

“Strength for the Weary”

Isaiah 40:27-31

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Summary

Weariness produces more than yawns and tired muscles. It generates questions. It softens convictions. It weakens resolve. The prophet Isaiah is addressing people who are intimately acquainted with this kind of weariness.

In Isaiah 39, it is prophesied that, *after* Hezekiah’s reign, the people of Judah will be sent into exile by the conquering Babylon. They had *survived* Assyria—God had delivered them miraculously (chapter 37)—but despite moments of faith and revival, Judah also followed the way of rebellion, idolatry and unbelief. And around 100 years later it, too, would be destroyed.

In chapter 40, Isaiah projects out into the future—after Jerusalem is destroyed and the people are languishing in exile in Babylon. He’s addressing a dislocated people; a devastated people; a guilty people. And—after years in exile—a weary people.

Isaiah gives us three pictures that help diagnose our hearts, and deliver us counsel that we desperately need in our weariness:

1. The Despondent Heart (v. 27)

Two attitudes have entered their soul and are dominating their thinking.

a. *“My way is hidden from the LORD”*

Isaiah looks into the future, and anticipates the acute isolation the exiles would feel. The holy city Jerusalem, the location that gives concrete expression to their faith, is in flames. The Temple itself, God’s dwelling place, is in rubble. And so they ask, “Does God even see anymore?”

It’s a theological statement that we make. It strikes at the very nature of God. “He can’t see.”

b. *“My right is disregarded by my God.”*

And the verb tense here is a continuous one: “My case *keeps getting* dismissed!” Now it’s not just “God can’t see.” It’s “God doesn’t *care*.” Have *you* ever felt hidden? And that sense of isolation can turn into *accusation*: “Don’t you care?”

So how does Isaiah counsel the exiles? By reminding them of just who their God is.

2. The Majestic God (v. 28)

In the original, there are actually three names for God, one after the other: “The God of eternity, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth—does not faint.”

Isaiah addresses the despondent heart of the weary by painting a picture of the majestic God.

3. The Empowered Life –v. 30

Note the contrasts: v. 28: God does NOT “faint” or “grow weary”

v. 30: Youths SHALL “faint” and “be weary” (same verbs)

The contrast: Precisely what God *cannot* do, man inevitably does.

Here’s the divine design for joining God’s all-sufficient power and my all-encompassing need. **Those who “wait on the Lord” live with a confident expectation of His action on their behalf.**

Why is “waiting on God” the mechanism by which He gives us His strength? When we wait on God, we confess our helplessness, and our complete dependence upon Him and our confidence IN Him. When we “wait,” we’re letting God be God!

Discussion Questions:

1. Think of a time in your life when God led you into a season of waiting. As you recount it (or maybe it’s current) why was/is waiting so difficult? In what ways were you tempted to think accusing thoughts similar to those uttered in v. 27?
2. How does Isaiah address the despondent heart of the weary by painting a picture of the majestic God? What attributes in v. 28 show God as majestic? How should the contrasts between v. 28 and 30 shape our view of ourselves as well as the way we relate to God in the midst of trials?
3. What things are you currently waiting or hoping for? How does waiting reveal what or who we are trusting in?
4. Jeff said, “waiting is not God’s way to deprive us, it’s His way to change us.” As you re-read v. 31, describe what weary people receive as they wait on God. In light of this, how can you wait with hope in the midst of your trial?

5. Read Romans 8.32. Where does this verse point us in God's Redemptive Plan? How does the Cross provide complete proof that God will act on our behalf while we wait expectantly?