

Thursday, April 16, 2020
Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

**"He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength.
Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;
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: 29-31)

What great encouragement this Bible passage gives us. This passage inspired the writing of a wonderful hymn: "On Eagles' Wings." Here are the words of the first verse and refrain: "You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, who abide in His shadow for life, say to the Lord: 'My refuge, my rock in whom I trust!' And He will raise you up on eagles' wings, bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the sun, and hold you in the palm of His hand."

That's pretty much all we need to know, isn't it? God is holding us in the palm of His hand! The passage above says that "even youths shall faint and be weary." Everyone runs out of steam eventually. Most of us can handle a SMALL problem for a fairly long period of time. And most of us can handle a BIG problem for a short period of time. But what about a BIG problem for a LONG time?

As I have said before, the health crisis that the world is dealing with hasn't really been going on for that long of a time. It certainly FEELS like a long time. And it has definitely had some major impact on people's lives – including death, or the death of a loved one. The loss of a job can make it feel like this has been going on for a long time. Time is relative. One week at Disney World is NOT nearly long enough, while one week of no food is extremely long! I suppose time is directly related to what we are experiencing.

Many of us have become "weary" during this pandemic. We are tired of staying home. We are tired of worrying if we or a loved one will get it. Healthcare workers on the front lines are just plain TIRED. But we are all waiting. The reading from Isaiah 40 tells us there's nothing wrong with "waiting." In fact, it tells us it is GOOD to wait ... as long as we are "waiting" for the right thing. Maybe you and I would be better off if we stopped waiting for life to get back to normal and started "waiting for the Lord," as Isaiah writes. Why? Because those who "wait for the Lord shall renew their strength."

It's as though Isaiah is saying, "I can wait as long as necessary if the focus of my waiting is on God." Why would that be? Because God is a sure thing! There is no question of whether or not God will come through. He ALWAYS comes through. When I know something is coming for sure, I seem to be able to push through. And not only that, but when we place our faith in God, He increases our strength. It's not just my limited strength to push through, but it's God's strength that gets behind me. This happens when I switch my "waiting" from the thing I've been waiting for to waiting for God; that is, when I learn to expect God to lift me up to a new perspective the same way that air lifts an eagle to dazzling heights!

God's peace!
Pastor Jim