

WAITING ON THE LORD  
Isaiah 40:27-31

Intro: It is probably true that the older you are, the more you will appreciate our text for tonight.

Those of you who have known the Lord for many years have had the experience many times which Isaiah described for us in these verses. You know what it is to see your prayers go unanswered. Your faith in the Lord has been tested to the very limit. It is probably true that you have said things to the Lord that you wish you could recall. And you have been ashamed as many times as you have been tested to see how very, very faithful the Lord has finally been, helping you beyond what you deserved and beyond anything that you expected.

But a careful reading of these verses shows that this is not just a passage for older people whose strength is not what it used to be, but this is a passage for young people--those whose strength is at its prime, and yet who soon find that the trials of life are more than they can bear.

Regardless of our age, or experience, or strength, we soon realize that the trials of life are too great for us to cope with. And they are designed by an infinitely wise Lord for that very purpose!

The problem that Isaiah was concerned about here is not confined to this passage, but you find it throughout the Word. We saw it in Habakkuk this morning. Habakkuk was concerned because his prayers had not been answered, and because his enemies prospered, while he, trying to do the will of God, suffered trial after trial.

But let us note how the problem is expressed here in Isaiah 40, and what the answer is.

First of all we have . . .

I. THE JACOB-ISRAEL COMPLAINT (Isa. 40:27).

Either the Lord was speaking directly, or Isaiah was speaking on behalf of the Lord. In either case, the question came from the Lord. The problem had to do with what the people of God were saying--saying either to themselves, or to each other!

And notice, like in many OT passages, particularly in the prophets, the Lord (or the prophet) addressed them by the two names of Isaac's son: Jacob and Israel. The one represented what he was by birth; the other what he was by the special blessing of the Lord. In other words, the old

Jacob and the new Israel.

You can see both sides in all of the people of God. Sometimes we talk like people who do not even know the Lord; at other times we speak as those who are wholly devoted to Him.

But there is a very precious thought here. The Lord used both names because, even though they were talking like Jacob, the Lord remembered that they were Israel--a prince with God!

How wonderful it is that the Lord does not treat us like we treat Him!

But what was their complaint?

They felt that the Lord did not know their "way," their circumstances, and that they were being "passed over," forgotten by the One they called, "My God."

Have you been there? I have--many times! You get so concerned about your circumstances that you cannot see anything else. Their strength was gone. They did not feel that they could take one day more.

In this passage we are definitely dealing with a prophetic situation. These people were going into captivity. It would be a long time before the blessing of God would be restored to the nation. In fact, it has not been restored to this day. But the prediction is made of John the Baptist and of the coming of the Messiah. In Him would be their deliverance--a deliverance yet to come. Over and over the elect of Israel would feel just like Isaiah described it in verse 27. They despaired of ever seeing the helping hand of God.

But this leads us to . . .

## II. THE LORD'S QUESTION (Isa. 40:28).

It amounts to this: What are you doing with what you have learned about Me? Or possibly to this: Have you really learned the things which you have been taught?

You see, when we are being tested, then we discover if we have really learned anything!

What was the most important part of their learning? Was it prophecy? NO! Was it history? NO! Those are both extremely important, but they are not the most important. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING THAT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL HAD LEARNED, OR AT LEAST HAD BEEN TAUGHT, WAS WHAT THEY HAD BEEN

## TAUGHT ABOUT THE LORD!

Do you know that it is the same with us? Learn all that you can from the Word of God, but remember that what you are learning about God--God, the Father; God, the Son; and God, the Holy Spirit--has priority over everything else. This is true because history is the interpretation of what God has done, and prophecy is the explanation of what God will do. And so if you do not know God, you cannot really appreciate either history or prophecy as you should.

What about the Lord?

Here I wish I could take you back to the first of the chapter and point out all of the things that Isaiah wrote here about the Lord. But time will not permit, and so I am going to leave that to you.

But what do we have here in verse 28. This is enough to occupy us for longer than we have.

Isaiah refers to the Lord as:

- 1) "The everlasting God."
- 2) "The Lord"--Jehovah.
- 3) "The Creator of the ends of the earth."

What was he trying to tell the people of Judah at this time?

Each name has many facets of truth, but let me point out one truth from each name.

God is first referred to as "the everlasting God" during the life of Abraham. See Gen. 21:33. This was just after the birth of Isaac (for whom Abraham had waited for over 25 years), and just before he was called upon to sacrifice Isaac.

As the everlasting God God never changes. What He has been He is now, and what He has been He always will be! Therefore, when our circumstances change, or do not change, we need to remember that God does not change. He does not change in His Person. He does not change His purposes. He does not change His promises. Nothing about Him changes. This is the first thing to remember.

Secondly, He is "the Lord," which basically means, the Living One.

Sometimes we do not treat the Lord as a real, living Being. He might as well be dead as far as our attitude is concerned. He sees; He knows; He cares; He thinks; and so on and on. He is alive. He does not forget, nor can He!

Third, He is "the Creator of the ends of the earth."

This speaks of His power as Creator, but it also points to the fact that He is greater than any of His creatures. Here is where we ought to go back to verse 12 and read down to verse 27 to see what Isaiah had just written.

Do you see the reasoning?

If God is alive, and if He has not changed from what He always has been, then, if necessary, He could create the world all over again in order to meet the needs of His people. And remember that when the Bible speaks of God as the Creator it always means that He sustains and controls all that He has created. As the Creator He is sovereign over all that He has made--Judah's many enemies included!

It helps even to think about these things, doesn't it?

But there is more--and with this we can conclude. This wonderful God and Lord has given us . . .

### III. HIS PROMISES (Isa. 40:29-31).

What did the people of God need?

I think we can say that they needed two things:

1) They needed deliverance from their enemies.

But they also needed

2) strength to cope with their trials.

And this is what the Lord promised them. Usually the later is even greater than the first. And this is a promise for the Lord's people whatever their age may be because not even young people can endure trials in their own strength.

Now it is true, as verse 28b says, that "there is no searching of his (God's) understanding." But there are some things that we do know about God's dealings with us. And we learn these from the Word. One is this: The Lord often tries us until our strength is exhausted so that we will realize how much we need Him, and that only He can do for us what we need to have done.

Look at the words: "faint,"  
"no might,"  
"faint and be weary,"  
"utterly fall" (vv. 29, 30).

But what is the way we obtain that strength which we need to bear up under our trials? See verse 31.

We are to "wait upon the Lord." What does that mean? It

means that we firmly and constantly put our trust, our faith and hope in the Lord alone! We cast our care upon Him, and then expectantly wait for Him to help us. We know, if we are waiting upon the Lord, that He will not fail us, and that, if He does not take us out of our troubles, He will most certainly give us the strength to endure whatever our troubles may be. AND HE USUALLY SEEMS TO DO THIS LATTER THING BEFORE HE DOES THE FORMER!

Consequently, "they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run, and not be weary;  
and they shall walk, and not faint."

Illus: I have told some of you about a letter I received from my mother during my first year away from home at college. I had written to my folks about some troubles that I was having, and this is what my mother wrote back (and I remember her words almost verbatim, I am sure):  
"Remember what the eagle does in the storm. He spreads his massive wings, and takes flight, rising above the storm, where all is calm and peaceful."

Concl: What is your trouble tonight? I cannot tell you when it will be over, or how it will end. But I can tell you this: If you are looking to the Lord, waiting upon Him in prayer, expecting your help from Him, you will be surprised what He will do. Remember Who He is--Who He still is, and always will be. He never has failed His people, and He will not fail you.

(Close with Phil. 4:6, 7.)