

THE GREATNESS OF OUR GOD

Victor Frankl was a psychiatrist who found himself in prison camps during the horrors of the Nazi regime in World War 2.

He saw what made the difference between the survivors and the dead. It wasn't a matter of physical health and strength. The difference between the living and the dead was hope. Hope for him and other survivors was something to live for that was beyond the barbed wire. He wrote a book that was a reflection on his experiences. The book is *Man's Search for Meaning*.

The prisoner who had lost faith in the future—his future—was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay. Usually this happened quite suddenly, in the form of a crisis, the symptoms of which were familiar to the experienced camp inmate...Usually it began with the prisoner refusing one morning to get dressed and wash or go out on the parade grounds. No entreaties, no blows, no threats had any effect. He just lay there, hardly moving. If this crisis was brought about by an illness, he refused to be taken to the sick-bay or to do anything to help himself. He simply gave up. There he remained. Nothing bothered him anymore.

Despair is a problem we humans have from time to time. Some go deeper in despair than others. Despair invades through crises of illness, accidents, and incidents. Some are due to bad choices. Others come in ways that out of our control.

If that is you, I hope you will give me some attention for the next few minutes. I want to give you a Word from God from His Word. The text I wish to dwell on is Isaiah 40:27-31.

*Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel,
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
And the justice due me ^[a]escapes the notice of my God"?
²⁸ Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is inscrutable.
²⁹ He gives strength to the weary,
And to him who lacks might He increases power.
³⁰ Though youths grow weary and tired,
And vigorous young men stumble badly,
³¹ Yet those who ^[aa]wait for the LORD
Will gain new strength;
They will ^[ab]mount up with ^[ac]wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.*

Despair of Man

Verse 27 describes the despair of men. I approached verse 27 in recent sermons with the idea that this is speaking of hidden sins. However, it can also speak of hidden hurts. It is a statement of those who are in despair.

Look again at their words as repeated by Isaiah.
*"My way is hidden from the LORD,
And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God?"*

Such was the case for Israel at this point in history of the writing of Isaiah 40. Exile was reality. They have been removed from their country. They have been removed from their temple where they recognized the presence of God.

They were like the Jewish prisoners of WWII Germany, finding themselves behind barbed wire.

They are in a state of despair. Despair simply means being in a place where there is no hope.

Many of our people, some in this very room are there. You have lost things precious to your life. You have lost a loved one to death. You have lost your health. You have lost a part of your life that you enjoyed. You tremble in your spirit thinking, "Thanksgiving Day is only days away. How will I get through the day? For what will I be thankful?"

Those in despair feel abandoned by God. "Where is God when I need Him? He demands much from me, but He doesn't seem to lift a finger to help me. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer helps us understand where that thought comes from.

"By what means Satan first drew mankind from the obedience of God, the Scripture doth witness: To wit, by pouring into their hearts that poison, that God did not love them."

The Word of God answers this despair with verse 28. It gives the solution for despair. It also answers the question we have been asking, "Who is your God?" It answers by pointing to the Greatness of our God.

Greatness of God

Look at verse 28.

Four statements point to the greatness of our God.

"The Lord is the everlasting God..."

The Greatness of our God in that He is eternal. He is everlasting.

We are locked in a small slot called the here-and-now. Because a second becomes the past after the second has gone by, we live in the temporal. All who focus themselves on just the here-and-now are doomed to the disappointing fragility of the temporal.

In a devotional I read this past week, I found this.

In the pursuit of fulfillment in life, technology and social media allow you to capture every moment along the way. You're not only on the fast track to success, but you get to show selfies at each lap along the way. Which only confirms how up-to-the-nano-second cool you are.

So get the biggest data plan you can, and collect wi-fi passwords at every stop. Check in at all the cool places. Share every inspirational thought you have, and every joke. Snap lots of pics. Get video clips, too, of course. And never stop uploading the whole show to the Cloud as you go.

Post everything online for the whole world to see. Pile up Likes and Friends and Followers until it's all just one frenzied blur. Hustle until your real life exceeds your dreams. And finally, once you've

reached the summit, I can guarantee you this one thing: your longing for more never stops. Like the latest technology, your achievements are outdated overnight.

Why? How could that be possible?

Because you were not created for earth. You were created for eternity. And there is nothing on this earth that can ever satisfy that spiritual longing you feel inside—even if you can collect it all. The only place to put trust in our eternity is in the One of eternity, God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“The Creator of the ends of the earth...”

The Greatness of our God for He is the Creator of everything and He is also sustainer.

That which He creates, He sustains.
Psalm 104:5-9.

He established the earth upon its foundations,
So that it will not [t](#)totter forever and ever.
⁶ You covered it with the deep as with a garment;
The waters were standing above the mountains.
⁷ At Your rebuke they fled,
At the sound of Your thunder they hurried away.
⁸ The mountains rose; the valleys sank down
To the place which You established for them.
⁹ You set a boundary that they may not pass over,
So that they will not return to cover the earth.

In other words, He not only created all there is, He keeps them. He is that which holds the atoms together.
As He sustains the earth, so even more He sustains those who are His people, His children by adoption.

“Does not become tired or weary...”

The Greatness of God is All-powerful, and never tires.

God needs no restoration. He needs no vacation. He needs no retreat. He is an inexhaustible fountain of exuberance and joy. Like the cold mountain stream, He is forever fresh and refreshing.

He eagerly awaits us to ask for that strength to be ours. Power in ministry. Strength in trial. Energy in activity.

“His understanding is inscrutable...”

The Greatness of our God in that He is All-Wise

Romans 11

³³ Oh, the depth of the riches [b](#)both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR?

We cannot plunge to the bottom of His wisdom. We will never reach the limits to His knowledge. Try to reach the vastness of His wisdom. When you think you have reached it, you have only reached the place where you choose to limit God.

When Albert Einstein was asked if he believed in God, here was his response: "I'm not an atheist. I don't think I can call myself a pantheist. The problem involved is too vast for our limited minds. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books, but doesn't know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws, but only dimly understand these laws." How dare we put limits on God! How dare we think we know better than Him!

Renewed Hope of Man

*²⁹ He gives strength to the weary,
And to him who lacks might He increases power.
³⁰ Though youths grow weary and tired,
And vigorous young men stumble badly,
³¹ Yet those who *[aa]*wait for the LORD
Will gain new strength;
They will *[ab]*mount up with *[ac]*wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary.*

The opposite of despair is hope. With renewed understanding of the greatness of our God, there is also renewed hope that God will see us through. It gives us the clear vision that there is something beyond the barbed wired prison of the here and now.

Human strength at its best and in its prime will inevitably fail. But, that is not the end. For believers in Christ, there is a power beyond ourselves. We can experience it!

God enables those who draw strength.

The key is the word "wait." Waiting does not mean killing time, sitting around, drumming your fingers. It does mean living in confidence and eager suspense. It is to live with the tension of promises revealed, but not yet fulfilled. It is being on tippy toes. It is not waiting hoping that it will happen. It is waiting knowing that it will happen.

How can we have that renewed hope? How can that be our experience?

Two questions must be answered as a check to see if we are living in waiting.

1. Do I believe that God can take my situation, show forth His greatness and carry me through it by His strength?
2. Have I deliberately shifted the loyalty of my heart from the false glory of this world to the coming glory of the Lord?

We cannot put faith in God and still have our heart in this world. Though Israel is in the captivity of Babylon, they are to remain loyal to their God.

"Whom have I in heaven by you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you." Psalm 73:25

Sunday morning of January 12, 1723, Jonathan Edwards wrote these words in his journal

I have been before God, and have given myself, all that I am and have, to God, so that I am not in any respect my own...I have given myself clear away, and have not retained anything as my own..."

Paul shares this.

¹⁰ But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I speak [\[a\]](#)from want, for I have learned to be [\[b\]](#)content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things [\[c\]](#)through Him who strengthens me.

Philippians 4

When we believe that God can take our situation, show forth His greatness and carry us through it by His strength, and our loyalty remains with God, we are in the place where God can lift, strengthen you, and carry you through revealing His greatness.

Have you come to place faith in Jesus? Have you come to the place where you recognize you need for forgiveness? Are you now ready to ask God to forgive you, help you change, and surrender to Him as Lord? Will you make that step of faith now?

Those wondering how you will make it through the week, consider again and renew faith in the greatness of our God.