

God's almighty power in supporting weaklings

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[0 : 00] I will ask your attention to the chapter that we read. That is the 40th chapter in the prophecy of Isaiah. And we'll announce by way of text.

The 29th to 31st verses. 29, 30, 31. 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 their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

We have in our Bibles two prophets of the Lord, very evidently much used, much led of the Spirit.

[1 : 16] Isaiah, quite a long book. Jeremiah, quite a long book. Nevertheless, every word, every syllable is necessary to the completion of God's inspired and holy word.

We do value the labors, the exercise of spirit that must have been in the hearts of Isaiah and Jeremiah and difficult times in which they were living, yet led of the Spirit of God.

We might say Isaiah's prophecy seems to evidence a more comfortable passage than that of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, nevertheless, the sovereignty of God is in all these things.

The lot is cast into the lap, and the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord. Isaiah was what the Lord would have him to be in his day and generation.

Jeremiah was what the Lord would have him to be in that difficult and dark period wherein he wrote his book and added, as it were, to the prophecy of Jeremiah the lamentations of the same much tried and perplexed person that he was.

[2 : 54] Well now, yes, we find more comforting expression in the prophecy of Isaiah, in certain parts of it particularly, and the chapter out of which I've taken my text this morning is indeed a wonderful, wonderful description of the sovereign God remaining forever, God over all, and blessed forevermore.

My friends, we're all witnesses of change. We're witnesses of change in ourselves. We're witnesses of change in the family circle.

We're witnesses of change in the neighborhood. And we can come to the nation. We see great changes in the situation obtaining in our nation at the moment to what we knew when some of us were young.

We also see changes in the international situation. Oh, how the face of the globe has changed, that some of us come up against titles of nations and we can't put our finger on the part of the earth wherein they stand.

But when we were at school, we were so conversant with geography and that other subjects taught to us that we could almost tell you just where many of those islands, let alone the nations, were on the globe as they fulfilled the will and purpose of God.

[4 : 44] But the nations have changed in dimension, in title, in so many respects. And we're sad to see the decline that has existed in many parts of the earth.

And we tremble as the Lord still reigns. The Lord remains in control. Nothing stays His hand or says to Him, What doest thou?

This 40th chapter is a very remarkable chapter. How the Lord uses simple expressions to convey tremendous meaning, tremendous comfort as we shall realize the God who caused these details to be recorded, preserved and handed down to us.

And my friends, who can read this 40th chapter without some idea of the greatness of God.

All the nations of the earth. But as the small dust of the balance. You know, when you're weighing with scales, the main content is poured out, there's invariably a little dust left behind.

[6 : 32] And you would take some instrument, a brush, or you'd take a piece of rag and you'd wipe the dust away as of no value.

No value. When the Lord, this great God, the creator of all, he looks upon the nations of the earth as the small dust of the balance.

But while it's the nations of the earth are so small and of little value, God in his sovereign goodness and grace has caused a work to be accomplished which lifts not nations but individual sinful men, women and children and lifts them up by his grace according to his love and purpose to salvation and they're higher than the angels.

They're of more value in praising God in glory forever than those characters that we read of in the highest heaven.

You see, we have to realize the limitations of a finite mind. God is incomprehensible to us in his greatness.

[8 : 13] But there are various things in this chapter that are worth considering the stars of the heaven.

The stars of the heaven beyond our comprehension. Take a look heavenward as Abraham was called to do when God was to reveal to him the greatness that ultimately would associate with himself.

The stars of the sky in multitude. So shall thy seed be, says God to Abraham. And that is still finding its fulfillment.

fulfillment. It's finding its fulfillment in the direct natural descendants of Abraham in that wonderful nation, the Jews.

But my friends, if we look from the natural viewpoint to the spiritual viewpoint, we shall see the seed of Abraham, God's people, all those Jew and Gentile, whom the Lord has purposed to salvation, and will have with him in glory to his praise endlessly in eternity.

[9 : 40] You see, and that's a wonderful word here in this fortieth, that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, and he says, lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number?

You say, but look, they're innumerable, they're innumerable. I heard a lecture by one of the chief scientists in our country, a man known as Burgess, who is the head of the scientific aspect of Bristol University, and he said that the stars and planets and that that are visible to us are only a small portion of those in existence, elements.

And yet, it says this, he bringeth out their host by number, he calleth them all by name.

Name is surely an individual identity, and every star in the sky is whether seen by us or unseen, but still in its place and doing its work according to God's got them all named, he knows everyone in an individual, and you see, what a wonderful projection of truth is to be found if we meditate on these things.

Every star is known to God by name. Let me put this to you. The people of God that are, as it were, the stars in the universe, spiritually considered, for which the world was made and for which the world continues to exist, this people have I formed for my praise, for myself, they shall show forth my praise.

[12 : 06] The people of God are the stars in the earth, and the Lord knows them all by name. He knows them all by name. There's no question of one escaping his knowledge and understanding.

He knows every child of God in a very personal way and manner. They're precious in his sight. He was so much in love with them that he spared not his only begotten son, but sent him forth into the world to work a work that is necessary to his glory and their good forever.

This people have I formed for myself. They shall show forth my praise. Like stars in the firmament, aren't they?

God will know he giveth power to the faint. He giveth power to the faint.

Oh, sometimes we get very faint. We begin to feel that God has forgotten us, that the Lord disregards us.

[13 : 23] We haven't a place in his favor. It seems as though everything combines together to declare that we're not members of that sacred blood-bought family, the stars in the firmament as the Lord knows them all by name and leads them according to his will.

He calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might for that he is strong in power none faileth. There's not a child of God on the face of the earth whom the Lord has thought upon with thoughts of peace and not of evil to give unto them an expected end.

There's not one that will ever fail. They'll get low. They'll get tempted. They'll be feel sometimes at the point of death so faint so weak so helpless so hopeless in themselves but that he is strong in power not one faileth and he goes on to say he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength.

weakness weakness is a threatening experience naturally weakness is a threatening experience naturally but spiritually spiritually it certainly doesn't carry any threat in that sense because he is that he is strong in power not one faileth he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength he increases strength he doesn't give you all the strength you need at the beginning not the beginning of your spiritual life he doesn't immediately bestow upon you such a measure of strength that you've got a sufficiency on board to see you through to the end of life oh no no no for thy shoes shall be iron and brass and as thy day so shall thy strength be it's a daily allocation of divine strength from on high that enables us to go on in the will of

God he giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might he increases strength oh you've thought looking out on life or on some particular phase of life circumstance that there's no future there's no future everything seems marred everything seems to be against you ah my friends to them that have no might he increases strength he increases strength a little strength here a little strength there sometimes a word of his grace and truth drops with such application as to be so suitable that you know even

[17 : 36] God is mindful of your situation and your innermost feelings they're described to a perfection in the application of his word heart and he increases strength little by little little by little day by day hour by hour night by night the church of God is maintained in strength by God himself when you stand at the threshold of despair oh how wonderfully the Lord uses his word or sends somebody to talk to you I had a phone call this past week and a dear man

I'll please open it was the pastor of Eastbourne he phoned me up had a communication from another quarter that mentioned my name so he phoned me up he said Harold I haven't spoken to you for a long time and I feel guilty and we had a conversation in the end I said look your phone bill will be tremendous at the end of this never mind he said never mind and I felt just the same as he felt love flows down a telephone wire sometimes when the Lord grants communion and fellowship to the souls of his people it's a wonderful thing how the communion of saints when faith answers faith how it comes in and it's a renewal of strength you think well I never could have enjoyed that conversation like I did if the

Lord the Spirit wasn't in my soul it's supernatural and the Lord sends these things you might meet somebody in the way I remember and I'm going to tell you just another experience and I don't want to get too personal I was in I took a position in Birmingham that was a considerable advance in my business life and quite a lot at Coventry Chapel in those days were critical they thought I was fired with fleshly ambition and I'd left Coventry and I'd gone into Birmingham to work and it would cause a weakening of the relationship between me as a member of the church and the church bodily and they got very critical and it worried my mind to think that feeling was present in the church there at that time

I went off to Birmingham and what was a regular practice for my lunch I left the office where I was working and went down to Lyons Corner House in I think it was Ball Street Birmingham at that time and I used to walk down there for a breath of fresh air and a little exercise in the middle of the day I asked the Lord as I left the office Lord if I'm wrong in being here if I'm sorry I put it the wrong way if I'm right in being here and the criticisms are not according to thy will grant that I might meet somebody in Colmore Row as I walk along that busy thoroughfare who I know and is a fellow believer you know I left the office and I went off down and Colmore

Row Birmingham between 12 and 1 o'clock or about 1 o'clock was absolutely thronging with people out of the crowd came an arm and took hold of my shoulder and said Mr.

[22 : 27] Crowder I'm pleased to see you I want to talk to you and he told me of his worry and concern he was fainting he was in a very far off fearful condition and I was able to speak to him in just a simple way about the greatness and goodness of God and he was so moved that he shed a few tears as we stood together talking and you know I felt such a ceiling in my own spirit that I was where the Lord would have me to be and I wasn't being fired with material ambition I was following the Lord in taking up that position at that particular time that man coming out of the crowd in answer to a prayer and he said to me when he said the

Lord brought us together Mr. Crowter this morning I didn't tell him my side of the question but I got my answer by these things men live and in all these things is the life of my spirit he gives 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 where does human resource come into the matter well youths we reckon are the penultimate of their strength when we're in our teens and twenties we almost could face anybody without fear naturally speaking from just physical ability love but it says here even the youth shall faint and be weary and young men shall utterly fall oh my friends human resources are not sufficient to see us through spiritual experiences we need something beyond that and the Lord gives promise but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength look if you're at the ends of the earth if you're in a trouble and you don't know what to do and which way to take look get on your knees they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength the Lord smiles on a person who's utterly weak confused and at the very threshold of despondency no strength in themselves and the subject of manifold temptations by the devil

I say the Lord hears the groaning of the prisoner the Lord sees the insufficiency of the situation because in that sense he's created it he's created it he's brought you to faint and be weary he's shown you your natural strength can't cope with the situation but he is sufficient but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength shall renew their strength my friends the Lord when Peter walked got out the boat and walked on the water to go to the Lord as soon as he took his eye from the Lord he began to sink did the Lord see him go under oh no no no no no no no he stretched forth his hand and caught him now do you know what that is experimentally do you know what that is he carries off till men are faint and comes at evening late but he's never too late he's never too late none of the righteous shall ever be lost and if the Lord by his spirit is working in your heart to will and to do of his good pleasure he won't let you go under the waves you may feel in a sinking condition poor old Peter he was well disciplined in the school of Christ but oh he had something he had something to write about and something that other penmen were constrained to record in the word of God but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength shall renew their strength you know sometimes the Lord can increase your natural ability to do what seems to be too much for you and you seem to turn a corner and things are not so bad as they were and you realise you're getting on better you're feeling more settled well the Lord is in charge of all the twists and turns the crooked things shall be made straight the rough plays shall be made plain the Lord can change the situation and your attitude and your attitude to that situation whichever is his will concerning you but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength isn't it wonderful isn't it wonderful when you have to eat your own words you've come to the point you say well I can't go on

I can't go on I can't go on the Lord renews your strength and you do go on you do go on and you have to eat your words your unbelieving fears realise how wrong you were to reckon without God to reckon without God why art thou cast down O my soul why art thou disquieted within me hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him when in his time in his way but there's a waiting on the Lord and my friends the Lord keeps us waiting he doesn't come immediately we cry he doesn't he doesn't work by our standard you may feel to have got at the end of the earth but you can go on an amazing distance further if it's the will of the Lord to wait in his graciousness to your deliverance you see it's all in the Lord's hand that's the thing it's all in the Lord's hand he disciplines his children he leads them about he instructs them he keeps them as the apple of his eye this is our

God well now I'm a Satan they shall mount up with wings as eagles now I've only ever seen one eagle in my life in flight and I was up in Scotland on the Isle of Sky there were there were eagles in the Cullen mountains on the Isle of Sky they nest there and so on and I actually saw one oh what what a sight it is the tremendous spread of the wing as these birds fly over the mountains in pursuit of their prey not only for their own satisfaction but the satisfaction of the nest that is built high in the mountain rocks well now the Lord and I jotted down because

[31 : 32] I've got a bad memory my memory is not what it was so I jotted down yesterday in meditation if you'd like to turn to your Bible in Exodus chapter 19 and at verse 4 Exodus chapter 19 and verse 4 it's the children of Israel coming out of Egypt isn't it how they groaned as bondmen to the Egyptians ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagles wings and brought you unto myself there's a nation the nation of Israel in bondage no army no obvious way of fighting their way out of the situation the prison house situation they couldn't see how they could possibly escape but my friends the Lord uses this as an illustration beautiful ye have seen what

I did unto the Egyptians and how I bear you on eagles wings and you know in the period of bringing up their young the eagles eventually get to the point where the youngsters must fly and you can just imagine when they were in the high rocks the summit of some of these great mountains it looks that they'll fall to destruction when the mother bird or father bird I don't know which tips them out of the nest and they go hurtling down hurtling down tremendous distance and the parent bird comes underneath and she she gets underneath and she bears them on her wings and takes them back to safety and that's what the

Lord does that's that's an illustration from nature that's what he did with the children of Israel he bore them on his wings and he took them through the way sounding wilderness and he settled them in the promised land you see God was the God of Israel and God did this and the Egyptians said you won't go you can't go we won't let you go it was they that perished they saw their enemies swallowed in the Red Sea while they themselves went through on dry land not let me just turn to these other scriptures look at Deuteronomy 32 32 11 12 another illustration of the same principle as an eagle stirreth up her nest fluttereth over her young spreadeth abroad her wings taketh them beareth them on her wings so the

Lord alone did lead him and there was no strange God with him I'll leave you to read these portions of scripture when you have time wonderful and then the last one I'll refer to is Psalm 103 Psalm 103 in verse 5 let me start to read the whole Psalm you read the 103rd Psalm I'll just refer who satisfieth thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles the Lord gives you a crumb of mercy the Lord gives you some particular help maybe in providential matters maybe in spiritual matters but he gives you something that's got the hallmark of heaven on it it's the bread from heaven he gave them bread from heaven to eat it's like the manna and my friends it strengthens you doesn't it it just does what it says here who satisfies thy mouth with good things so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles you know an eagle at a certain time looks very sorry for itself it molts and it looks a poor insignificant creature and then it's renewed and it looks again in the glory of its very nature as the preeminent bird among the world of birds the eagle is a fine sample of the creation's wisdom power and beauty there's a renewal and so you go from strength to strength you go from one valley and over the mountain and into the next valley and it's up and down and it's up this is a Christian experience it's not just an even flow of delighting in the

Lord oh no my friends there's a trial of your faith there's a down sitting as well as uprising they that know no changes fear not God if you can maintain a level all the time with no ups and downs to trouble you and worry you I question look well to your foundations look well to your foundations because the Lord exercises his people and he knows how to keep them exercised too he knows how to wean them of themselves that they may rely upon him totally now I must close you've got Sunday school but they shall mount up with wings as eagles and they shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint the renewing the renewing the renewing

[39 : 42] God is a renewing God you you you you you lose your first love and your heart gets hard and cold and prayerless and indifferent and you get you feel more like a stone than anything else my nature is like a stone one of the hymn writers got it but there's the renewing the renewing the Lord knows how to soften a hard heart oh he knows how to break down the barriers with which you may have surrounded yourselves in your unbelief but he makes his own way and he brings his own will to pass well now there's a few simple thoughts simple thoughts in a great subject too comprehensive for us to understand but simple enough as shown to us in the scripture to encourage us to press on to press on waiting upon the Lord waiting upon the Lord if you're going to make your feet sore with walking you try walking on your knees you try walking on your knees you'll find the Lord will help you the Lord will renew your strength the Lord will maintain his grace in your heart and in your life

Amen you again you you