

SERMON NOTES
Isaiah 40:12-17, 29-31

We have no excuse for not worshipping him as Lord of all.

Isaiah 40:12-17,29-31 (NIV)

STRENGTH FOR THE WEARY

1. Hope for the hopeless

- ∅ The last few verses of Isaiah 40 tell us what to do when we are tired and weary. But for the cure to be effective, we need to understand our situation and God's provision – as set out in the chapter as a whole.
- ∅ It starts with proclamation of good news – God is on the move to come to his people and save them. (vv1-4). He is coming to Zion to be in the midst of his people.
- ∅ All mankind will see his glory, not just Israel (v5)
- ∅ The Deliverer is a powerful 'strong man' (v10). He is also a caring shepherd (cf. Ps 23, John 10:11).

2. Knowledge for the wise

- ∅ Great poem vv12-17, reminding us of the wonders of creation.
- ∅ He asks us questions to make us think and study the creation and to respect the greatness of the Creator.
- ∅ All science is really theology, so that we can know God better.

3. Humility for humanity

- ∅ Nations are insignificant compared to God (vv15,17)
- ∅ There is nothing we can offer that is truly worthy of him (v16).
- ∅ To whom then will you compare God? (vv18,25) Idols are ridiculous (vv19-20). No human power is his equal (v25).
- ∅ His eternal power and divine nature can be clearly seen (Romans 1:20).

3. Encouragement for the discouraged

- ∅ Are we too small to attract his interest? (v27)
- ∅ He is beyond our comprehension, but he will not forget his promises, his commitment to his people. (v28)
- ∅ The demands of life become exhausting: we get weary, we stumble, we fall. Two causes:
 - Demands of service take their toll (cf. Paul in 2 Cor 12:28-30)
 - Dissipation of sin saps our strength (cf. David in Ps 32:3-5)

4. Strength for the Weary

- ∅ The secret is: *'Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength'* (v31)
- ∅ Renew = Exchange – we become stronger as our life becomes entwined with God's. He wraps his strength around us.
- ∅ Hope = Wait - how do we wait on him? Coming to him in Jesus, studying him, looking to him, trusting him, praying to him, doing his will, serving him.
- ∅ The result of applying this remedy is threefold (v31):
 - We soar up on wings like eagles, full of blessing and excitement
 - We run, busy and fully stretched – and we finish the race, tired but not faint
 - We walk, steadily doing the job, day after day.

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.

¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

¹⁴ Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

¹⁶ Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

¹⁷ Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

¹⁸ To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to?

¹⁹ As for an idol, a craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it.

²⁰ A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot. He looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple.

²¹ Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from

the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

²² He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

²³ He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

²⁴ No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

²⁵ "To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

²⁶ Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O 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.