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July 13 & 14, 2019

Valley Church
Week 20 – Comfort in “Exile” Isaiah 40

In Isaiah Chapter 40 the prophet writes to his own people—a nation in exile in Babylon. In their despair they wondered if God had forgotten them completely. In reply the prophet reminds them of the incomparable greatness of God. *For Isaiah everything begins and ends with God.* Nothing in life can be understood apart from him.

To a people whose faith had come to a breaking point, Isaiah points them back to God. His words speak to everyone struggling at a break point of life.

Isaiah 40:28-31

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. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 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.

1. The _____

He is the _____ God.

He is the _____ of the Ends of the Earth.

He Never Grows _____.

His _____ No One Can Fathom.

2. The _____

God will supply _____ in our weakness.

God will do it because we all _____ it.

3. The _____

“Wait for the Lord.”

“Renew their strength”

Encouragements for Today:

Our greatest _____ is to look up and see the sufficiency of God.

Our greatest _____ is resting in the finished work of Jesus.

Our greatest _____ is exchanging our weakness for his strength.

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUPS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION:

Icebreaker:

1. What was the most exciting news you ever received? Why was it so welcome?
2. What is the furthest distance you have ever run or walked? How did you feel at the end?
3. When you are down in the dumps, what favorite things do you like to think about to lift your spirits? Does it help?

Scripture:

1. In Isaiah's time the coming of a king was announced by a herald. People literally leveled the roads the king would travel. What king is in view in verses 3-5? What does it mean to prepare the way for him?
2. How would this message affect you if you were one of these defeated people torn away from your home, your faith, and your way of life? After all you've been through at the hands of foreign kings, how would you feel toward the coming king?
3. What then would the eternal word of God mean to you?
4. How do the works of our hands compare with those of God (vv. 12,19-20)? When do our own works become idols?
5. How does God regard the power of nations, even today's superpowers (vv. 15-17, 23-24)?
6. Is any image or standard of comparison adequate to measure God's worth (vv. 18-25)? Why or why not?
7. What is the complaint of the exiles (v. 27)? What must they still learn about God before they can be restored to their homeland (vv. 21, 28)?
8. As a weary exile, which of these promises would you find most uplifting?

Heart:

1. What "grass and flowers" (v. 6) or "idols" (v. 19) of this world today seem awfully powerful to you? How much do you depend on them? By comparison, do the promises of God just seem like words right now, or do they provide you with hope? Why?
2. What sort of complaints do you hear today from non-Christians? From Christians? How might you answer them from the truths of this chapter?
3. When have you most recently felt like God must have lost your address or phone number? What fears and thoughts arose in your mind? How might the truth of this chapter help restore strength to you?
4. Practically and theologically, how does one "soar like an eagle?" How is learning to hope in God like a fledgling bird learning to fly? How has God caught you when you have fallen instead of flown? In what way is he teaching you to fly now