not heard? Do you remember what I said? Listen, listen to the voice of God. It's not God that has forgotten you, but it's that you have forgotten me.

So, what does God say to us in our doubts? Well, in these verses 28, God gives us four foundational truths that give us assurance why we should not give up hope and why we can be assured in our time of struggle.

Here they are. Here's the first one. God is everlasting. Verse 28, the Lord is the everlasting God.

Did you know that no one made God? The very first verse in the Bible tells us that it was in the beginning God. There was never a time when God was not.

God has always been and will always be. He is the eternal God. Now, if God is everlasting, that means his word is everlasting.

[11 : 13] Look back to verse 8. Chapter 40, verse 8, the grass withers, the flowers fall, everything has an end.

It'll all finish. But the word of our God endures forever. God's word, his promises are eternal.

They don't fail. they will be fulfilled. God will do what he says because he is the everlasting God. Here's the second foundational truth to give us assurance.

Read on. The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. God made this endless universe.

universe. So, maybe not tonight, but on a clear night, go outside and have a look up at the skies. The nearest star or planet to us is the moon.

[12 : 19] It reflects the sun's light to the earth, which takes 1.3 seconds to reach us. And then if you were to look a little bit further out than that, you'll see Orion's belt.

You know those three stars in a row? You'd probably say there's lots of three stars in a row, but anyway, there's Orion's belt. And there's another star called Nebula.

You know how long it takes for light to reach from there to get to the earth? 1,600 years. Then if you look beyond that to the galaxy Andromeda, there are 300 billion stars, and it takes 2.5 million years for their light to reach the earth.

Now look at verse 25. To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal, says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens.

Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

[13 : 38] You see, if God designed and ordered this vast universe that we can hardly comprehend, this is the God who made you and me. And if he knows the stars by name, how much more does he know you?

And how much more will he strengthen you and sustain you? If he can hold the stars and the planets up in the universe, well, God will hold you up.

So God is everlasting, God is creator. Here's the third one, God is self-sufficient. Do you see it there? Verse 28, he will not grow tired or weary.

God doesn't need me time or down time. He never switches off or goes off. He doesn't need help or assistance.

He never yawns, he never tires, he never rests, he never sleeps. He is utterly and completely self-sufficient. He depends on no one, but yet this is the God who rules and reigns and we depend on him.

[14 : 49] He is always there, attentive, listening, watching, knowing, never wearying. He never becomes weak. God, the all-sufficient one, loves you deeply.

So he's the everlasting God, the creator God, the self-sufficient God. And fourth, end of verse 28, he is the wise God. His understanding no one can fathom.

How many questions do we have for God? There's so much we don't understand. Why do I have to walk through this time of grief?

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

Verse 14, whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him? And who taught him the right way?

[16 : 01] Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding? Answer, no one. God is all knowing and all wise.

He orders and determines everything and everyone according to his plan and purpose. And it's this everlasting creator, all knowing, all wise God, who is over your life and my life.

There's no chance, circumstances or random events. In his wisdom, he works what is right and good. We can't fathom his ways, but yet we can trust in him.

you see God's response to the complaint of verse 27. Where are you God? Have you disregarded me? He answers, no.

I'm the everlasting creator. I'm the all sufficient wise God. I care for you. I keep you. I will not let you go. I love you. I will bring you home.

[17 : 06] home. In fact, as we wait for home, he will give you the strength day by day.

So, we've looked at forgotten by God, assured by God, and here's the third one, strengthened by God as we wait.

Look at verse 29. God's promise, he gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

What good news for weary and weak people like ourselves. God is not hidden from you. He hasn't disregarded you. He graciously gives you strength and power.

But here's the question. what is this strength going to look like tomorrow morning? What can I expect when I wake up and the alarm goes off and well, I don't feel I've got a lot of strength to get out of bed.

[18 : 18] And I really don't want to face into another day. Will he give me strength so that I'm never tired again? Am I going to have such great power that I won't get sick again?

Will I never be weak and weary again? What kind of strength is God promising as we wait for home?

Well, verse 30, even youths grow tired and weary, the young men stumble and fall. Even those with boundless energy, the fittest athlete who's up at the crack of dawn, the strongest soldier who goes through nights without sleep, little kids who seem to have that inbuilt Duracell battery, all of them at some stage or another need to stop and rest and sleep.

They also crash and burn. They also stumble and fall. And if they need strength, then how much more do we need strength?

Verse 31, But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary.

- [19 : 35] They will walk and not be faint. You see, God had not forgotten his people. God had promised a day when he would come and he would bring his people back home.
- And God did intervene and he did rescue his people from exile. They got home. But it was only a small number that made it back.
- It wasn't the great success that they had hoped for. The city walls and the temple were rebuilt, but it was smaller and less impressive.
- Opposition remained around them and they continued again to disobey God. Weak and weary, they stumbled and failed again.
- So what of God's promise? Had God failed to deliver? For his people? No. The promise remains, verse 31.
- [20 : 40] Those who hope or those who wait in the Lord will renew their strength. The covenant God who makes his promises keeps his promises.
- You see, God's promises were ultimately tied not to a place, but to a person. God who comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ.
- The one that we sung about. Jesus said that if you're weak, you should come to me. Or as it says, Jesus says, come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
- For I am gentle and humble in heart, and I will give rest for your souls. You see, the invitation here from Isaiah is for us today to hope in the Lord, to come to Jesus, who becomes, get this, he becomes our weakness and our strength.
- Think about this with me for a minute. Christ became weak for us. He became like one of us, experiencing hunger and tiredness and temptation.
- [22 : 06] But his weakness went to a depth that we will never ever experience. Although innocent and without sin, he was dragged to his execution.
- He was betrayed and denied by those he loved, stripped and mocked and beaten, nails pinning him to a cross, crown of thorns crushed on his head.
- In his weakness and hidden in his darkness, he cries out to the Father, why have you forgotten me? My cause has been disregarded by my God.
- In weakness, Jesus, the God man, breathes his last and he dies. On the cross, Jesus, the everlasting creator, the all sufficient wise God took my sin and your sin and suffered the curse that we deserve.
- Christ became weak for you and for me. That means that Christ can now meet us in our weakness.
- [23 : 18] Have a look with me to Hebrews. Hebrews chapter four.
- Is there a, somebody found it that they got a page number? 1204. 1204. 1204. Hebrews chapter four.
- verse 15. So we're thinking of Christ becoming weak for us.
- Now listen to these words. Hebrews chapter four, verse 15. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way just as we are.
- Yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.
- [24 : 39] Christ became weak for you and I so that he could meet us in the depths of our weakness and give us the strength that we need by his grace and mercy.
- One writer put it like this, I have never been able to escape Jesus. I cannot go deeper into weakness than Jesus went.

Weakness has no cranny he does not know. There is no place I can run to where Jesus cannot find me. No darkness so great that he cannot ride into it with a flaming torch and carry me home.

You see Christ was weak for us but get this he is also strong for us because yes he was pinned to that cross but he in his power submitted himself to the cross he humbled himself to death and with glorious strength he obeyed his father he died he was buried but he was raised with power and might Christ rose victoriously from the grave Satan was defeated and death was destroyed now Christ rules and reigns over all things and all people with his mighty arm now that strength the strength that raised Christ from the dead the strength that Christ has that now rules over this universe that strength that power is now at work in us for our good again the author that I just quoted from put it like this

I know that Christ has gone down further into weakness than I will ever go and so he is well able to come and find me but crucially he is also risen in life giving strength and so he is well able to raise me up and take me to life in God weaker than my weakness Jesus is also far stronger than my strength so here's an invitation for us all this morning for all who know they are weak and weary come and collapse into the strong arms of our saviour a saviour who when we stumble and fall will catch us and keep us we come admitting our frailty and trusting in his ability the invitation is to come with all our mess and all our sin all our stumbling and all our failing and to rest in him to receive his forgiveness and to be renewed the apostle

[27 : 59] Paul understood this he put it like this with these well known words God says to him my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in weakness therefore Paul says I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ power may rest on me for when I am weak then I am strong this is not a promise to remove every struggle and every difficulty it's a promise from almighty God to give strength to the weary and power to the weak to hold us and to keep us and as we rest in him we will soar on wings!

like eagles we will run and not grow weary we will walk and we will not be faint and we can look forward in anticipation with the glorious hope that Christ will bring us home amen let's pray he gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak oh lord we come to you in our weakness in our frailty with our sin and our mess we know that we stumble and fall so often but we thank you that we have a saviour who meets us and understands our weaknesses one who lifts us up one who comes near who strengthens and holds and keeps not just today and forever we pray that we would know your grace and mercy afresh in our life trusting you that you will hold us and one day you will bring us home and we will be strengthened in a way that we never imagined possible because all things will be made new and there will be no more struggles or suffering anymore we look to that day assured that you the everlasting

God the creator God the all wise and sufficient God will keep us we thank you and praise you amen