



3. Ready to Fly

(Isaiah 40:25-31)

Have you ever had the experience of where a particular verse of scripture seems to follow you around? It seems to pop up at times when you need it, as if God intended that you have it - well, perhaps He did? My verse is Isaiah 40:31. It was the verse given to me at my baptism. Let me give it to you as it was given to me in the Authorised Version: *they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.* " Somehow, this verse seems to crop up at critical points in my life, particularly where I need encouragement.

It's quite a significant verse in this chapter 40 of Isaiah. The chapter started off by giving a message to a people who had sinned and been taken into a long exile in Babylon. Their situation seemed an impossible one and many felt like giving up. But through their exile was this prophecy - the Lord is coming: prepare the way. As we saw in previous weeks, whenever God's people are down and in a difficult position, there is always the promise of revival.

The question is whether they will pick themselves up and prepare the way of the Lord. We've found in our survey of history that some do - and experience the power and presence of God in ways that they could never have imagined - and some don't and usually disappear into the mists of history.

And as the people read this passage some said "God won't do this" or "God can't do this" and gave up. As a cure to this we are given the amazing picture of God that we find in the bulk of the chapter. We have an amazing God who does amazing things.

Sometimes our God is too small and we don't believe He can make a difference - but He's the incomparable God. He can and does change lives, churches, societies, nations and to prove it He's doing that now, as we speak.

I know that some of you have found our little tour through Isaiah intimidating. It makes you feel inadequate for whatever reason. Perhaps you just don't believe that God can change a situation in your life that you can't see a way through. Just a minute, what sort of God do you have?

I remember a lovely slim book by a well-known preacher called Roy Hession. It was called the Calvary Road. We are called to take up our crosses and follow Jesus on the Calvary Road. We've talked a lot of roads on the last few weeks and preparing the way.

How do you start making a road? I'll tell you. You break up the land surface to lay foundation and make a good road surface. All progress as a believer starts with brokenness.

This message came through to a broken people. What were they saying? *Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"?*

How many times have you been in that position? "Lord, where are you in this?" "Why aren't you listening - my need is desperate". The message comes back: *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.*

What's being said here? First of all, God is the everlasting God. How dare we think that God can't do something! It's a travesty. "Our God" is too small, but God is the Creator of the ends of the earth. Never say can't or won't. I remember when I was young and started to give up doing something, my mother would say "what's the problem" "I can't do this". "Mark, there's no such word as can't".

Actually there isn't - it's two words - can not. Sadly, there are things I can't do. I can't sprout wings and fly! But....

Actually, spiritually, that's exactly what God wants us to do **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.** God want us to be like an Eagle. Eagles are top carnivores. They are kings of the sky. They are unassailable but most of all, they are free to go where they like. We were made to soar.

So why do I spiritually feel as though I'm down a drain you may say? Look at the rest of the verse: **He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. His understanding no one can fathom.** So you can't understand what God is doing? The first reaction most people have to not fathoming God's will is to try to do their own thing. They rely on their own wisdom. Bad move! The Jews in Babylon did that. I'm afraid that we do much the same. If we can't discern what God is saying, then it's easy to give up and not bother. Or just say "God's ways are unfathomable, so I won't work them out".

But what we do know is that God has His purposes and we do know many of them. One of those purposes is to vindicate Himself and His people which is why we have the call "Prepare the way of the Lord".

God doesn't want us to be down but to soar on His spiritual energy, but knows that from time to time we just run out of steam. As most of you know we have dog called Judy. She has boundless energy it would seem. When we're in the country, she darts around like a mad thing. But when she gets home - she's curled up somewhere fast asleep. Why? Her energy isn't boundless. It's like the young men referred to here. Small and active children do sleep! If you're a parent you know this but you wish they'd go to sleep just a bit sooner than they do!

God doesn't sleep. His energy is boundless. We get this wonderful verse: **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.**

The think about the spiritual life that God brings is that it doesn't have a limited life or run out. God's desire for us as believers is to renew our strength, to run and not be weary and walk and not faint. Whether you are 9 or 90, our spiritual life should be effortless. That applies as much as a church as individually. So why do we seem to run out of steam and go through bad phases?

Look at the wording more closely **those who hope in the LORD.** The AV has it **those that wait on the Lord.** Other translations have it **"those that wait for the Lord"**. That's possibly the closest translation. What does this mean? We must wait for God. Not run ahead, not do things in our own way whilst we are waiting. Do things in God's time, according to His will. God does things in His time.

I said earlier in the year that we need to be people that listen to the voice of God. I'm pleased by the response by the numbers coming to prayer meetings. In prayer meetings we come to listen, not just to speak and we're starting to learn that as a church. In this way we find God's time.

This passage re-iterates this need. If we desire to soar, to walk, to run as a fellowship or just as an individual, we need to do it in God's time. To wait on Him. To wait for Him. And to listen when He calls Prepare the way of the Lord.

One other place where we meet our Lord and hear His voice is around the table. That's why it's called Communion. As we remember again His broken body and shed blood, we are reminded of our weakness and our inadequacy. But as we remember we are reminded that by His Holy Spirit, He is present with us. Let's listen for His voice this morning. What's He saying? How does He want to minister to us this morning?

Perhaps you are feeling weak run out of steam right now. Listen to the voice of God. Wait on Him. he wants you to soar. Renew your strength, get it back and start to soar again.