

Sunday 22 March 2020- “Acknowledge God presence”-Isaiah 40:28-31, Psalm 46 (850)

“...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.”(Isaiah 40:31)

The Philistines were utterly unable to find out in what the amazing strength of Samson consisted, until he revealed it to his espoused wife. **It was his religious observance of the laws of the Nazarite which occasioned his extraordinary power.** His uncommon bodily strength, therefore, was from the Lord; and when He departed from Him, he became weak as another man.

But the strength spoken of in our text is evidently not physical strength or intellectual vigour; it is a spiritual power seated in the mind and soul.

The strength spoken of is a moral or more spiritual quality. As bodily health is only found in a well-balanced and healthy state of the bodily functions, so spiritual strength can only be found in souls into which new life has been infused, and is in vigorous exercise. The elements of this strength are —

(1) **Faith, founded on Divine illumination.** This is the mainspring of all spiritual exercises. All men are influenced and governed by some kind of faith; but worldly men have no true faith in things spiritual and invisible. Spiritual strength especially consists in that exercise of faith called trust or confidence, not in human beings, but in God.

(2) **The affections.** When your love to God is on fire and constant in its exercise, then there is real strength.

(3) But the essence of spiritual strength resides in **the will to accept and believe that “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”(Psalm 46:1.** When the determination of the will is not only fixed but strong, then the soul is in a vigorous state. Where there is strength there will be diligence in well-doing. As the saying goes- **“Where there’s a will , there is a way”.** More so in Christ who is **“The way, the truth\ and the Life”(John14:6)**

To **“walk and not faint”** is the Lord’s plan and will for us. The word **“walk”** is used in the Bible to express the character John talks about **“John**

looking on Jesus as He walked , said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”(John 1:36). There is never anything abstract in the Bible, it is always vivid and real. God does not say-Be spiritual, but –**“walk with Me, alongside Me, follow Me”**. When we are in an unhealthy state physically or emotional, we always expect the worst as we seen this week in our country, people emptying the shelves, all the scaring messages on social media, causing confusion. Some people even drive negativity and fear to the point that God was given back seat. The soul of fallen man naturally grovels on the earth; his face instead of being raised to heaven, is prone toward the ground. But when the Holy Spirit enters into any man, his thoughts and affections are raised to those things which are above.

By the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, faith, love, and hope are brought into lively exercise; and these are as pinions to the soul.

Human strength is of many kinds — physical, mental, spiritual and remember all strength apart from God is derived strength, and is consequently dangerous and must come to an end. On the other hand, Divine strength never fails. These two things

seem very far away: man with his faintness, God with His eternity and inexhaustible omnipotence. If we can bring these two together, what a wondrous thing will happen! Then the sacred words of the text will be fulfilled.

"They that wait upon the Lord." (Isaiah 40:31). We will see the fruit of waiting on the Lord-. **"will renew their strength." (Isaiah 40:31).** God's strength will be for our honour, comfort, and safety. But also for God's glory and our own usefulness. The world need the light of Christ now and we the church can be that to them. Mrs Pearsal Smith once said:

This is what the soul on wings does. It overcomes the world through faith. To overcome means to "come over," not to be crushed under; and the soul on wings flies over this world and the things of it.

But the message of the recuperative power, **"that you shall mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary"**. It is a power that is not your own, a power that comes from no earthly source, a supernatural power, power from on high-this is what the prophet is offering.

Closure:

As we go out of this service-remember a weak Christian is a burden to himself/herself and others as meeting with many difficulties which he/she cannot grapple with, but which prove too hard to him/her. There are many temptations to resist, and many afflictions to endure, and many duties to perform. So the reality of God's presence with this pandemic is not dependent on any place, person, government or research but only dependent upon the determination to set the Lord always before us. **Our problems come when we refuse to bank on the reality of His presence.** The experience that Psalmist speaks of- **“Therefore will we not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...”(Psalm 46:2)** .This will be ours when we are based on the Reality of God's presence, not the consciousness of God's presence, but the reality of it. Why? He has been here all the time, through many destructions, viruses, tornados and disasters. It's moments like these, that we need ask God guidance, wisdom and spirit of discernment. Remember if our common-sense decisions are not His will and His order, He will press through them and check; then we must be

quiet and wait for the direction of His presence. May the Lord help to realize He is with us in this storm.

Be still and know that I am God. Amen.