

## Strength for the Weary

### I. Intro: Story of "LOOK UP"

We are weary. 40% more stressed than just 5 years ago. 2 kind of weary: physical, and emotional/spiritual. One affects the body; the other affects the soul. The solution for physical weariness is a good night's sleep. But the solution for emotional and spiritual weariness is not always evident.

This morning we're looking at how to find strength for our weary souls.

Weary souls are a result of wearing circumstances. Weariness comes from being worn out. Or worn down. **What is happening around me starts to affect what's happening in me.**

Anyone feel like the stuff that's happening *around* them is affecting what's happening *in them*? Stuff like hurricanes and fires and threats of nuclear war and the political scene, and social media, the things that affect us collectively. Add to that, the things that affect us personally: things like our health, grief, conflict, worry over our kids, or our finances, or our health, or the health of a loved one. A relationship struggle, a work stress, a reoccurring problem, an addiction, a delay, and wow! -the potential to feel completely weary is endless.

**Tell about A Moment to Breathe: free giveaway and some of the comments.**

Our problem isn't new. The people of Israel were undergoing things around them that affected what was going on in them. Isaiah writes to a people who were about to go into captivity-- taken from the safety of their land into the land of the enemy-- not of their own free will, but as captives. They would be their 70 years. That's a lifetime. Isaiah 1 - 39 warns of this upcoming captivity, but Isaiah 40, Isaiah turns a corner- he tells them

how to live in the midst of their circumstances. And he promises to give them strength while they wait.  
Read Isaiah 40:25-31

<sup>25</sup> “To whom will you compare me?

Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> **Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:** who created all these?

He who brings out the starry host one by one  
and calls forth each of them by name.

Because of his great power and mighty strength,  
not one of them is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you complain, Jacob?

Why do you say, Israel,

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

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

<sup>31</sup> 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 was a problem that wasn't going away anytime soon. And those kinds of problems wear you down...cause you to be weary. Make you think I'm done! I'm so over it...But you're not.

**Here's the situation: They were asking the same things we ask in the midst of circumstances that wear us down: *My way is hidden from the Lord, My cause is disregarded by God. (vs. 27)***

Ex. God doesn't see. God has passed me by. I need you to see...because if I'm invisible I don't matter. And I need to matter to you.

EX. The need to be seen is woven into our DNA- by God himself. That's why a child says, "Look at me!". As we get older, we have more subtle ways of needing to be seen - recognition, selfies, social media likes, etc....and if we aren't liked we feel like we aren't seen, which makes us feel sad. But if we feel like God doesn't see and God doesn't care - it's devastating.

But God's answer is clear: I do see. I do care. (VS 27: Why do you say? Why do you complain? Do you not know? Have you not heard? I even know each stars name- I certainly know your name! I give strength to the weary. I increase (multiply) the power of the weak). **I have all strength so I can give all strength.**

**A. How do I get the strength God gives?**

**1. Those who hope in the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Wait - *Look for with eager anticipation.***

There is a promise for those who hope in, wait for, the Lord...they will renew their strength.

2. Vs. 25: One major command in Isaiah 40: LOOK Up. Look up so you can look for. Look up to remember who God is so you can look forward to what God will do, and Look for what God is doing.

**EX. *The woman who told me to "Look Up".***

A. *God does not give 5 simple steps to deal with in captivity...that only serves to get us to look at ourselves. Nor does God give 5 reasons why captivity is good for you...that would cause us to look primarily at*

*the circumstance.* **Rather God says don't look at yourself; don't look at your circumstance...look at me.**

LOOK UP: Why? Because...

**B. In seeing God unlimited nature I receive his incomparable strength.**

**II. Look Up and I'll See God for Who He is and receive His Strength**

**1. God IS Mighty, God IS All-Powerful, God IS the Creator, God IS All-Knowing**

<sup>26</sup> **Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:** who created all these?

He who brings out the starry host one by one  
and calls forth each of them by name.

Because of his great power and mighty strength,  
not one of them is missing.

**2. God IS a Comforter (1-2)**

**40** Comfort, comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and proclaim to her  
that her hard service has been completed,  
that her sin has been paid for,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

God tells Isaiah to speak tenderly to Jerusalem, to comfort her...not to wag a finger and say I told you so, or OK, buck up, you got what you deserved, or even Ok, enough, it's over so get on with you life. No, he speaks words of comfort, of hope, of deliverance of perspective

***EX Story of Dad and car keys***

### 3. God IS Glorious (3-5)

A voice of one calling:

“In the wilderness prepare  
the way for the Lord<sup>[a]</sup>;

make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up,  
every mountain and hill made low;  
the rough ground shall become level,  
the rugged places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
and all people will see it together.  
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

a. All people will see God’s glory—count on it. But to see it now, prepare the way for people to see it. And we prepare the way IN THE WILDERNESS. I.e. Remove the stuff that makes it hard to see God’s glory....this is what John the Baptist did. Their pride was the barrier so John preached repentance of sin...drawing their attention to the need for a savior. Prepare the way for YOU to see it...get rid of stuff preventing you from seeing.

### *EX. Straddling the fence*

#### 4. God IS Stability (my word stands forever)

A voice says, “Cry out.”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All people are like grass,  
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

<sup>7</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.

Surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup> The grass withers and the flowers fall,  
but the word of our God endures forever.”

5. Your hardship won't last forever but my word will. People won't last forever, my word will. Faithfulness won't last forever but my word will.

*Ex. Dad telling me "people will fail you; I may fail you; but God will never fail you". This truth turned out to be the key for me gaining strength during the most difficult season of my life and ministry...people did fail but God did not.*

**III. And in All that GOD IS, God offers help (27-29) – He gives (multiplies)....strength to the weary, he gives power (ability!) to the weak.**

- a. How does God multiply strength? **A transfer happens in my soul when I shift from focusing on where I am to focusing on who He is. Seeing God for the all mighty king, the compassionate comforter, the everlasting creator, puts things in perspective, which gives me strength.**
- b. Strength to soar, to run or to walk.

Sometimes we soar above things  
Sometimes we run across things  
Sometimes we walk through things

- A. God offers hope...for those who wait on the Lord. He offers strength for the weary. For those who look not at their situation, but at the Savior. For those who look up.
- B. You are not hopeless because you are not helpless. You have God, your helper.

III. Conclusion: Application-

God promises strength for those who wait on or hope in Him. The transfer of strength takes place when I stop looking down and look up. When I shift from focusing on where I am to who HE is.

**ONE APPLICATION POINT to receive God's strength: LOOK UP**