

Isaiah warned of the coming captivity in the previous chapter. In this chapter he began to address those in the future who would experience the captivity. He encouraged them that it would be a purifying experience for the nation. God would bring them back to the Promised Land and the glory of the LORD would be revealed (Isaiah 40:5).

God reminded them how short human life is. To waste one's life on an idol's lying promise of prosperity was a complete waste of one's life. Idolatry was a main reason for the coming captivity. The difference between God and idols was quite a stark contrast. A mere piece of wood that is overlaid with a precious metal is still just a hunk of wood and some metal. While the Israelites believed idols could represent a spiritual power, and the Torah tells us they do represent demons (Deuteronomy 32:17), those powers are nothing compared to the God who created the heavens and the earth.

The chapter began with a comforting word. It continued with a reminder of the stupidity of trusting idols, and went on to speak of the greatness of God. Our passage today tells of how that all plays out in our daily life.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Isaiah 40:27 God uses both names of their namesake to remind them of their two natures. Jacob is the unredeemed nature. It is the carnal side of the people of Judah that would be crying out that God couldn't see their suffering. During the captivity they wrote songs of woe, missing their homeland (Psalm 137:4). They whined about their condition without acknowledging that they were responsible for it. They should have been singing songs of repentance. While crying about God not seeing their suffering, He was right there in their midst offering the comfort we see at the beginning of the chapter (Isaiah 40:1). That comfort was not only that things were about to improve, but that the Messiah was coming to redeem their souls.

It took them awhile to get the message, though it was written a hundred years before that captivity. It takes us awhile too. Haven't you thought, "Come on God! Why are you letting this happen? Can't you see what I'm going through?" I know I've whined like that in the past. I told you a couple of weeks ago that I had decided to ruthlessly deal with my whining. Chambers wrote, *May God not find the whine in us anymore, but may He find us full of spiritual pluck and athleticism, ready to face anything He brings.*¹ It is quite a task since it is so engrained in our old nature. The only way to ruthlessly deal with whining is to walk in the Spirit and crucify the flesh with its affections and desires (Galatians 5:24). Only when we choose to walk in the Spirit can we be victorious. It's a moment by moment decision of which life we will yield to. My flesh says God doesn't

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 40:5 (ESV)
⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Commented [PW2]: Deuteronomy 32:17 (ESV)
¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that were no gods, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.

Commented [PW3]: Psalm 137:4 (ESV)
⁴ How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land?

Commented [PW4]: Isaiah 40:1 (ESV)
¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Commented [PW5]: Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest, May 15th

Commented [PW6]: Galatians 5:24 (ESV)
²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

care about my situation. The Spirit says God is right here with me helping me go through it for His purposes which always end up being good (Romans 8:28).

The second half of their complaint asked why my right is disregarded by my God. What is your right? Do we have a right to anything? Do we expect God to intervene whenever there is injustice done against us? Be careful what you wish. God may intervene against you. They were going to receive their right, which was captivity. That is what we rightfully get when we become slaves of sin. It takes us captive (John 8:34). We try to stop because we see it destroying our lives and find we can't stop by our own power. They thought they had rights as children of Abraham, but they also had rights as people of the Mosaic covenant to be judged for their idolatry (Deuteronomy 29:17-19).

I've heard people declare, "I have rights! I'm and American!" Often what they were demanding was a twisted sense of justice. God cannot do anything that is not right. Man can be counted on to be unrighteous. So when the sins of men affect your life, or justice for your own sins catches up with you, be careful about what you demand of God. If you ask for justice, you just may well get it. God asks why we would say those things as if to suggest He was somehow clueless.

Then God tells us what we were missing. ²⁸ *Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.* Isaiah 40:28 He isn't clueless. We are! He inhabits eternity. He knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). He sees all time in the present. He made it all and knows every detail about it all. He never wears down or wears out. You could spend a trillion years trying to learn what He knows and find you had just begun. How can we possibly suggest God is unaware or unconcerned about our situations? **If you got an email from God completely explaining all that was involved in the trial you are experiencing today, it would take you the rest of your life to read it all.** As believers, we have to let go of the idea that we can comprehend what God is doing in a given situation. Sure, He might give you a bit of insight, but only a miniscule bit, like one byte in a terabyte.

God is continuing to drive home a point from the previous verses. He is so great that we simply will never fathom His greatness. So why would we say something as stupid as, "God doesn't see what's happening here, and if He does, He's not being fair"? It's because we are in the flesh and seeing things from our limited view. We need to step back into the Spirit and know it's all in God's hands and will all glorify Him in the end (Jude 25).

I ask why this political scandal or that crime of Isis isn't dealt with by God. I don't need to know the answer. I need to know that God knows and the day will come when He will balance the books. It may be on the Day of Judgment or it may come in this life, but it will come (Romans 14:10). It will come because He is the Almighty Creator whose understanding is unsearchable.

Commented [PW7]: Romans 8:28 (ESV)

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Commented [PW8]: John 8:34 (ESV)

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

Commented [PW9]: Deuteronomy 29:17-19 (ESV)

¹⁷ And you have seen their detestable things, their idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, which were among them.

¹⁸ Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,

¹⁹ one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.' This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike.

Commented [PW10]: Isaiah 46:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'

Commented [PW11]: Jude 1:25 (ESV)

²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

Commented [PW12]: Romans 14:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

In the meantime, injustice wears on us. Life can beat us down. How can we endure life in this fallen world? Why not go to the One who doesn't faint or grow weary?
²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Isaiah 40:29 He is the source of power and strength. Why do we look to ourselves as if we could somehow buck up and pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps? When you come to the end of yourself, you can turn to the source of strength and power, the LORD. Notice that the verse tells us this power and strength goes to the faint and the ones who have no might.

We wonder why God takes us right down to the last second or the end of our finances. Here is why: **Only then will we totally rely on Him and give Him all the glory.** It is lesson after lesson on our inability and God's all sufficiency. I often have people come to me when they just don't think they can get the victory over something in their life, or their situation seems hopeless. It's then that God can show them His greatness and love for them. When we give up and throw ourselves upon God with no other hope but Him, then He supplies the strength and power. Hopefully we learn this lesson and lean on Him continually, but it often seems we need a refresher course. And all the honest people said, "Amen!"

³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; Isaiah 40:30 The strongest and healthiest find they don't have what it takes to face difficulties in life. Why should we think we are any different? Man just needs to realize what God said in the previous verses. We are like a blade of grass that springs up, dries out, and blows away. We think if we just eat the right food, avoid this or that, exercise, get enough education, somehow we can have what it takes to face any challenge that may come our way. Those aren't bad things, but they aren't the answer. **The only thing that will get you through is a relationship with the source of strength.**

What is the best way to prepare for the inevitable difficulties you will face in life? It is to walk in complete submission to the Spirit of God in your life today. That includes getting rid of anything that hinders your communion with the Lord (1Peter 2:1). That often means an attitude toward someone in your life. Loving God will result in loving your fellow man. Men, God tells us that not living with our wives in an understanding way can hinder our prayers (1Peter 3:7). We eat certain things to boost our immune system. How much more important is it to live in fellowship with God for this life and the next?

³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 The Hebrew word translated "wait" also means "to look for" or "expect." I think of it as that quiet time in prayer when you ask the Lord if He has something to say to you. I wait for Him to speak. I expect His direction. I look for His guidance. Inspiration comes to my mind to pray for certain people or to encourage someone with an email. A verse will often come to mind to think about. Sometimes I'm convicted to forgive and

Commented [PW13]: 1 Peter 2:1 (ESV)

¹ So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander.

Commented [PW14]: 1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

pray for a person I'm upset with. Other times I just sense how great God's love is for me and sing a song praising Him for that love.

It doesn't take a lot of time. But if we will do that regularly, then when the difficulties come, and they will come, it is just natural to go to the Lord and receive the strength He gives to get through the trial. The lines of communication are clear.

This is one of those habits that we should develop because Jesus set the example to show us how. He arose before dawn and went to an isolated place to pray. When the disciples found Him, they told Him the village was waiting for Him. But Jesus had received different directions from the Father. He wasn't going to respond to the demands of men, which is what we tend to do. Instead He went on to other villages He had not yet visited (Mark 1:35-38).

Another example for us in Scripture is Philip. He was experiencing a revival in Samaria. Peter and John came to assist and then returned to Jerusalem. Philip would no doubt think it was important to stay and disciple all these new believers. Instead, an angel of the Lord told him to go to a lonely road in the wilderness where he met a man whom he led to Jesus as Savior (Acts 9:26). That man took the Gospel to Ethiopia, which became the beginnings of the Coptic Church. I'd be surprised if the angel just appeared in the middle of Philip's busy day. It was no doubt during his time of prayer.

Peter's vision of going to the Gentiles was a revelation he received when he went up on a rooftop to pray (Acts 10:9). The Apostle Paul is an example of thinking he should go one way, but by being attuned to waiting on the LORD, he had a vision that gave him the direction he needed (Acts 16:9). These all waited, expected, and looked to the LORD and He gave them the strength to soar like eagles.

This is such an amazing promise, it is incredible that more of us don't apply it to our lives. Who doesn't want to soar like an eagle, run and not be weary, walk and not faint? We either don't have faith in the promise, have other priorities, or there is something we have not surrendered that we fear may be addressed.

Is it possible that our greatest hindrance is that our life is all about "me"? Do we think, "I love the Lord and am grateful for my salvation, but I don't really want to give God my time and certainly do not desire to open myself up to any specific instructions He might have for me today.?" Can we be too busy for God?

If those reasons apply to you, let me suggest that you step out in faith and experience the joy of serving the Lord. It far surpasses anything the world has to offer. It is joy unspeakable and full of glory (1Peter 1:8). Don't let the world deceive you into thinking that it has anything of real substance to offer you (1John 2:17). We were made for the glory of God, and every substitute will eventually disappoint us.

Commented [PW15]: Mark 1:35-38 (ESV)

³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him,

³⁷ and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."

³⁸ And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

Commented [PW16]: Acts 8:26 (ESV)

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place.

Commented [PW17]: Acts 10:9 (ESV)

⁹ The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.

Commented [PW18]: Acts 16:9 (ESV)

⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

Commented [PW19]: 1 Peter 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

Commented [PW20]: 1 John 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

We may avoid being still before God because we realize there is something in our life that we know God will address, and we just aren't ready to give it up. For those who feel this way, let me remind you that God has your best interest at heart (Jeremiah 29:11). He only asks things of you that are for your good (Deuteronomy 10:13). We only hurt ourselves when we refuse to hear His instructions and cling to something that is detrimental to our spiritual health.

What does it take to get up early enough to take a ten minutes in God's Word and ten minutes in prayer? Twenty minutes! I guarantee you if you do that you'll want to take thirty minutes. Then you'll want to take more and you'll find a way to do it. It's a matter of priorities. If a television show the night before, or Facebook in the morning, or whatever keeps you from that time is more important, then you won't take the time. **Decide to live according to your priorities** (Matthew 6:33).

Waiting on the Lord can also be to expect Him to answer. Sometimes we pray and the answer comes and we don't connect the answer with our prayer. We might ask for an opportunity to share our faith with a person, and that very day we end up in the company dining room at the table with that person. What do you think the Lord wants you to do? Or we ask God for work and someone invites us to help with a job, but it was not what we were hoping for. Maybe we should think again. When you pray, wait and watch for the Lord to answer.

If you will develop this life pattern of looking to the Lord each morning and as you go through your day, He promises that you will mount up on wings like eagles. You will be able to soar high above your situations and see them from a heavenly perspective (Isaiah 55:6).

Dr. James Kennedy gave a sermon once on soaring on wings of eagles. He told of watching eagles as a boy and how they would so rarely flap their wings. Even when taking off from the ground they would wait for the wind and let it lift them. The word for "wind" and "spirit" is the same in Greek. We can ride on the Spirit by spreading our wings of faith. When we sense Him moving, directing, answering prayer, we respond and go with it. It's not a lot of our effort. It's all about waiting for the wind of the Spirit to blow and take us where we need to go (John 3:8).

Did you notice that the verse goes from soaring to running to walking? The soaring can be a special time when God seems so near and present with us. Those times are rare. There are times when just running without growing weary is what is needed. It reminds me of some weeks I call a marathon. There is so much to prepare and do that I feel like I run all week long. If I try to do it in my own strength I will grow weary. But when I wait on the Lord it is a joy.

Perhaps most needed of all is the strength to walk and not faint (James 5:11). That is just to persevere. We know what God has called us to do and we keep plugging away

Commented [PW21]: Jeremiah 29:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Commented [PW22]: Deuteronomy 10:13 (ESV)

¹³ and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Commented [PW23]: Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Commented [PW24]: Isaiah 55:6 (ESV)

⁶ "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near;

Commented [PW25]: John 3:8 (ESV)

⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Commented [PW26]: James 5:11 (ESV)

¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

day after day. Routine can cause us to be so tired we feel as if we may faint, just quit trying any more. But when we wait upon the Lord, there is strength to endure. His encouragement, inspiration, and love renew us again and again. There is a freshness even in routine. Why would any believer not want to take hold of this promise and experience it every day (2Peter 1:4)?

Questions

- 1 What are two complaints in verse 1?
- 2 What big factor do we often miss?
- 3 Will justice prevail? How do we know?
- 4 Who does God assist with power?
- 5 Why aren't we strong enough?
- 6 How can we prepare for trials?
- 7 What are other translations for "wait"?
- 8 Give Biblical examples of waiting?
- 9 Why don't we wait on the Lord?
- 10 Elaborate on the three promises.

Commented [PW27]: 2 Peter 1:4 (ESV)

⁴ by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.