

The Promise of God's Power

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Date: 11 August 2024

[0 : 00] But we'll begin our worship this evening by singing to God's praise. We're going to sing in Psalm 57, in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 57, page 74 of the psalm books.

We'll sing from verse 1 to verse 5, the tune is Selma. Have mercy on me, Lord, to you my soul holds fast. Your covering wings will shelter me until the dangers pass.

I cry to God, most high, to God who answers me. For he fulfills his purposes for me most perfectly.

We'll sing from verse 1 to 5 to God's praise.

My wings will shelter me until the dangers pass. I cry to God, most high, to God who answers me.

For he fulfills his purposes for me most perfectly.

[1 : 39] He sends his help from heaven and sends me from above.

He will be close to see my light, no senses to above.

I live with savage peace. I dwell in my own strong.

With men who speak with piercing words, A sharp sword is their tongue.

above the highest heaven, O God, exalted thee, And over all the earth below, His greater majesty.

[3 : 10] Let's unite our hearts in a word of prayer.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, as we come before you again this evening hour, we do thank you that we can come with boldness, that we can come with confidence to you, to that throne of grace.

But we come humbly before you as well, recognizing who you are, recognizing that you are a sovereign God over all, all of creation and all of your people, that you are the one who is all-powerful and almighty.

And yet we thank you for the confidence of the psalmist in these words that we have sung, that he cries to God, most high, to God who answers me.

And we pray, Lord, that we would have that assurance and confidence, even as we offer up our prayers together here, but also in our own personal devotions to you, in our times of prayer, in our own quietness, in our homes, or whatever we might offer up prayer to you, in the quietness of our hearts, that we would come in that way, recognizing that we are in that relationship with you, that we speak to you as the Lord and God of heaven, but also to the one who is our Father.

[4 : 40] And in that, there is such a bond, a wonderful, loving relationship with your children as we are. And we thank you that you do listen, that you do hear our prayers, and that in our prayers, Lord, you are able to fulfill your purposes and fulfill them, as the psalmist says, for me most perfectly.

And in that, Lord, we seek your will to be done. For your will is that perfection. And teach us, Lord, not to seek our own will, not to have our own desires fulfilled, but that all that we do and all that we seek to do for ourselves or for others, that it would be according to your great and mighty purposes. And we do thank you for the fact that you are the one who sends help, as the psalmist says, help from heaven above, that you send your truth and love, and that we have your word to remind us of that.

And as we hear from it again this evening, may we see it as your truth, and may it speak to us that full truth, not just our own thoughts, Lord, but that they would be your words that we hear, the words that remind us of your steadfast love towards your people, the strength that you are able to give in our weariness, that hope that you give in the midst of all that dismay that surrounds us at times.

And we do pray, Lord, that you will hear us all as we offer up our prayers and hear us as your people far and wide. For we thank you that today, and especially as it's your day, the Lord's day, a day where, from the rising of the sun to its setting, from north, south, east, and west, your people have been and are and will call on your name, that worship will be offered up to you as the true and living God, that in the midst of all the other idols and false gods that are worshipped, we thank you for the multitude of people who gather in your name in small numbers and places and in large

numbers and other places, but all together we seek to lift up our praise and our prayers to you and to join in that wonderful chorus of heaven where praise is made before you, where we know, Lord, we have a Saviour who is seated at your right hand.

[7 : 05] We have our Lord and our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who, as we offer up our prayers, we do so in and through his mighty and powerful name.

And Lord, we do commit ourselves into your care and into your keeping as a people, as a congregation, as homes and families, as a community. Lord, surround us with your presence, the very thing that we so often take for granted, that you are with us, that you will be near in all things. And yet, as we even read your word this evening, we see how quickly, as a people, we can turn away, as we can forget you, Lord. And so as we go on, even in this week ahead, may we go knowing you with us and asking you to be with us, asking that you would guide us and help us and lead us along life's journey, that we would make our ways according to your paths, that we would follow your ways.

Teach us in them, Lord, we pray. And we just ask your help and your strength in all of these things. May you bless us as a congregation here. We thank you for the fellowship of your people.

We thank you for visitors as we have been seeing over these last weeks, coming from all different places. People home on holiday and people just passing by and coming to worship with us.

[8 : 30] We thank you for that fellowship and the bonds that there is in Christ. Christ. We just pray to see that unity and fellowship blossom. We pray, Lord, your protection over us as a people, that you would unite us together in your word and according to your truth and lead us in your ways as a people, even in this time and these months ahead, Lord.

May we know your will and your purpose for us. We pray, Lord, for every home and family here. We thank you that we can remember each other at the throne of grace and to do so not just publicly but in our prayers as well, Lord, that you would keep us prayerful for one another.

Even as we think of those who are unwell, those who are going through times of distress in different ways. We think of people who are in different needs at this time, Lord, and thankful that even when we don't know their names, that you do and that we can come prayerfully for them.

We do have particular prayers for people as well as we have mentioned this morning and seen with Scott and Fiona and the girls and they're moving to Harris. We pray for them, Lord, for you to go with them, to be their shepherd, to be their help, to guide them and to help them in this next phase of Scott's training.

May you bless them in the congregation of North Harris, help them to settle there and to make new friends, to be a blessing to those there and help Scott in his studies over this coming year as well and in his preaching, lead them and guide them and be his help and strengthen it all and may they know your blessing with them.

[10 : 14] And we do pray, Lord, for others who are training for the ministry. We thank you as we have heard in these last weeks of the congregation of North Uist and David Ferguson accepting the call.

We thank you for that and we pray for him and Catherine and Duncan as they move and as they settle into a new home, a new community and especially into a new congregation there.

We ask that you will lead them together and bless them as a people there. May your church flourish in the North and Uist and also in the South as well as we pray for the congregation there as well.

We do pray for our seminary as well with all the students who have finished. Some may be waiting on a call as well. We pray for your leading and guiding to them and for other inductions that will be taking place in these coming weeks as well.

We thank you for that and pray that you will provide more and more gospel ministers, those who will go out with the good news and proclaim it throughout our land.

[11 : 18] We thank you for our seminary and for the professors there and for all the students who will be starting back in these next few weeks. We pray your blessing and help towards them and that you will be with them, Lord, in this coming year.

We thank you too, Lord, that we can commit the disarray that we see around us, our nation, in so much turmoil and the world in so much disarray. When we think of leaderships and contests going on in America, we think of turmoil in the Middle East and the Ukraine and the tensions in North Korea and the Far East as well, Lord.

There are so many things going on around us and so many things that we do not even know about. How your people are persecuted, how your church suffers in so many different ways. And yet we thank you that you are the light to this world, that you are the one who is able to powerfully bless and to bring peace, to bring stability, to bring your goodness upon us. We do pray that, to know it throughout our land, near and far. And so we commit ourselves into your hands now, Lord. We ask that you will bless us as we turn to your word, that you will lead us into it and the singing of your praise help us to lift up our voices in thanksgiving to you, that you will give us voices that will rejoice in you and hearts that will proclaim you and that the joy of the Lord would be our strength.

[12:49] We ask, Lord, that you would forgive us for all our sin too, that you would have mercy upon us, that you would cleanse us anew by the precious blood of Christ as we come in his name, offering up all of these things, thankful for a glorious and a wonderful Savior, a precious Savior.

May he be more and more precious to us each and every day and may you love us through him and do us good as we ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus and for his glory.

Amen. We again sing to God's praise this time in Psalm 121 in the Scottish Psalter version.

Psalm 121. Find this on page 416. Psalm 121 on page 416.

I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my need. My safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made. We'll sing the whole of this psalm and the tune is Denfield.

[13:56] We sing to God's praise. Amen. Amen. I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my name.

I sit ye calm and from the Lord who then on earth hath made.

Thy foot in no place like nor will he sombered at the gate.

Behold thee that keeps Israel He sombered at the gate.

The Lord be keeps the Lord thy shape on thy right hand the same.

[15:13] Thou good by night thee shall not smite nor yet the sun by day.

God the Lord shall keep thy soul He shall grace where thee come all hell and forth thy going and hand in God be forever well.

We'll turn and read together in God's word now in the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah chapter 40.

We're going to take up our reading at verse 9. Isaiah chapter 40 and at verse 9 you'll find it around page 724 of the Bibles.

Isaiah 40 is almost like a turning point in the book of Isaiah where it begins a new kind of section where the people of God have been we've been seeing them becoming more and more unfaithful up to this point up to chapter 39 and God has been warning them and then in chapter 40 onwards it's more about how God is going to restore his people and we see that in this chapter when it begins with these words comfort, comfort my people says your God.

[16:57] We're going to take up our reading at verse 9 and we read there of the greatness of God. Get you up onto a high mountain O Zion herald of good news lift up your voice with strength O Jerusalem herald of good news lift it up fear not say to the cities of Judah behold your God behold the Lord God comes with might and his arm rules for him behold his reward is with him and his recompense before him he will tend his flock like a shepherd he will gather the lambs in his arms he will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young who has measured the water from the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance who has measured the spirit of the Lord or what man shows him his counsel whom did he consult and who made him understand who taught him the path of justice and taught him knowledge and showed him the way of understanding behold the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are accounted as the dust on the scales behold he takes up the coastlands like fine dust

Lebanon would not suffice for fuel nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering all the nations are as nothing before him they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness to whom then will you liken God or what likeness compares with him an idol a craftsman casts it and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains he who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move do you not know do you not hear has it not been told you from the beginning have you not understood from the foundations of the earth it is he who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are like

grasshoppers who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them like a tent to dwell in who brings princes to nothing and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness scarcely are they planted scarcely sown scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth when he blows on them and they wither and the tempest carries them off like stubble to whom then will you compare me that I should be like him says the holy one lift up your eyes on high and see who created these he who brings out their host by number calling them all by name by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power not one is missing why do you say oh Jacob and speak oh Israel my way is hidden from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God have you not known have you not heard the Lord is the everlasting God the creator of the ends of the earth he does not faint or grow weary his understanding is unsearchable he gives power to the faint and to him who has no might he increases strength even youths shall faint and be weary and young men shall fall exhausted but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength they shall mount up with wings like eagles they shall run and not be weary they shall walk and not faint amen and may God bless that reading of his word but before we come to look at this passage we're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 89

Psalm 89 page 345 the Scottish Psalter version we sing from verse 13 down to verse 18 Psalm 89 at verse 13 thou hast an arm that's full of power thy hand is great in might and thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height we'll sing from verse 13 to 18 the tune is Evan and we sing to God's praise thou hast an arm thou hast an arm that's full of power thy hand is great in might and thy light and thy name is great in might and thy name is great in might justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place mercy and Prob tranquility and In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever art shall go.

They in my name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly.

[23 : 28] And in thy righteousness shall be exalted thee on high.

Because the glory of Israel doth only stand with thee.

And in thy favor shall our heart and thou praise all did thee.

For God is our defense and team to us of safety bring.

The holy one of Israel is our almighty king.

[24 : 44] Amen. We turn back to our reading in Isaiah chapter 40. And as I said this morning, today we're thinking about two different ways we could maybe sum up what the Bible is about.

If we were asked by someone, as I was saying this morning, maybe you've been reading a book or watching a movie and you've been speaking to someone about it and they've asked, well, how would you sum it up? What would make me want to watch that or read that?

How would we approach that when we think about the Bible, the scriptures that we have before us? When we think of inviting people along to church to come and hear the word of God, how do we explain to them what we're inviting them to and why they should take it seriously, why they should listen to the invitation and come and hear what this word has to say?

This morning we were looking at the theme of sinners in need of salvation. That is what the Bible tells us from beginning to end. We were looking at 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 where Paul is writing, concerned for the church at Thessalonica, they are concerned for their faith and how they are going.

A church that has seen sinners come to salvation. And that wonderful good news of the gospel is that there is a saviour for sinners. So we thought of that this morning, sinners in need of salvation.

[26 : 16] But coming to faith is just the start. Going on in faith is what it's about as well. And how are we encouraged to go on? Well, again, the Bible speaks to us of this.

It reminds us of how we go on. We go on not in our own strength, but in the strength of the Lord.

And another way of we can summarise the Bible, especially in a world that is so weary and heavy laden with so many different things in these days, is to say, well, in this word, you find a God who says to the weary, come, come to me and find refreshing in me.

Find renewal in me. Find strength in me. And that's what we see in this wonderful passage. Isaiah chapter 40. As you come to the end of this chapter, where our focus will be really from verse 27 to the end of the chapter.

We can read there at verse 30. Even youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. The word of God is full of so many promises.

[27 : 40] Promises of God. And you read through the word of God, and you find so often in the midst of God's people, so often turning away, as we'll see here in Isaiah, so often the people turning away from God, going in their own direction, and yet God is still faithful with his promises.

God is still faithful with his invitation to people to come to him, to return to him, to find rest with him. Despite unfaithful people, God so often showers blessing upon them.

And it's important to remind ourselves, too, of these promises. Promises that God will be with us. Promises that God is there to help.

And promise, like we see here, as those who wait on the Lord, those who are maybe feeling faint and weary, if you wait on the Lord, he shall renew your strength.

He keeps us going. He keeps us going on. You could look at this passage and say, the people themselves have brought it upon themselves, just this array that they find themselves in.

[28 : 53] And they are being taken captive by a nation called Babylon. This is what is in store for them because of their disobedience. So they've brought it on themselves, and yet they are shown the love of God in the midst of it all.

And isn't it wonderful that God still shows that love, still shows that patience towards us as a people, still longs for us to come to him, and gives us this promise even today that when we wait on the Lord, he renews our strength.

Renews our strength. He gives us hope. A man named Viktor Frankl, an Austrian man, he was a famous and a leading psychiatrist before the Second World War began.

But during the Second World War, he was captured and taken prisoner, and he was imprisoned in concentration camps, one of which was Auschwitz, as well as another three concentration camps. He lived through that. He lived until he was 92, died in 1997. But in looking back in his experience in the concentration camps, having been a psychiatrist, he was obviously observing people.

[30 : 19] And he said as he observed those who were imprisoned there, he made out that what separated the survivors from those who died in the concentration camps wasn't so much physical health and strength, he said, but hope.

Those who had hope, something to look forward to on the outside, something to keep them going, he said they were more likely to survive. Even a physically well person could go into a camp, and within a short space of time, because of having no hope, they could perish.

But those who were weak and fragile, but still had hope, they often survived. And as we look at Isaiah writing to the people of Judah and Jerusalem here, we see that he is writing to give them this hope.

And it's in the midst of kind of dismay for them. They're in a time of despair because of what they're being told is in store for them, being taken captive, being taken prisoner.

But they are told to focus on the Lord, to keep their focus on him, and that he gives this promise that when they wait on the Lord, he shall renew their strength.

[31 : 37] He shall renew their strength. And it's a message for our world today. If you want to think about why you should invite someone to come to church, if you want to think of it in this way, you think of sinners in need of salvation, we need Christ.

But we also have this too, that when we feel weary, when we feel tired in this world, when we feel such a sense of dismay, when all the chaos that we see around us, that the Lord gives hope.

The Lord gives hope of something better. The Lord gives hope of a renewal within us, a rejoicing within us, that he renew every strength, that we might mount up on wings like eagles, and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

That is his promise as we look to him. And so we want to ask people to come and find that for themselves. We want to have it ourselves as well. We want to have that hope and assurance and comfort ourselves.

So when we are offering it to others, we're talking through experience, that this is the Lord who has helped me. This is the Lord who has renewed my strength. And I want us to look at three things in this passage.

[32 : 49] First of all, we see a weary people. Then we see a great God. And then thirdly, we see a glorious promise. So we begin with a weary people.

And you ask yourself, well, what has left them in this state? So you come into chapter 40. What has left them in this state where their future looks so bleak, when they're going to be taken captive by Babylon?

Well, you see it by just going back a couple of chapters. Chapter 40 is, like I said, like a turning point in the book of Isaiah.

Some people describe it as the Old Testament and the New Testament, and there's a split, a moment of divide, and that this is where the divide is in the book of Isaiah. So in the previous chapters, there's been hope that everything's going to be well, but they're looking for that in the wrong place.

And you see it in chapter 38, how quickly, in chapter 38 and 39, how quickly people can change. There's this man called Hezekiah that you read of in chapter 38.

[33 : 59] Hezekiah was ill, and he pleads with the Lord. He pleads with the Lord for help and healing both for him and his city. And in chapter 4, in verse 4 of chapter 38, it says, Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears.

Behold, I will add 15 years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and will defend this city.

And you think to yourself, What a wonderful blessing. Hezekiah, his prayer has been heard, his tears have been seen, and the Lord has answered. And it's a wonderful time, you think.

And then you go into chapter 39. And what's Hezekiah doing now? Hezekiah has these Babylonian envoys who have come. They've come to see Hezekiah.

They've come to see his abundance of wealth. And he's almost led in by them. And he thinks, Here is someone I can be friends with. Here is someone who will help me.

[35 : 11] And yet all he is doing is throwing God's promises back in his face and saying, You're now going to rely on this nation. And you don't realize what danger you're putting yourself and your people into.

And the irony is, if you read in verse 8 of chapter 39, it says, Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, The word of the Lord, yet you have spoken, is good.

And this is it. For he thought, There will be peace and security in my days. Through his own wisdom, through his own understanding of the situation of what he was going to do with the Babylonians and make this relationship that he felt would bring peace.

He couldn't have been further from the truth. He thought, There will be peace and security in my days.

And that's so often when we look to our own devices in this world. When we look at our nation, so many have said, We will have peace through this or that or the next thing.

[36 : 18] And yet there's no peace. There's more turmoil, more trouble, because we're not listening to God. And then you come into chapter 40 and you realize that this peace that Hezekiah had hoped for, it's not going to be.

Not at this moment. Isaiah begins with chapter 40 with comfort. Comfort, my people, says the Lord. With that assurance that the word of the Lord stands forever in verse 6 to 8.

And that's what leads us then into the rest of chapter 40 where we see the goodness of God. But this weedy people, they don't see it.

And when you look at verse 27, you see God speaking so directly to the people there and challenging them. Saying, Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel?

My way is hidden from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God. So this is the situation. The people are groaning and they're groaning towards God.

[37 : 25] That their ways are hidden. That His understanding is just not there. They're disregarded by God. That is the way they see it. And today people cry, There is no God.

We don't want God over us and yet there is dismay. There is so much that is wrong in this world. But we push God and then if they do say anything about God, well, where is God?

He's disregarding us. He's not interested. He's cruel. He's not kind to His people. He allows so much suffering in so many different ways. It's a very cry that we have here in verse 27.

My way is hidden from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God. But you notice something here. The way the people are speaking of God, they still hold Him.

The Lord is Yahweh. That is the word that they're using here, Yahweh. And it's my God. We could almost say that we've gone further away from that.

[38 : 31] People speak of God as, well, He's your God. He's got nothing to do with us. He's not our God. He's your God. And so, we are in disarray.

We have a people around us who are weary. And it's all because God is pushed away. And when you look at it here, the people's faith is challenged in the way that they say, God does not love us. God is not interested. God is, our ways are hidden. Our ways are disregarded by God. And behind it is that fear that God is unloving.

He's not interested in them. That's their take. And yet, what's happened is that they are blind to God. We can all say, I'm sure, at some point, we've asked questions of God.

We've asked God, I'm sure, where are you? What's going on, Lord? Are you not interested in what's happening? We all have these moments. But God so often speaks to remind us that he is there.

[39 : 48] But as we mentioned this morning, there is an opponent against the gospel. There is an enemy, and that is Satan. And again, we have to see him in the midst of this, that there is Satan here as well, planting seeds of doubt, making people ask questions of God.

Does he really love me? My way is hidden from the Lord. My right is disregarded by my God. That's not God speaking. That's Satan putting doubts in their mind.

John Knox, the famous Scottish reformer, he once spoke about it in this way, reminding us that the way of Satan is not a new way. He said, By what means Satan first threw mankind from obedience to God?

The scripture bears witness to this, by pouring into their hearts that poison that God did not love them.

Now that's the way that Satan came to draw mankind away from obedience to God. To put that doubt, that seed, that poison, that God does not love them.

[41 : 02] Despair and doubt is one of Satan's greatest weapons against the Lord's people, against all people, against all mankind. To say, God is not interested.

To leave us in that place where we think, my way is hidden from the Lord. My right is disregarded by God. That he's not interested in us.

We lose hope in that. But that is not how God leaves his people. That is not what we see as we read on in this passage.

That there is so much more that if Satan attacks, we are to turn to God. And that's what the role of Isaiah is as the prophet in the midst of this.

to bring the people back to God. To bring him back to see that no, he's not forgotten. He's not disregarded. It's not that he doesn't love you.

[42 : 03] That he can bring good. As the hymn writer says in the hymn before the throne of God above, when Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look and see him there who made an end of all my sin.

Upward I look. We look to God. And that's exactly what Isaiah is doing here as the Lord speaks through him. For the second thing we see here is a great God.

A great God. And you see that in verse 28. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. We look up to God.

We look up to him who is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. So often in despair in these times, these moments, we can take our eyes off God and we lose sight of him.

[43 : 16] We can't see a way forward. We forget that God's been faithful in the past. We forget the hope that God gives for the future. We just look at the here and now and we don't see God.

But here is Isaiah saying, look up. Just like Psalm 121 spoke of when we think of I to the hills will lift mine eyes.

There was this danger in the Psalms saying, where will my help come from? My help, my safety comes from the Lord who has made heaven and earth.

And Isaiah is focusing the people here. You have known, you have heard, he is saying in verse 28. You know all about God but you've lost sight of him and God is there for us today.

He's saying, have you not heard, have you not known the Lord is the everlasting God. Something our nation knew so well in the past and has forgotten.

[44 : 16] Something even the churches today have maybe forgotten to a certain extent. We've forgotten what we know and what we heard of God. But God is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He is our only help, our only hope in the midst of everything. He is all powerful. He is all knowing. There is no situation that lies out with his control, out with his knowledge.

It's not that he's sleeping. It's not that he's not there. He does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable. We think we have wisdom. We think we have understanding. It is nothing compared to his. And that is what we remember. That is what we are to hold on to ourselves. If we think of inviting others to come and hear this message, this gospel, this good news, how do we know God ourselves? Sometimes it's easy to tell others that God is good, that you need God in your life.

[45 : 30] But do you tell yourself? Do you remind yourself of the greatness of God? Do you remind yourself as you look at God's word?

Here is the Lord who is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. And he is the one who had mercy on me, a sinner.

Isn't that amazing? That God loved me, that he would give his son for me. The creator of heaven and earth is interested in us.

So the doubts that Satan puts in, my way is hidden, my right is disregarded, that God doesn't love, it's dismissed, it's dispelled as we see God in all his greatness.

The writer and minister John Flavel from many years ago, he once said this and it shows the importance of listening to the word of God.

[46 : 36] He said, one word of God can do more than 10,000 words of men to relieve a distressed soul. One word of God can do more than 10,000 words of men to relieve a distressed soul.

And isn't it amazing that God speaks to us. That even as we look at these words tonight, here is God speaking to us. Have you not known?

Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God. As he speaks to us, but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

God speaking to us. But are we anchoring ourselves in that word and in his promises? Someone once described it as looking to the icebergs that you see around the cold waters of places like Greenland.

When you see icebergs in these areas, you see that there are different kinds of icebergs, different sizes of icebergs. Some are small and some are very large.

[47 : 48] And as you observe them, you can see that they may be very often going in different directions. The small ones might be going one way and the larger ones going another way. And how is this?

Why is that? The person said the explanation is simple. The winds, the surface winds, move the little ones, whereas the large ones, what moves them is the currents of the ocean underneath. And they used it as a way of illustrating how our lives are. They said the wind represents everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing.

That can just blow us in different directions. But they said operating at the same time with these gusts and winds is another force, another more powerful force.

And it's a sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of his unchanging love. And we can be tossed around by the winds as James in the New Testament describes.

[49 : 03] And that's when Satan puts these doubts in that blows us off course. But Isaiah is bringing them back to be grounded in the word of God. With that deep flow, that undercurrent of his unchanging love.

Because there is the greatness of God. So we see here the goodness of God. The final thing we want to see here is the promised renewal.

A precious promise. God's greatness is something that at times we just cannot describe. How do we describe the greatness of God, the love of God towards us, especially when you think of it in the midst of times of dismay?

I'm sure you've heard it before described, maybe I've used it myself, of how someone describes a jewellery shop and how they display diamonds. And very often you find that in a jewellery the most precious diamonds are displayed with a black background.

And the reason for that is that the darkness shows the beauty of the diamond in an even greater way. And how often we think of the word of God in that way, how there is a darkness behind things, and yet you see the beauty and the greatness of God shining in the midst of darkness.

[50 : 40] And here is Isaiah speaking to a people, people who are questioning God, people who are anxious and worried and afraid, and yet Isaiah is shining that light into the darkness and

showing the beauty of God and the hope that God gives.

And he says it in verse 18 earlier on here, he's reminding them of where else are you going to look, to whom then will you liken God, or with what likeness compare him?

Is he like the idols, he goes on to speak, idols that can do nothing. But then he goes on in verse 21, do you not know, do you not hear, has it not been told from the beginning, have you not understood from the foundations of the earth, how God is the one who inhabits above the earth, the one who is in control.

He is the one who has power over all things. And so it is this God that we have who gives us strength. He is the one who doesn't faint or grow weary, whose understanding is unsearchable, he is the one who gives power, who gives strength.

He gives power to the faint and to him who has no might, he increases strength. So when we are weary, when we are dismayed, when we are tired, when we are all of these things, he gives us his power.

[52 : 12] And when you take these verses forward, when you look at them in the context of the New Testament, it so much points to Christ.

They are pointing us towards Christ. And we see there his glory shine on the cross in the midst of that darkness.

And although as we've looked at recently, as you're looking at what happened at the cross, the people who were questioning and the people who were downcast, the two on the road to Emmaus we were looking at last week, they felt that hope was gone.

And yet God was doing an amazing thing. God was doing something beyond our understanding. His understanding is unsearchable.

To us it seems to make no sense, the cross. And yet there we see where we will be renewed, where our strength comes from.

[53 : 16] Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. You think of the disciples after they met with the risen Lord.

Lord, met with all these people who met with God, the risen Lord. No more were they faint and weary.

You think even the two on the road to Emmaus who had been downcast walking almost all day to Emmaus from Jerusalem seven miles and yet it seems like there was no time at all until they were back in Jerusalem when they had recognized Jesus.

They weren't faint, they weren't weary. Their strength was renewed. And that is what the Lord does. That is what the Lord does for his people.

And that's what verse 31 gives to us. It's a beautiful and a wonderful promise that this is what he will do for you and for me as we put our trust in him.

[54 : 22] It seems to have a future, future, but it's also for the present that he is able to actively renew us day by day to strengthen us each and every day.

It is the Lord who does it. I listened to a short testimony today of a woman and she began by saying this, people can't change.

change. She wasn't saying it meaning it. She was saying it having heard it so often in her own life. People can't change.

I.e. what they were saying to her was, you can't change. And for so long in her life that seemed to be the case. And she said, I was hung over every day.

This was her life. She describes herself as the meanest atheist. God just meant nothing to her. And anyone who had any interest in God, she was the meanest atheist towards them.

[55 : 34] This was her life. People can't change. But now she's saying that is not true.

She has been sober ten years. A believer and a bright witness for Christ. And she said, once you meet God, you cannot but be changed.

She met the living God. And she also said this, if you believe people can't change, it's because you haven't met God.

God is the one who is able to change any. And testimonies are always such a powerful reminder for us.

Powerful reminder of how God transforms life. And that is what the gospel does. That is what Christ does for sinners.

[56 : 40] Sinners in need of salvation, there is Christ. And the weary in need of refreshing to go on, there is Christ.

It's all of him. He saves and he keeps and he keeps us going. Even youths shall faint and be weary and young men shall fall exhausted.

But they who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.

Isn't that a wonderful promise of the renewing power of God? A weary people see the greatness of God and go on in his strength.

Let us pray. God to God to God to God is powerful. That one word from you is worth more than 10,000 words of men.

[57 : 52] And we thank you that you speak and that your word is truth and that your word is life. We thank you that your word renews even when renewal and change seems impossible for us.

And we pray, Lord, that your word will be actively powerful in our hearts and in those around us. It will be renewing and refreshing to us that even in the midst of the times of weariness we can all experience that we will know that renewing strength of the Lord, that we shall know what it is to mount up with wings like eagles, that we should know what it is to run and not be weary and walk and not faint.

We thank you that that is through your strength given. So may you bless us with it and watch over us we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 89 once again in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 89 at verse 33. page 347 of the psalm book psalm 89 at verse 33.

Yet I'll not take my love from him nor false my promise make my covenant I'll not break nor change what with my mouth I speak.

[59 : 20] We have that assurance of God keeping his promises and keeping his love towards those who are his own. Psalm 89 verse 33 and the tune is Effingham.

Yet I'll not tame my love from him nor false my promise may I can that child of pain or change what with my love I say yet I look in once by my holiness ham van

The Lord shall pass the sun before the dust for rain.

If like the moon shall ever be, He's done with steadfastly, And I to the which in the air Doth witness faithfully.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right. We'll close with a benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon And abide with you all now and forevermore.

[61 : 42] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.