

Spiritual strength renewed (Quality: Good)

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Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[0 : 00] If the Lord will help me, I will speak from the word in the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 40, the 31st verse.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. The prophecy of Isaiah, the 40th chapter, the 31st verse.

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles.

They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint. It occurred to me when this verse engaged my mind that it is quite a suitable word to follow on on the subject of our Thursday evening service.

[1 : 16] Some of you, of course, were not able to be there, so I'll just mention to connect the point that on Thursday evening I spoke from that word in Isaiah concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, that the Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that he is weary, that morning by morning he wakened in my ear to hear as the learned.

And I mentioned how the tongue of the learned was given to the Lord Jesus Christ in his human nature, of course, that he might speak a word in season to those that are weary.

Now, if it should please the Lord as to speak a word in season to any who feel weary and weak in spirit through this word, for it refers to such as are weary and weak and need their strength to be renewed, that would be a very helpful and profitable sequel to the other's conscience.

Another thought that occurred to my mind was this. This is a very suitable word for a Lord's Day morning with the Sabbath before us today.

For there in the week, you know, who have the stress and strain of life upon you, your mind, you must feel that you do need a rest not only from the strains of life, but a rest in which your spiritual life can be renewed in strength and vigor.

[3 : 04] Because there's no question about it, as we opened our worship with this morning, the six days of toil and care and strain have a very weakening effect upon us, upon our spiritual life.

How welcome, then, is a day of rest. And especially when we're enabled to gather together in the sanctuary of God's worship, engage ourselves in spiritual and holy things.

How often that is a time when in waiting upon the Lord we feel our strength to be renewed. Sometimes it's the very spiritual influence of divine things upon our heart.

Sometimes some word comes, a word of promise perhaps, or some word with that influence attending it that revives our spiritual strength.

Now we are all here present before God. We have come to wait upon him. To wait upon him in his house.

[4 : 15] To wait upon him in his worship. To wait upon him in his word. And if it should please him that in waiting upon the Lord our strength may be revived and renewed, then it will be good indeed.

One is reminded of the case of Elijah, by the way. When? After a most remarkable vindication of his prophetic authority and of the Lord God of Israel against the worship of Baal, the Lord so singularly appeared for Elijah, but there was a sequel to it.

And his strength gave rise. The strain had been too much for his strength. So he fled into the wilderness. And in dejection of spirit, we read that he sank under a juniper tree, said, O Lord, take away my life.

I'm no better than my father's. But the angel of the Lord awoke him. And there was food provided for the poor prophet.

But he needed exactly that. He needed rest and he needed refreshment. For, as the angel said to him, the journey is too great for him.

[5 : 40] You haven't got enough strength for it. No, my friends. There's something like that often in our case. The journey seems too great for us. We seem not to have strength for it.

We need the Lord to renew our strength. Now, just a glance at the context. We're spending much time upon it.

It is God's answer to the despondency of Jacob. Why say so, O Jacob, and speakest thou Israel?

My way is hid from the Lord. And my judgment is passed over from my God. It doesn't mean, of course, Jacob and Israel personally, but the seed of Jacob and Israel.

Now, it seems to them as though they were not regarded as their God. It's so. Their way was hid from him. He regarded it not.

[6 : 45] And their judgment, or as it really means, their cause. The things that they were involved in and burdened with were passed over, not regarded by their God.

But, as I've said before, it was not that his way was hid from the Lord. It was that the Lord's way was hidden from him.

Now, when the Lord's way, his dealings with us, is hidden from us, it so often seems to us as though our way is hidden from him.

No, it never so, my friend. It never so. And when the Lord seems not to appear for us in matters that may be trying and perplexing to us, it seems to us as though our judgment in these matters is passed over from our God.

For now, this kind of thing sends the spirit of the people into a very low and despondent condition. It is very remarkable how the prophet, speaking in the Lord's name, deals with this despondency in the minds of the people.

[8 : 06] He doesn't explain. He doesn't say how it is and why it is, that their ways seem to be hidden from the Lord, nor why the Lord did not appear for them in their cause and in their judgment.

But he impresses upon their minds, in a very majestic way, the greatness of God himself. Another tempting to go further into this, but I will pass it over with just this remark.

Sometimes the Lord is pleased to give some light upon what to us seems so mysterious and so dark and so difficult.

In other words, he sometimes, in that way, condescends to explain things a little. But not always. The Lord can bring every thought into subjection, to his sovereign, wise, gracious counsel and way, not by explaining anything, but by impressing our minds with the greatness of his name and in his nature.

That causes all questioning and perhaps sometimes repinings to quiet down in our spirit. The sense of the greatness of God seems to overwhelm everything else in us.

[9 : 34] Has there not known, has there not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary.

You're speaking, you're thinking, so God has fainted and is weary. That can never be. There is no searching of his understanding.

But then, Jacob might say, that's true enough. But how does that help me? That he is almighty, and so on, and great, and powerful, that's true enough.

But then I'm weak, and helpless, and dependent. How does that help me, that he is so powerful? Why, this way, he giveth power to the saints, and to them that have no might, he increases strength.

But then, how is this power to be given? How may we seek for it? It is in waiting upon the Lord. They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength.

[10 : 44] They shall mount up, with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint. Now, I want it, I may be able, to bring this word, to bear upon our own present need.

I've no doubt, that there are some in this congregation, who feel to need exactly that, that the Lord would strengthen them, in their hearts. They need, their strength renewed.

Then, this is a word in season. May the Lord, make it profitable, and helpful. The text, of course, suggests, these three points, for our meditation, to dwell upon.

There is first, a need implied. A need of having, our strength renewed. There is secondly, the way in which, that need, can be supplied.

Say that, wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength. And then thirdly, there is the effect, of that strength, when it is renewed. They shall mount up, with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint.

[12 : 05] There is a need, the way in which, that need, is to be supplied, and the effect, of that strength, when it is, renewed. But, as a way into the subject, I'll just very briefly, mention, that there are of course, different kinds of strength.

There is physical strength, that is very necessary, for our physical life, and vigor. Strength of body. There is also, mental strength, strength of mind, vigor of intellect.

And it is remarkable, what strength of mind, some people, have manifested. And sometimes, where there has been, physical weakness, there has been more, mental vigor.

for that natural strength, in those two ways of it, of body, and of mind. I would think possibly, that, the prophets, in this word, even the youth, shall faint, and be weary, and the young men, shall utterly fall, may refer, to physical strength.

Because, in our youth, and, middle age, we will say, our physical strength, reaches its highest. We, we, we rise from, the weakness of childhood, to the strength of youth, and middle age.

[13 : 41] When we attain that, then, our strength begins, to go down. We begin to lose, our strength. So that, however strong, of a young man may be, in their heyday of life, or however, mentally, vigorous, and capable, they may be, in full possession, of that faculty, the time comes, when they become, weary, and faint.

When they can't do, what they have done. When their physical powers, begin to weaken. And they begin, to be conscious of it. And when their mental figure, begins to weaken.

They find, they can't concentrate, and penetrate, its things. It tells its own story. Strength is failing. Strength of body is failing. Strength of mind is failing.

And we know, it will be so, to the end. For, there's no renewing, of the strength of youth, in old age. Neither of body, or mine. So even the youth, shall faint, and be weary.

And the young men, shall actually fall, presently. They won't retain, they're a figure, to the end. The strongest, may become the weakest. But now, there's another kind, of strength.

[15 : 00] Their spiritual strength. Now, it is a spiritual strength, of course, that this is, applicable, and pride. They, wait upon the Lord, to renew their, spiritual strength.

Now, their spiritual strength, will not decay. It will be renewed. A child of God, of 70, and 80, may have much, spiritual strength, as, as, as, he had, in the first, beginning, of his spiritual life.

Because, spiritual strength, is renewable. I'm sure, that experience, confirms, what I'm saying. I know, my experience, over, now, over 60 years, in spiritual matters, confirms that.

And, I certainly know, my ministerial experience, now, nearly 58 years, confirms that. Our spiritual strength, is renewable.

When I say, spiritual strength, as distinct, from physical strength, of course, I mean, spiritual strength, with regard to, spiritual life.

[16 : 15] There can be, no spiritual life, without, spiritual strength, to live that, spiritual life. And, that word, comes to my mind, which is confirmed, if I can correctly, repeat it, now, the apostles, pray for the Ephesians, that the Lord, would, um, strengthen them, with strength, in the inner man.

Strengthen you, with strength, in the inner man. Now, the inner man, is the spiritual life, of a child of God. It is his new nature.

It is that in which, it resides, eternal life. The inner man, is the new nature. Now, the inner man, is subject to weakness, and strength, it is subject to, so, as the Lord is pleased, to renew it, with renewing, strength.

A believer, spiritual life, begins, at the new birth. You've heard me say this, I know, more than one. The new birth, is the essential, beginning, of real, spiritual life, in the soul.

When, a man, is born again, he begins, a new, spiritual, life. He begins it, it never ends.

[17 : 50] Never, to all eternity. If it begins, in the new birth, it never ends. It knows, no death, no death at all.

Now, although, in an unregenerate state, that is, who are not born again, have no, spiritual strength.

And, so will you read, in the epistle, to the Romans, that when we were, without strength, Christ, died, for the ungodly. Very beautiful word.

When we were, without strength. Without strength, to save ourselves. Without strength, to overcome, the power of sin. Without strength, to escape, the eternal doom, of sin.

Without strength, to believe it. Without strength, to love. Without strength, to do anything, spiritual. Now, when we were, in that weak, helpless, state, Christ, died, for the ungodly.

[18 : 57] Now, everyone, that is born again, and possesses, spiritual life, is born again, because Christ, died for the ungodly. Because, Christ, died for the ungodly.

And so, in that remarkable, 53rd chapter, of this prophecy, you read, he shall fear, the travel, of his soul, and shall be satisfied.

Mark that, the travel, of his soul. Now, the sufferings, of Jesus Christ, were, the first, pangs, of everyone, that's born again.

everyone, everyone, his sufferings, would travel. They would travel. And, when anyone, is born again, of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ, sees the travel, of his soul, in the new birth, of that sinner.

See, he shall feel, the travel, of his soul. So that, when we were, without strength, Christ died, for the ungodly, of now being, born again, through his death, for the ungodly, we need, spiritual strength.

[20 : 19] And, this is, evident, in this, way, that there is, spiritual strength, in spiritual life, because, when the soul, is born again, possesses, spiritual life, it begins, to act, in a spiritual way, that he could, never act in, before that, because it had, not strength, it's not strength, because it had, not life, spiritual life, sooner, begins to be, the movement, in the heart, of that, spiritual life, that's, the first, way, in which, that spiritual strength, is shown, is that, one, has strength, to repent, and turn, to God, strength, to turn, to God, he couldn't, have done that, before, he had no strength, to repent, before, but when he, has strength, he repents, toward God, his heart, turns Godward, there's a great, change, in his heart, and his mind, with regard, to God, he begins, to confess, before God, his sinful condition, begins, to seek,

God's mercy, he finds, it has strength, so the Lord, helps him, to believe, as that strength, is directed, to Jesus Christ, he finds, that there is in himself, when the Holy Spirit, revives his spirit, and strengthens him, and instructs him, he finds, in his heart, to believe in Jesus Christ, to come to him, to look to him, to cleave to him, to trust in him, now this is, the new, life, packing itself, with strength, I mustn't dwell, any longer, on this particular point, that the time is passing, now, then, it is with regard, to spiritual strength, that we need, the Lord, to renew, our strength, there are reasons, for this, and one reason, is this, a child of God, has not the source, of spiritual strength, in himself, he has spiritual strength, but he is not, the source of it, where then, is the source of it, the source of it, spiritual strength, is in Jesus Christ, and in God, happy, is the man we read, whose strength is in thee, that is, whose strength, is in thee, as the source of it, the never failing, source of it, strength, so we haven't, much strength, in ourselves, apart from the source, of our strength, may I put it to you, something like this, a person may, have very little, possession, very little money, at his command, not much, if it is, hardly enough, to pay his way, and keep him out of debt, that suppose, there is someone, in connection with him, who is very wealthy, and who can supply his needs, from time to time, as they arise, now in that case, the man's, money, would not be, in his old possession, but in his friend, who supplies it to him, he would need to have, a continual supply, from that kind source, now it's like that, with our strength brethren, our strength, is not in ourselves, if it was in ourselves, we could live, quite independently, of any help, from the Lord, but the spiritual life, is a very dependent life, we depend upon the Lord, for our strength, blessed is the man, whose strength is in thee, because, if strength, is in a never failing, source to him, work in himself, he might expend it, and it be gone, but being in the Lord, it's unexpendable, it is infinite, in its source, so the Lord, goes on giving power, to the faint, and to those, that have no might, he increases strength, and still, he is as strong as ever, as almighty, to save, and to help as ever, with him, there is no weakness, at all, but no, because, our strength, is not in ourselves, we need the Lord, to be continually, renewing it, by, communication, of helpful, strength to us, well, that's one reason, why we need, to have our strength renewed, we have not it, in ourselves, then, there are other reasons, for this, we need to have, our strength renewed, because our spiritual life, is of such a nature,

that we do need, strength to maintain us, in it, and, if you give, a minute consideration, to the, natural similitude, that spiritual life, is compared to, in the scriptures, you will see at once, that we need to have, our strength, constantly renewed, for instance, spiritual life, is a conflicting life, there's so much, that comes against it in us, and you know, how that's described, in the scripture, it's like a wrestling, we wrestle not against, flesh and blood, but against, invisible powers, powers, that are very strong, highly evil, we wrestle not against, flesh and blood, but against principalities, and powers, invisible powers, satanic powers, now, to, engage, in a conflict, needs, strength, and, our spiritual conflict, is not overcome, at one battle, if by the grace of God, we are helped in one, period, of our experience, of this, powerful, conflict, within our heart, against, so much, that comes against us, and come into, a period, of more quietness, and calm, as strength, feel renewed, you mustn't suppose, that's the last, of that experience, you know, it is very much, with us, as it was, with the Lord Jesus Christ, in this matter, in his temptation, he overcame, but we read, and the devil, left him for a scene, see, the devil, left him for a scene, now, this conflict, goes on brethren, sometimes, you may be tempted, by unbelief, to doubt everything, dream not, to face, so, clear, so strong, as exempt, anyone, from the, pain of doubtful, darts, of the enemy, my friends, there's not, there's not a truth,

I've been preaching, to you these years, but I have not, had a conflict, about it in my own mind, and in my own heart, we wrestle on, towards heaven, against wind, and storm, and tide, we'll never get there, unless the Lord, renews our strength, we just haven't, strength enough, to maintain the battle, left to ourselves, and he who thinks he has, is in the greatest danger, of all, he's the one, above all others, who are lucky, to make a nasty fall, well, we need strength, for the conflict, then again, if you consider, that the spiritual life, is compared, to a race, as the apostle, puts it, in that third chapter, to the Philippians, he said, forgetting the things, that are behind, and reaching forth, to the things, which are before, I press, toward the mark, for the prize, of the high calling, of God, in Christ Jesus, the prize is wonderful, it is eternal life, it is to win Christ, and possess him, and that's a wonderful, prize to win, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, but there's a pressing, towards that mark, a pressing towards it, it's not won, by just sitting still, and doing nothing, it's not won, by just being, content, to feel, our own weakness, and emptiness, and poverty, true as that is, to feel, but it's not won, by just resting, in weakness, at all, is it?

A race needs vigour, to press, towards the mark, in Christ, as the good dear, to press against, towards the mark, it is pressing on, pressing on, pressing on, an awful feeling, so weak, so dependent, so tried, and so opposed, but it's to press on, until we reach, that blessed, mark, and that, eternal prize, that's worth it all, worth it all, that I say, there's no comparison, at all, but no comparison, brethren, it isn't everyone, who seems to enter, the race, that's ever, reaches, the prize, not everyone, you know, there's some sad instances, of this, in the new testament, of some, that did run well, and, fell into apostasy, Demas, have forsaken me, having loved, this present world, the world, was too strong, for Demas, never gained the prize, and there were others too, do you feel, we shall gain the prize, shall I gain the prize, at last, oh that, eternal prize, of life, and holiness, and love, and,

[31 : 00] Jesus Christ, well I know, one thing, I desire to press, towards that mark, I know, I know that I have not, strength to reach it, left to myself, not to take a single, step in the way, I should, I should, give up, long, I should have given up, long before now, if the Lord, have not, renewed my strength, see then, the need of having, our strength, renewed, just one point, Lord, I can just take, another moment, of your attention, there's a need, of having, our strength, renewed, from conditions, in our own hearts, oh my friends, there's something, very weakening, in us, you know, all the time, it isn't only, what assails us, from without, it's what, weakens us, from within, sin, now my friends, there's nothing, weakens us, so much, as the sin, that dwells in us, sin is a, weakening disease, as well as, the polluting evil, it's a, weakening disease, then, there's the unbelief, as we read, beware, if any of you, be deceived, by the deceitfulness, of sin, and of an evil heart, of unbelief, well,

I mustn't dwell longer, I think I've shown, you the first point, perhaps a little, this morning, what this strength is, and how, we need this strength, to be renewed, to hold on our way, not to be overcome, of evil, whether, from without, or from beneath, or from within, to press on, fight on, labour on, pray on, and at last, to reach, the heaven of eternal love, and life, and glory, and God, Amen.

Amen.