

Isaiah 40 v27

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Isaiah chapter 40, and read from verse 27.

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? 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 youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted, but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Now, as you know, we're always on the move in life.

[1 : 04] We're always going from one place to another. Some people move very quickly as they go through life. Some people, they tend to run wherever they're going, or they're darting this way and that.

Other people move a lot more slowly. Some people, as they go through life, they might be termed more like plodders, in the way that they're never in or never appear to be in a rush, just moving about whatever they're doing at a very kind of slow pace.

And that's the way it goes. Some people, as we say, they move quickly, and some people move slowly. But we're all on the move. And just as people move, some people move slowly, and other people move quickly in the natural world, so it is spiritually as well.

Because some people in the kingdom, some people who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, they seem to be making huge, as it were, huge strides in the Christian faith.

They're the kind of people who seem to have a huge appetite for the things of God. They have a real hunger for the Word. They seem to fill up their mind with the truth.

[2 : 21] They're involved with everything that they can in serving the Lord. And you look and you say, my word, what zeal, what an impact, what an effect these people are having.

And you're seeing them maturing so quickly. And then there are others, and they seem to be much slower. They don't seem to have the same hunger or the same capacity for work, the same... But that's how it'll always be like that.

And that doesn't mean that one person is a good Christian and the other person is a hopeless Christian. Not at all. It's just like as it is in the natural world, so in the spiritual.

In fact, Jesus said that. He said when the gospel goes out and it's preached and people believe, he said those who believe will bear fruit to the glory of God.

But they don't all bear the same amount of fruit. He said some will bear 30 fruit. In other words, they're still Christians, they're believers, but there won't be the same energy, the same capacity for work, maybe the same development spiritually as others.

[3 : 32] Some 30, some 60, and some 100. And the church has always got to remember that. And we're not to think that because one person isn't developing, as it were, or maturing at the same level as another, that they're like a second-rate or a third-rate Christian.

We're never to think in these terms. We've got to accept that that is how it's going to be. You look at the disciples of Jesus, and you take two brothers, Peter and Andrew. You couldn't get two brothers more, as it were, and alike, or two brothers more and alike.

Because Peter was the kind of person, he was always at the forefront, whatever was happening. He was right there. He was the one. He was the impetuous one. If the Lord wanted anything done, Peter was volunteering before the Lord would even finish.

He was the one. He was always mouthing. He was always rushing. He was always involved. He was the one who was ready to die for, so he thought, for Jesus.

Andrew seems to be somebody who's in the background, a very kind of quiet man. Of course, it was Andrew who led Peter to Jesus. And Andrew seemed to, when you look at the life of Andrew, seemed to be the kind of person that you could get alongside.

[4 : 50] But they were two totally different people. But both had their important part in the kingdom. And every believer has an important part within the kingdom.

Now, as we said, there's this idea of the movement in life, and it's also a movement, because everything that we look at naturally, we can also apply spiritually.

And the Christian life is looked at as a life of activity. Christian life is never looked at as a life of laziness and just taking it easy. It's always activity. And the Christian is always looked upon in the Bible as somebody who's either walking or running.

For instance, it says in the Bible about walk humbly with your God. Walk, we're told, again, worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

And then again, it says in the Bible, let us run the race that has been set before us. It says, so run that you may obtain. There are lots of verses that talk to us in the Bible about walking and running.

[5 : 59] And if we're going to just look at that, there are a lot of things that we can learn from that, a lot of spiritual lessons. But here, as we try and tie it together, we see that it's a time when Israel have a problem.

And Isaiah is dealing with this. Of course, it's the Lord who is dealing through Isaiah with his people here. And the problem facing the Jews at this time is that they become despondent and they become defeated.

And they're looking out at, as it were, on a long road. And the road ahead of them is too long for them. It's too far. And they feel tired. And they feel weary.

And they feel weak. And they wonder how they're going to keep going. They wonder how they're going to get where they're supposed to be going. And they feel like giving up.

It's all too much for them. Have you ever been there? Have you ever felt like that? And you say to yourself, you know, I don't know if I can keep going.

[7 : 07] This is too much. And we can have that naturally in life. We can have it spiritually. Or we can have it just within our ordinary life.

But, of course, if you today are a believer, there is only one life. You can't separate one from another. It is life. But there are some things you say, this is tough.

I don't know if I have the energy. I have this thing. Sometimes Christians are saying that. And they're saying, I don't know if I can keep going any longer. There's a basic problem with that.

And don't get me wrong. I believe we all go to that place sometimes. We all find ourselves in that place sometimes. But the problem, if we find ourselves in that place, is that we've done exactly what the Jews long ago did.

They had taken their eyes off the Lord. And they were looking at themselves. And they were depending on their own strength and their own energy and their own ability.

[8 : 12] Yes, they're still looking at the Lord. But they're depending upon themselves. And they're trying to go and do things on their own. And it just cannot, it won't work. But more than that, they feel that the Lord has forgotten about them.

And you know, that's an awful place to be. If you're a follower of the Lord and you feel the Lord's forgotten all about you, that's an awful place to be. And that's what we see in verse 27. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord?

It's as if here you are and you're going through life. And it's as if you, as you journey through life, that somehow it's like there's a covering over your life. And the Lord can't see you.

It's as if you're hidden away in a corner. Oh, yes, the Lord's seeing lots of other people. But somehow he's missing you. He can't see you. And that's what they're saying.

My way is hidden from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God. Either he can't see me or else he's forgotten all about me.

[9 : 20] That's really what they're saying. And they're feeling alone and isolated and helpless and defeated and despondent. Because they feel the Lord's not in it for them anymore.

And they're trying to go through this on their own. And what the Lord is doing through Isaiah is saying, right, you've got to refocus. You've got to get a refocus here.

Stop thinking about the long road ahead of you. Stop thinking about all the pains and the problems and the trials. Not that we're taking these things away. But if you're simply looking in on yourself, then you're going to sink.

And you know, that's true. If we continue always to look in upon ourselves, then we are going to go down within ourselves.

And particularly if you're tired and you're weary and you're finding things too much and you begin to dwell upon that, it will become, as it were, a downward spiral of dejection and being defeated and saying, this is too much.

[10 : 32] I can't do. And the Lord says, no, look, I want you to stop looking at yourself and I want you to start thinking about me.

And that's what the prophet is trying to focus their minds on. And that's why it comes to verse 28, it says, have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is speaking to people who know.

This is not news to them. And it's just they've forgotten. Or they need to re-hear it. And that's the same with ourselves. I don't believe there's anybody in here today who has never heard this before. But we need to hear it over and over again because sometimes we can lose our way. We can become despondent. We can become defeated and dejected. The Lord doesn't want us to be like that.

And so the Lord is saying, right, have you not heard? The Lord, because at the end of the day, the Lord is your Lord. This is what he's saying. He says, I'm your Lord. The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

[11 : 40] And he's saying, look, everything that is, doesn't matter where you cast your eyes. I am the one who has made it. In fact, I have made you your life.

And the Lord in this chapter has been bringing before their focus that he is the Lord without any limitations. That he is the Lord who is free from change.

That he is the eternal God. That there was nobody before him, but he has always been. Now, you and I can't get our heads around that.

It's very difficult for us to understand. But that's how it is. He is the everlasting God who is from all eternity. And his wisdom is unsearchable.

His understanding is unsearchable. We cannot get into the mind of God. We cannot begin to search into his mind and delve down. The Lord has revealed.

[12 : 43] The Lord has revealed some of his mind to us. And the best theologians who have delved into his word. They've sometimes had to come to the point and say, well, so far and no further.

We can only, we believe it, but sometimes we just cannot understand it. It is so deep. It is so profound. It is sometimes so mysterious. Who can search the mind, the wisdom of God?

The God who is all-powerful. When you think of this creation that he has brought into being, in fact, it's quite extraordinary.

It's in verse 26. Verse 25 is saying, To whom then will you compare me that I should be like him, says the Holy One? Lift up your eyes on high.

Right? This is what he, lift up your eyes on high. And see who created these. Now he's obviously talking about the stars here. Who created these?

[13 : 46] He who brings out their host by number. The millions, the billions of stars, brings them out by number, calling them all by name.

By the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. It is reckoned by astronomers that there are 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

400 billion stars. And it is reckoned that there are 125 billion galaxies.

And that means that astronomers use figures, which, how do you understand it? That there are 10 billion trillion stars.

Now, these are numbers that just blow your mind away. Okay? Think about these numbers for a moment. He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name.

[15 : 00] By the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing. Isn't that extraordinary?

All these billions, the trillions of stars, he brought them all out and not one is missing. Counts the number of the stars, he names them one by one.

And so this is what the Lord is doing. He is refocusing the thinking of Israel upon himself. And he is saying, look, I know life is difficult for you.

And I know you feel defeated and dejected. And I know there are pains and sorrows and troubles in your life. But, hey, hold on a moment. Turn away from yourself and focus upon me.

And that's what the Lord is doing. And then the Lord says, he does not faint or grow weary. His understanding is unsearchable.

[16:01] So here is the Lord who governs the universe, who holds everything by the word of his power. And it goes on to say, he gives power to the faint and to him who has no might he increases strength.

Even you shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. You see, the problem is that the Lord is saying here that those who are following him, even the young men, even the youths, even those who are at the peak of their powers, if they try and go through life on their own, or even, yes, following him, but relying on their own strength and their own resources, they will fall.

They will become exhausted. It doesn't matter how clever, how strong. It doesn't matter whether we're at the peak of our powers or not. It can't be done.

That's what the Lord is saying. So then he says, right, you're tired, you're broken, you're weary, you feel done. What do you do? Verse 31, but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

To wait upon the Lord is to have the attitude of like a servant to a master, waiting for instruction, depending upon this person to tell you what to do, to guide you in whatever you are to do.

[17:35] And that's what the Lord is saying. Look, you have to, you have to learn to wait upon me. How do we wait upon the Lord? Well, we wait upon the Lord in providence.

That is that we have to recognize that God rules and overrules all things. And that's important for us to understand, because sometimes God's providence is very, very difficult.

And I know there's many people in here today who have struggled with the difficulty of God's providence, because life has not worked out the way you hoped or expected.

In fact, life is so painful, there's a knife in your heart. And it's turning because of the pain of what you're having to go through. And some people might want to make apologies.

Some people may come to a pulpit and want to make apologies for God and say in some way that the Lord didn't know or the Lord didn't understand. No, my friend, however difficult, and I say this with all the compassion and tenderness, however difficult your providence may be, the Lord knows.

[18:50] The Lord is in control. The Lord sits enthroned. He is on the throne of the universe. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without its knowledge.

And if we lose sight of that, then this world becomes a total mess. It becomes a whole distortion. We are just bubbling about victims of fate and chance and whatnot.

No, the Lord is ruler. He is governor of all. That's what the Word teaches us. And faith has to lay hold upon it. And may I ask you today, Lord, give me that faith to see that.

Give me that faith to believe it. Because it will help to a certain extent to realize that even what you can't understand, and even what is difficult to lay hold upon, that God knows, and that He actually has a purpose in it all.

That's what's mysterious. That He has a purpose in it all. And I believe it's part of what will happen in glory, is where the purposes of God will be opened up, and we'll see it all tying together.

[20:06] And for the first time, and for the first time, we'll understand, and say, Oh, now I see. Now it makes sense.

These things that crushed me and broke me, it now makes sense. And so we need to learn to wait upon God in His providence.

We also need to learn to wait upon the Lord with regard to what we're doing here just now, coming together in His house. That's one of the things we do when we come together.

Yes, we come to worship the Lord, but we come to hear what God will say to us. Because coming into church today, we all come with all that we've been in life, and particularly in the last few days, since we met here last.

And our experiences have all been difficult. And some people may have come into church today with a bound in their step, because life is really good for you just now.

[21:11] You feel happy, you feel content. And that's great. But for some of you, it might be different. You might just feel so low in yourself.

And that's often when we come, and this is what's so important, when we come to wait upon the Lord, we're saying, Lord, please restore my focus. Help me, Lord, as I come into Your presence today.

Help me, Lord, to see and to understand. Help me to see You, so that if I see You, you know, when you look at life through the Lord, it looks different.

And that's what we're learning to do as we come to wait upon the Lord, where the Lord will sharpen our focus. This is a place that the Lord has set aside for us, where we might come in order to worship Him.

Again, we're to wait in prayer. Prayer is the contact of the living soul with the living God. Where we come, it's one of the most wonderful privileges that we're given.

[22 : 20] And the wonderful thing is that it doesn't matter a person's age or intellect or their capacity or anything. We can all come to the Lord in prayer. And it's not, our prayer is not in the multitude of words.

Our prayer is in its heart. And that is why even a groan that is uttered by faith, a groan that goes to God, a groan where we cannot even put together how we feel into words, but it's going to the Lord, is often more powerful than half an hour of words that are empty.

And the Lord hears this groan. He hears the broken heart that is ascending to Him, because it's by faith that groan is going.

Prayer is one of the most wonderful privileges. So let us learn to wait upon the Lord in prayer. So the Lord says, But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

And this word renew is very simply meant to exchange. It's to exchange what you have for something else. It's like taking off your clothes and putting on other clothes.

[23 : 37] And as the Lord is saying, If you wait upon me, wait upon me in my providence, wait upon me in prayer, wait upon me in the word, you will exchange where you are for your weariness and your tiredness and your exhaustion, and you will be exchanged with my strength.

That's really what He's saying. You will be renewed. Renewed in strength. So that they will mount up with wings like eagles.

That's one of the most wonderful things to see an eagle in flight. The power. The soaring ability.

That's its natural instinct.

It's God-given instinct. It's a bird of power. Flying upwards. Everything about the eagle seems to be flying in power and in height and in might.

That's what the Lord is saying. That's what I'm going to do for you. So that you will... It's like, you know, when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, that's kind of what it's like.

[24 : 46] It's like the freedom and the soaring ability that the eagle has. Free as a bird. Up into the sky. Up high.

And you know, when that happens, the eagle apparently has tremendous vision. Eagle is... We use the expression eagle-eyed.

Somebody use eagle-eyed. Sees. Sees everything. Eagle. Eagle. Apparently has really sharp eyesight. And you know, in a sense, that's what happens to a person when they come to faith.

They become eagle-eyed. They're able to see in a way that they couldn't see before. They're able to see the king in a land that is far off.

They're able to get a little glimpse of where they're going. They're able to see things a little from God's perspective. The Lord changes their vision, their understanding in life.

[25 : 50] And so there is this, as it were, soaring free as a bird. The Lord will lighten our troubles and our burdens.

Now, when I'm saying all this, that doesn't mean that there isn't a place and a point for somebody, suppose, this doesn't... It's not going against nature and to say, Well, if that is true, then I should always feel energy.

I don't need to go to bed at night. That's not what it means. Of course, we need a rest. There are times the Lord even said to His disciples that they had to come apart.

We're not talking about that, but we're talking about just the natural run in life, where there are times we can become tired and we can become weary. But this is a wonderful thing that the Lord will enable us to do.

He will enable us to fly higher and to run faster and to walk longer. As we go on the Christian road.

[26 : 53] Are you going with the Lord? Do you have a great today? Do you have a great vision of the Lord, of His greatness, of His power, of what He is able to do in you and for you?

Or are you today, like these Jews of old, defeated, dejected, tired, weary, fed up?

You wonder, how am I going to make another day, another week? Life is a struggle. Well, the Lord is saying, I want you to look to Me.

I want you to discover today what it's like to be able to exchange all that weariness and tiredness, all these burdens for the strength that I will give you.

May we go to the Lord, cast ourselves upon Him, and discover this in Him. Let us pray. O Lord, we pray that we might know that renewal of strength within our own being, that we will experience the joy of the Lord being our strength.

[28 : 12] We pray to lift us up and to encourage us as we go on. May we live in constant dependence upon You. Lord, be our shield and shelter, be our rock of defense.

Just like the eagle is always way up into the heights, the nests almost in the inaccessible heights, we pray that as the Scripture says, let your mind set your affections on the things that are above.

May our mind and our heart and all that we are be focused upon that which is above, upon the Lord. Lord, guide us in everything. Bless us, we pray, and take us to our homes safely.

In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen.