

They that wait upon the Lord

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[0 : 0 0] of it in which we read the 40th chapter Isaiah chapter 40 let us read again at verse 29 he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength even the youth shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew the strength they shall mount up with wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint they that wait upon the Lord shall renew the strength spiritual strength moral stability and resilience of mind and soul these are the things that God promises to his people and they are the things that he promises to them in the most difficult and trying of circumstances these qualities of character and of mind and of heart are things that all men in every age have admired one does not have to know Christ or be a convinced Christian in order to admire them but is it not true that until we do know Christ and until we are Christians in very truth is it not all too true that until then although we admire these things spiritual strength and inward integrity and moral resilience is it not all too true that although we admire them we have to admire them in others but my friend these are gifts and graces which God gives to his people they are not things which he sets out to be admired only in a special few the Bible does not teach a rank of saints to which the more ordinary mortals like ourselves must look the Bible speaks of a people loved by God and redeemed by God through the precious blood of Christ and then speaks of a people who are transformed by the power of the Holy Ghost and made new creatures in Christ Jesus these are God's people and they are God's people today in 1982 just as surely as they were God's people 2,800 years ago or 2,500 years ago before the Babylonian captivity and that is the setting of the prophecy of Isaiah these are God's covenant loved people but like his covenant loved people have always been they are going through a difficult period they are difficult people they are rebellious and again saying people as Paul says of them quoting Isaiah in his letter to the Romans and because they have not learned

to obey God in all things and because their faith is small and their trust is slim God is telling them through the ministry of Isaiah that he will bring them into a land of captivity and they'll learn there what a bitter thing idol worship is and they're being visualized already in captivity but even in the midst of this threatened judgment God is telling them even when the captivity comes there will be a voice from the throne not merely from the throne of judgment but from the throne of grace isn't that wonderful isn't it wonderful for you and me tonight just as truly as it was wonderful for our disobedient people who were to be carried off into captivity for 70 years in order to learn the ABCs of God's dealings with them wonderful for us because we too when we know our own hearts find ourselves to be all too often a disobedient and a gain and say people a people who do not listen to God's voice but who listen to the promptings of our own sin affected hearts and we gain and say the Lord we cross and we contradict him ah but God says even in the midst of the judgments and the chastisements and we were saying this morning if the Lord loves you my friend you'll know his chastisement his correctings and don't be afraid of them be afraid if you don't have them sunken for them and he's saying here even in the midst of chastisement and correction there'll be a voice on the throne not the throne of judgment but the throne of grace and mercy and it will be crying out and it will be saying comfort ye comfort ye my people because God loves his people and it is because of his love to his people that he will chastise them do you know why he brought

Israel down to Babylon because he loved them with a love that wouldn't let them go and slither away into idle worship and my friend he loves you with a love that will never let you go either won't let you slide away into ungodliness or slither yes you may backslide and the Lord will chastise you but even in the midst of chastisement there'll be the cry from the father heart of God through the son by the spirit saying comfort them comfort them even in the midst of chastisement speak to Jerusalem the abandoned forsaken city that's been raised to the ground and cry unto her that her warfare doesn't look like it but yes in God's mind God's purpose God's heart her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned and then through the rest of the chapter it's as though there was a note of sadness in the voice of all that God has to say through the prophet

I want to comfort you and what are you doing you're turning to idols and you're taking trees that won't move and you're trying to carve a God out of them or you're taking your gold and your silver to a cunning workman what folly and yet how often when we ourselves go on through the journey of life we create our own idols and then they're complaining they're complaining that God has passed their judgment verse 27 God is saying and the very names that God is using should have spoken deeply to their hearts Jacob the Jacob the twister who was made an Israel a prince of God why sayest thou

O Jacob and speakest to Israel why do you say and speak this my way is hid from the Lord and how often God's people do that even to this day and my judgment is passed over from my God I put my judgment into his hands it's only the people of God that could make this complaint I put all my concerns into his hands and he seems to be neglecting them he's even handed them over to somebody else not so Jacob Israel you're wrong your way is not hid from God just as surely as Job could say by faith he knoweth the way that I take so Jacob and Israel at this time and Jacob and Israel in Christ tonight can say he knoweth the way that I take my friend let that comfort your heart God is not blind to your circumstances nor is he blind to your need nor is he hard and unfeeling and unthinking as we were saying this morning there's one on the throne who is moved and who compassions over our infirmities and although he doesn't blink at them he's moved and compassion over our sins and our failures too our judgment has not been handed on to God our correction our chastisement has not been handed on by God to another he'll never do that it's still in his hand and all the directing of all our days will never pass out of his control it will always be his because we are in his heart people in captivity difficult circumstances complaining that God has forgotten and forsaken them and handed their control and their destiny over to someone else and then the voice speaks have you not known how long are you going to take to learn the lesson have you not heard that the everlasting

[11:18] God the Lord the creator of all the ends of the earth they're building up these words they're building up a picture of one who is all wise and all powerful and it's confirmed for us with these words he gives power to the faint you remember a man who learned that learned it out of bitter experience under the hand of God I prayed he says I prayed God three times that he would take away the thorn from my flesh and then God answered them did he send an angel to take the thorn away from the apostle no he didn't but he spoke to the apostle and this is what he said my grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness and that was a hard lesson even for an apostle to learn and it's a hard lesson for people

God's people to this day to learn for me tonight and for our elders here and for our believing praying people and it's an even harder lesson for those of you who are only groving still after Christ don't but oh my friend keep on groving and learn the lesson when you're nothing God comes in that's what we need as individuals and it's what we need as a congregation it's what we need as a Christian church in Britain today that we would know our weakness and our nothingness and that we would know God coming in the God who gives power to the faith who makes strength his divine strength perfect in human weakness that's how he does it and we try to be so self sufficient we go to God to throne of grace to prayer to the

Bible we're asking him for help and we close our minds and our hearts and we come away we leave and we're as weak as ever because we feel that what we have done will not strengthen us only God will strengthen us even the youth shall think what's a youth a young man ever seen powerfully disciplined exercised young man perhaps an athlete preparing bringing himself to the peak of physical perfection in order to some achievement I saw much of it when I was young used to strive after it myself would spend two and a half hours out of a working day for eight months of the year throwing a hammer in order to have two months going down the Highland

Games and of course when they're doing it super strong there's something about youth that's wonderful God takes these young men young athletes the very strength or perfection of human strength remember being told once when I was 19 by the time you're 25 you'll really be finished you begin to collapse then so the youth even the youth those who are at the peak of their physical attainment they shall faint human strength will not do to meet the real crisis that come in human experience the young men shall utterly fall but they that wait upon the Lord waiting upon God and winning from God here it is waiting upon God in order to win from God and my friend the last will never come without the first they're totally interdependent you want to win from God do you want to win the strength that gives moral victory that gives inner toughness toughness remember once hearing the description of a Christian that I've never forgotten and it came strangely from the lips of Martin

Luther King Christian he said is like the Christian's God he's got a tough mind and a tender heart and Christians today need to have tough minds if we're going to hold on to the truth as it is in scripture and in Christ then we must have tough minds but we must cradle out tough minds and tender hearts Christ himself did that nobody tougher in his mind when it came to the nitty gritty of truth or error and yet no one so tender in his heart and if we're going to have moral resilience if we're going to be able to stand strong for God in the kind of generation in which we live then my friend we have to learn that winning these things from God is an achievement that comes to us they're won only by waiting upon God they that wait upon the Lord

[17 : 42] I want to dwell just in that first of all and then look at some of the things that we win from God by waiting on them they that wait upon the Lord I think this is a beautiful expression waiting on God do you know anything about it not just as an expression but as an experience I believe that it is an experience which couches on the very soul of what Christianity is waiting upon God it's very simple and yet it's very profound it is very easy and yet it is very difficult and if you ever tried to wait upon God in a sensible text you know that waiting upon God implies several things it implies first of all a felt sense of dependence it implies that you or I have come to know our need of God and we go to him to wait upon him a spirit of dependence and it's the very first lesson that God teaches when he goes to bring a soul close to himself you need me and strangely it's a lesson that we need until the very end the old is sent us to learn and relearn the lesson that we are as totally dependent upon God spiritually as we are physically and temporally the psalmist knew this dependence he said this thou art the God of my salvation therefore do I wait upon thee every day psalm 25 you do you do you notice something he doesn't say

I will wait upon you and you will become the God of my salvation but he says you are the God of my salvation therefore I wait upon thee one of the clearest evidences you can have that you are saved and in Christ is that evidence from psalm 25 that you daily wait upon God and in your daily waiting upon God confess your total dependence upon him Peter learned this lesson Jesus said to him one day when men were forsaking Jesus and we forget that they forsook him in flocks and multitudes they did when the trial and testing came will you also go away he said to his disciples and

Peter spoke to them all and he said Lord to whom can we go for thou hast the words of eternal life my friend no matter what jam you're in tonight no matter what difficulty you may be experiencing let me say this to you you're learning you're being taught you're dependent and there's no escape from it accept it and make it the springboard that will make you wait upon God and I think that waiting upon God implies something else it implies not just dependence but a believing trust I know God the psalmist seems to say he is the God of my salvation therefore I will wait upon him he's helped me in the past he's been a savior to me somehow through my Christian friend then he'll help me tonight he'll help you all the days he'll give you your very dependence has brought down his help in times past and it has built in you generated in you born in you trusting dependence upon

God and you say even when you don't feel and when you don't experience by faith you say faithful is he that has promised who also will do it faith real living faith in the Lord Jesus seems to have something in its very nature that makes it trust God implicitly it's like Job it says though he's slay me yet will I trust him you wouldn't trust somebody that said out to kill you would you well Job goes as far as that God was handling him roughly we might say he was feeling it ah but he trusts the God who is handling him and he knows that ultimately somehow it will all work together for his good and he makes that amazing statement of faith though he slay me yet will

I trust him because he trusts him God never will save him he'll save him out of the pit and I believe the way of God of course implies this also not just dependence not just trusting faith prayer but prayer prayer prayer is not merely going down on your knees for a few minutes in the morning and then for a few minutes in the evening prayer I believe is a attitude of mind and heart that dwells with us all through the day and that sends up often inarticulate cries to God unspoken prayers of the heart that the eye of God can breathe and that the ear of God does hear but of course there will be specific and there must be and there should be specific set times of prayer for every believer do you say to yourself

[24 : 59] I'll take this promise of Isaiah 40 31 and I'll bring it to the throne of grace and I'll say now Lord now here it is you've said it I believe it fulfill it they that wait upon thee have come to wait have you said that to God this day have you allowed this day to pass without looking up to heaven and saying oh God of all grace I'm coming to wait on you if you had done that my friend you never know what God will be pouring into your soul now you never know what God will be preparing for you tomorrow he's an amazing wonderful God wearing upon him and it's not just prayer it's not just an attitude of asking God it's a attitude of expectancy that looks to receive that's what

Christian faith is that gets from God and gets again let me ask you again a wee question my Christian friend when did you last really get something that you knew from God why not is it just because you're not waiting upon him if you're not waiting you'll not be winning and if you are waiting you're winning already because it was him he who brought you to the place of waiting himself my people he said will wait upon my name and wherever his people have found that has been one of the prime characteristics they wait upon God winning from God winning only that which God has promised and winning that because

God has promised it just listen what comes to those who wait upon God what do they win from him they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength if you're taking the little Hebrew or taking the Hebrew text and translating it very literally Matthew Henry says you'll be putting it like this they that wait upon the Lord shall be adding to their strength I'm not very much of a mathematician but I guess that adding to is kind of multiplying isn't it multiplying your strength start off with two just two times two not two times one and if God was to strengthen you as a Christian and make you twice as strong as a Christian as you were when you come in here you would be a powerful man of God wouldn't you but why just multiply by two why not multiply by ten and my friend if you went out here out of here ten times as strong in Christ as you were when you came in how would you be you would be very weak in yourself don't forget that and God adds strength it's his strength that he adds perhaps you'll go out feeling weaker although in reality you were stronger and he uses beautiful metaphors doesn't he can you ever forget the pictures that this text builds up here's the first one there's three of them an eagle taking off in flight just imagine an eagle the king of them all king of all the feathered creatures have you ever seen an eagle taking off

I have thrilling things spreading out these huge wide broad wings and moving them slowly but my work taking off and I have actually followed a golden eagle with a pair of very powerful binoculars till it was so high that even the powerful binoculars had lost the speck he had become popping big burnt the span of his wings were more than 12 feet I'm sure and yet he could go so high that even the binoculars would lose him great picture the bible uses it again and again strong swift as an eagle says one text and strong as a lion there's a christian for you are you swift as an eagle strong as a lion that's what you should be in christ when you strength this attitude what do you do they shall mount up with wings the wings of grace and of prayer and of sanctification and pardon of sins how many wings is the the lord in them they shall mount up with wings as eagle they'll soar soar says

Matthew Henry again upward to god in their daily life are you doing that that's one of the things you'll win oh we need a generation of god's people who know that they are god's people and we need a generation of christians who will live on a high plateau as in the very presence of god and then there's another beautiful picture they shall run and not be weary and i think the picture of the young man's back in his mind's eye not many of us perhaps ever did much running and some of us now are not fit to do any at all but we see them on our television streams and we still admire them Ovec and Cole and all these fellows who can run so beautifully and when you watch them running they look as if and the commentator said he looks as if he could go on forever they say of that strangely named fellow

[32 : 11] Sebastian Cole well that's the picture they shall run and not be weary and that's very unnatural just you try it my friend i used to do hill races in my teens when you were doing some of these hill races i tell you you were very weary anytime you were halfway up you were feeling like lying down and giving it all up and saying what a fool i am imagine doing this running up a hill but god says it's possible to run to run in the way of his commandments as the psalmists have beautifully put it run in them not just walk in them but run in them and not to be weary when is that possible when he's adding to your strength and they shall walk and not faint less dramatic there was first of all the soaring strength of the ego the beautiful flowing fluid movement and then there was the runner something the same grace and power persistence and constancy and pace now we're back where most of us are we're walking but my friend what a wonderful thing walking is people actually cover far more ground walking than they do running and if you're walking no matter how slowly well you're making progress and they shall walk and not be faint just recently we were hearing a lot about our soldiers who are to march across the falklands through the peat bogs and over the hills with these huge packs in the bags was it 52 miles some of these commanders did and they must have been gay finned and if they weren't they must have been very highly trained

I'm sure they were because even walking takes it out of you my Christian friend haven't you found that you started out to walk with Jesus and your vision was so great it was wonderful oh you would go to the prayer meeting every week and you would get strengthened and you would speak to the neighbour and the fellow they would work with and you wouldn't be afraid of any and you used to sing in your heart I'm not ashamed to own my lord or to defend this cause and you haven't been in a prayer meeting for two years or six months or two weeks when did you last speak to somebody about Jesus what's wrong you're fainting you're almost dead it would take a doctor or a nurse perhaps to tell the difference between one who would really fainted and one who had died altogether and I'll tell you it would take more than a picture even a free church minister to tell whether some of our members are dead or just if they've just fainted and if they're dead then God help them there's no hope for them there shouldn't be members but if they're only hope if they've only fainted then we do have some hope for them a wee drop of living water from heaven could land on them and they would wake up and they would gain the joy of the salvation wouldn't they what's the use of being saved if you've not got the joy of your salvation what's the use of trying to walk at all if you're not really walking with the

Lord why be faint you know the word has connotations of faint heartedness somebody who can only humble along and you know this I believe that's a dreadful picture of the average Christian in L.D.

they're not soaring like an eagle and wings and they're not running unwirriedly they're walking and even they're walking they're fending they look as if they couldn't stagger very much further and let me say this my friend sadly I am including myself among the average Christian I'm talking about but this is what God has promised and this is what we can win from God because he has promised it listen to the text let it preach to your mind and your heart and your soul my friend and let it preach to you long after you'll never hear my voice in the pulpit again on a side of the face let it preach to you when I am no longer your preacher they that wait upon the

Lord shall renew their strength they shall load up with wings and wings as eagles they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not fit and there is absolutely no reason why you why I by the grace of God should not be among them let us learn to wave upon him may bless this truth to you as let us pray and help us to say with an apostle

[38 : 54] I will rather glory in my infirmity that the grace the strength of Christ may be perfected may rest upon me and be perfected in me bless thy people here tonight oh God and be near them and help them to wait upon me and fulfill the promises given to those who do wait and bless any amongst us who are not really thy people at all bless any who have felt that the sermon is unreal and doesn't touch them where they are and give them a word oh Lord from thy spirit may they seek thee until these things do become living realities for them go before each one of us into this new week and help us in it to be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus bless especially our boys and our girls and young people be with them and watch over them in their schools and in their homes and in their colleges hear us

Lord in our prayers and do for us above and beyond our asking for Jesus sake Amen