

Strengthened By God

Isa 40:27-31 ²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"? ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹ But 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.

Isaiah had been speaking to those who had gone after the gods of this world. To those in the visible Israel that had rejected God of Scripture, the God of their fathers. And he had ask them, have you not known from creation itself that God, the God of Israel is the only true God?

But now he is speaking to those who are looking to the God of Israel, but have become weak in their faith. Indeed he calls them Jacob and Israel, that is, "the church, the ekklesia, the called out ones) of our Lord. We understand that the use of the names Jacob and Israel is to remind them of their covenant promising and covenant keeping God that they are serving. And this morning, we have gathered to worship that same covenant promising, covenant keeping Triune God of Israel, we are the spiritual Zion. We are present day Jacob and Israel and we therefore must ever keep in mind that we are also the recipients of the promise of God to Abraham. (In His seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed) The covenant promise is ours today as well as to the people of the covenant in Isaiah's day

Two things we should note this morning; First, the discouragement of God's people, and Secondly the encouragement of God's people given by Isaiah.

A. The discouragement of God's people. - *Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel: "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my just claim is passed over by my God"?*

1. The cause for discouragement is the apostasy that is prevalent all around them.
2. "*My just claim is passed over by my God*" - In a sense they are saying "it's not fair".
 - a. Like Lot the righteous soul of God's people is vexed
 - b. Often when the judgments of God that fall upon the world around us, affects us.
 - c. Or when we see the ungodly around us prospering; it may seem to us that God has forgotten His promises to us as with David.

Ps 73:1-3 Truly God is good to Israel, to such as are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

3. The church in every age knows discouragement because of the predominance of sinful men around them.
4. The church in every age knows the hatred of the world toward them.

B. The encouragement of God's people given by Isaiah

1. Have you not known, have you not heard
 - a. Have you not profited by God's written Word?
 - b. Have you not profited from the record God has given of Himself in His Word?
 - c. Have you not been told how God protected your fathers at all times
2. God is an ever present help. - *The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary.* (cf. Ps. 121:2-5)
 - a. The God we serve still possesses and manifests the power which He had displayed in the creation.

Calvin: He argues from the less to the greater: "Since God keeps every part of the world under his authority, it is impossible that he shall forsake his Church."

- b. Take comfort with David (cf. Ps 121:2-5)

3. There is no searching of His knowledge. - *His understanding is unsearchable.*
 - a. The Hebrew word translated knowledge here does not speak of a “learned knowledge”
 - b. Rather it speaks of “understanding” in the sense of ability - knowing how to use the knowledge one has.
 - c. It matters not what is happening in your life, He knows what He is doing and why He is doing what He is doing.
 - d. The purpose is to show us God’s power and purpose in all things.
4. We also must understand that we are indeed weak in and of ourselves.
 - a. Our weakness is to God’s glory. - *He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.*
 - b. Let us remember, “the power of God is made perfect in our weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9.)
5. But they that wait upon the Lord. - *Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall, but 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.*
 - a. Even the choice best young men shall falter
 - b. But those who wait upon the Lord. - That is, those who eagerly look to the Lord; put their trust in the Lord.
 - c. They will know weakness - but God will renew their strength

We must, therefore be fully convinced of our weakness, that we may yield to the power of God. The Jews, who were oppressed by that cruel captivity, had great need of this doctrine; but for us also, during this wretchedly ruinous condition of the Church, it is exceedingly needful. (Calvin)

CONCLUSION: He strengthens His elect to soar above the trials of this world.

He strengthens His elect that they may be more than conquerors in the midst of trial.

Rom 8:36-37 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

It is not that we will not know trials, it is that in those trials **we will know victory.**

“While we are troubled on every side, we are not overwhelmed; we are perplexed, but are not in despair; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but are not destroyed.”
(2 Corinthians 4:8, 9.)

What have we learned?

We will live in and during discouraging times.
We will know weakness because of the weakness of our flesh
Our trust cannot be in ourselves but in God who is our strength:

A God who is a God of might and power
A God who has shown His power in behalf of His elect time and time again.

Let us then: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes;* (Prov. 3:5-7)

“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil 1:6-7)