

'Strength when weary'

Isaiah 40:1, 27-31

When are things going to go back to normal? Where is it all going? Well as we wait – I want us to think about these words from Isaiah 40 to encourage our hearts.

Where we come in to in our reading the Church has been through a real time of struggle and the Chapter starts with this verse because God wants to comfort:

Isaiah 40: 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

God wants so much to reassure us. It is the thing the Lord says most in scripture- so many reassurances in so many ways that He is there and for us to take heart and be encouraged. However bad things can be in life the reality of the living and loving God just makes the difference.

I've been thinking recently about how awful it would be if God didn't exist! I can't imagine how much worse that would make things feel. Even in the questions and struggles of life the reality of the loving God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit just changes the perspective and gives the hope.

In Isaiah 40 the Lord is reassuring the church that He hasn't forgotten and he's there. In later verses from Isaiah 40:

Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”?

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;

31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,

they will walk and not be faint.

A word that keeps coming out of this passage is 'weary'. We get weary in so many ways: physically, emotionally, tired of certain social relationships or lack of them, or some life condition, and experiences- ongoing illness, or debt, or anxiety, or poor coping or... whatever. We can get weary with ourselves, and we can sometimes feel spiritually weary too. Sometimes for lots of reasons we can feel a real weariness- that a night sleep won't sort out. A deep, life limiting, energy sapping weariness.

God is never like that. He is the Spring of Life - full of joy, peace, boundless energy and capacity. This passage reminds us of God's strength:

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.

But it is not a strength to belittle us or mock us. It is a strength to lean on, to be galvanised by

29 He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.

In our weakness and frailty God strength lift us up and restores us. We can all feel shattered and weakened by life circumstances. Perhaps in the circumstances in which you find ourselves now you may feel they are knocking you for six. A weariness that means you feel you can't really go the distance.

But we don't pick up our strength by looking to ourselves but looking to our strong God. He lifts us up, and we hope in Him, and one day we will soar! In Jesus that is promised to all those who belong to Him: *31 but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength.*

They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

This is ultimately fulfilled in the next life but we see dimension of it in this life as well.

We get weary but God is strong, with a loving strength to be there with us and for us to help us carry on.

A lady named Corrie Ten Boom was someone who did so much to help during the Second World War and afterwards and she said this:

"If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed. But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest."

Where's your focus for recharging, for strength? Look to the Lord. When we hope in the Lord, our weariness gives way to new strength and life and peace. When we hope in the Lord, we will find our strength and vigour restored.

AMEN