

Isaiah 40:12-31

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[0 : 00] We have a lot to go through today. I'm going to really try and move fast. But if you get to the 30-minute mark and you really got to go to the bathroom, or your child really needs something, I'm not going to be offended.

But we need to, as the old King James language says, gird up the loins of our minds this morning for all that we need to go through. But just join me in a quick word of prayer.

Father, we offer up this time to you. You would be pleased. Help us to focus. Help us to listen to your word.

It would take deep root in our hearts and have your desired effect upon our lives. Work in and through us during this time. Use me, a broken man, a broken vessel, to accomplish this in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. So we've been, we started last week walking through the monumental chapter, Mount Everest chapter of Isaiah 40.

[1 : 03] So I encourage you to go back and listen to the message from last week because it lays sort of the historical background, historical context for everything going on, to which you may be a little lost.

But I'll try to summarize in a couple minutes because that's all we have, maybe one minute. But the first part of Isaiah from chapter 7 to 39 is mostly pictures and pronouncements of divine judgment against the people of Israel and then later on Judah.

And so a very grim, hard words to God's people. He had been patient with them. He had sent them prophets. He had done all kinds of things to show them, like his love and his forbearance.

But now that time had passed and he said, judgment is going to come. And eventually the northern kingdom comprised of 10 different tribes were destroyed by Assyria.

And then 100 and I think 35 years later, Judah and Jerusalem were eventually destroyed by the new superpower, Babylon. And so Isaiah lived though during the time of Assyria.

[2 : 12] And when he gets to chapter 39, it ends with King Hezekiah. And so, but if we jump into chapter 40, in the blink of an eye, Isaiah is sort of transported into the future.

So he's speaking to God's people in the context of their future exile in Babylon. It's one of the cool things that Bible prophets do, what God does through them. So he knows that they're in the future going to be in Babylon, in exile, even though they currently are not while he's saying these things. He knows that it will happen. And so God speaks through him a word of comfort and assurance and certainty in their future exile, kind of projected by the Holy Spirit into the future, much like John was in Revelation.

But he knows the questions that they're going to be asking while they're in exile. Has God failed? Has his promises failed? Does God even want to deliver us?

And if he wants to, can he deliver us? And if all those things are true, will he actually do it? Will he actually make the decision to do it? Especially since they don't deserve it, just much like we don't deserve the grace of God.

[3 : 29] And so in their darkest moments, this call of prophecy goes out into the future to speak a word of comfort. So we broke up this chapter into three sections. Last week, we just did one of them.

And that was the glory of God is the comfort of his people. That's what we talked about up until this week. So this week, I'll summarize really quickly what we covered last week.

But some of the images of Christ that we see in the first part of this is the comfort to Jerusalem prefigures the comfort that is found in Christ Jesus. And that's verse three.

And then later on, John the Baptist uses those words to announce the coming of the Lord in person. Verse five, we see that the glory of the Lord is revealed through Jesus Christ.

Right? Then later on in verse five, that the fading of human lives is contrasted with the eternal salvation in Christ. And then verse eight, which is getting close to where we ended.

[4 : 34] Jesus is the incarnate tendered shepherd who carries his helpless people. Okay, so just a few connections to last week. But today, we're going to do part one and part two or part three.

So let's just dive into it. And just, excuse me, just for time's sake, we're just going to walk through this Bible study style. I'm going to break the preaching rule and not read it all because it'll take four or five minutes for me to read it all.

So we're just going to walk by it and eat it kind of piecemeal. But part two is the uniqueness of God is the assurance of his people.

The uniqueness of God is the assurance of his people. And so we'll start in verse 12. All right? We see God transitioning to a focus on his sovereign power and executive rule as the creator of all things.

Last week, we saw the attractiveness and tenderness of the shepherd and the promise of comfort. And today, we see God's irresistible power to make what he said come to pass.

[5 : 39] Therefore, it's impossible for such a great God to forget his people or neglect his people. So I hope we're going to break this up into a few different pieces under this. But number one, verses 12 through 14, it says, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in its scales, and the hills in a balance?

Number one, God is the ever-wise creator. That's what we see here in verses 12 through 14. God is the ever-wise creator. So it always helps to magnify the Lord by thinking about what was going on before creation.

But God existed eternal and immutable. He needed nothing. He was independent. He didn't choose to create the world or us or anything else because he was lonely and needed company, or he just, you know, wanted to pick up a hobby.

He wasn't needy or dependent on anything. When Paul was in Athens, Greece, he said, The God who made the world and everything in it, being the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything. So the next time you have a weak view of God, just have that in mind that he needs nothing. He's not served by us. Since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

[7 : 12] That's Acts 17, 24 through 25. So, Yahweh, the living God, gloriously and freely reigned before anything else in creation.

Perfectly satisfied and happy in himself. Something that we don't understand. Therefore, he chose not to create because he lacked something, because it was an expression or an overflow of his greatness.

Revelation 4, 11. Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power, because you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

So, God is the Creator. He's holding all creation. So, if you look at verse 10 of chapter 40, the translation really is sovereign Lord. So, he asked a series of rhetorical questions to demonstrate how God is the sovereign Lord.

He established creation and he is uniquely powerful and wise. His omnipotence, his wisdom, he spoke all things into being before there was anything made at all.

[8 : 30] Psalm 33, verse 6, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by his breath, the breath of his mouth, their host. God is all-powerful, therefore his word is all-powerful.

Our word doesn't really accomplish a whole lot, but his, as you can read in later chapters, I think chapter 55, talks about how his word does not return to him void. It accomplishes all he desires. And so, we see a proclamation here. He looks at creation, different parts of creation. The waters of the world. You see this? He says, The oceans, the seas, the lakes, the rivers are held like a tiny drop, a tiny pool in the hand of Yahweh.

Crazy. The heavens are marked off. I love this. The Hebrew means to adjust. To adjust a thing to its proper place or function. And it means, you see the word span that's used there.

He marks off the heavens with a span. So, the outstretched thumb and the pinky. So, it's like God's going, that's like what he's doing with the universe or with the heavens.

[9 : 41] And he positions them there. He said, You will go here and this will be your function. And we know how well finely tuned the universe is and how finely tuned earth is and one little change there would be no life here.

Perfect. He measured it out by his outstretched thumb and pinky. The span. He is so supreme that he positioned the heavens and the earth saying, This will go here.

An old Puritan said, Remember, a long time ago, Can we, when we behold the starry theater of heaven and earth, conclude other? But that finger and arms and wisdom of God has been there. God is so vast that he holds all the dust of the earth in a small basket or pen pot. Now this is cool. This astounds me.

It says he holds the dust in a measure. You see that? The phrase, in a measure? It means a third. Anybody know how much land makes up on the earth?

[10 : 47] Maybe 30%. So a third. He holds the dust of the earth on a scale. That's where water covers about 70%.

The dust makes up 30. A third. In a measure is what in a measure means. A third. Pretty crazy. I double checked on that one. I kind of found that on my own, which I was kind of like, Wow, that's really neat.

Then, it makes mentions of the mountains and the hills of the earth saying, God is so mighty and powerful that he can pick them up and move them with no problem. With ease. With no problem. He can put them on a pair of scales and weigh them in the balance. So he takes all of creation at a glance and says, Who else but the Almighty could weigh these things and measure them, determine its boundaries with perfect precision?

So, the point is, any of this is too big for us. This is stuff that we can't conceive, something that we have no ability to do or comprehend. It's just an overwhelming, overpowering thought.

[11 : 50] And it's meant to be because it's meant to make us small and God enormous. So, if God can do this, He alone is worthy of His people's trust and love.

Go to verse 13. It says, Who has measured the Spirit of the Lord? Or what man shows Him counsel? Whom did He consult and who made Him understand?

Who taught Him the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and showed Him the way of understanding? So, to ask some very intensely humble questions.

So, just as Yahweh can easily measure with perfect precision all creation, all created things, can any created thing do that? Can any created thing do what He just talked about?

The answer is no. Can anyone fathom or comprehend the mind of God that created all these things? No. What puny mortal like me or you would dare look at the face of God and try to give Him counsel or teach Him what's right or wrong?

[13 : 04] That's what it says. right out of Deuteronomy chapter 32. It says, the rock about God. His work is perfect for all His ways are justice, a God of faithfulness and without iniquity.

Just and upright is He. God's knowledge is perfect. 1 John 3.20 He knows all things. Psalm 147 verse 7.

Great is the Lord and abundant in power. His understanding is beyond measure. So all this is meant to humble us, meant to dwarf us and make us feel small and insignificant.

Sin makes you want to feel significant. Sin makes you want to feel big and powerful. Puts us in the wrong position before God. So God is saying, is it you?

Would you dare compare yourself to me or would any man at all compare himself to me? So what a great God. Paul in Romans actually cites this, quotes this, providential plan of salvation, of surety for redemption for the Jews and the Gentiles.

[14 : 19] And he cites this and he breaks side and prays. And he says in Romans 11 verse 33, Oh the depth and riches, wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.

For who has known the mind of the Lord? Right? 700 years later he's quoting this. For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor? Or who has given him a gift that he might be repaid?

For from him, through him, and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. So that's number one under this first title. Number two, God is the immense Lord of the nations.

The immense Lord of the nations. You see this in verse 16. Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket and are counted as the dust on the scales.

Behold, he takes up coastlands like fine dust. Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for burnt offering. The nations are as nothing before him.

[15:26] They are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. So, to further magnify the uniqueness of God, Isaiah says that the nations are like a drop from a bucket before him.

A very humble imagery. How many of you ever carried a big bucket of water in your yard to do something? Wash a car, water a plant, and you accidentally bump something and one little drop goes flying out?

That's like what the nations are like to God. You wouldn't like go back and refill the bucket. You would just say, just a drop, doesn't matter. And that's what the nations are before God.

And that's not to say he hates the nations or despises them. It's just saying in comparison, they are nothing. They are little. They are insignificant compared to God. God does love the nations.

He sent them a savior. He desires praise from the nations. But they rage against him. They rebel against him, much in the way our own nation is in many ways.

[16:28] But the whole point is this is not a vexing problem to God. He's not concerned. He's not threatened by any nation whatsoever. Or the sum total of them. He is not threatened.

He has no issue, but he governs them as he chooses. Right? They present no threat. But to us, they seem big. They seem insurmountable. But to Israel, the nations around them seemed overwhelming.

But they're not. And the same is true for us. Then he mentions Lebanon here in verse 16. Without further ado, really quickly, Lebanon just had these big cedar forests and a lot of animal life.

And basically saying, like, you know, wood is used to build the fire to have a burnt offering. So you have all the wood of Lebanon laid down. And then on top of that, put down all the animals that are there for a sacrifice.

He would say, not enough. Like, even a burnt offering that big would ultimately fall short of what God truly deserves.

[17:31] But the best of human worship will always fall short. God only accepted fully and was pleased with one sacrifice. That's 2,000 years ago on the cross.

Number three. Very simple. God alone is God. God alone is God. Verse 18. To whom will you liken God?

Or what likeness compare with Him? An idol? A craftsman casts it. A goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts it for silver chains.

He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that it will not rot. He seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up the idol that it will not move.

And so God offers a challenge here. Verse 18. I dare you to find anything else in all creation to compare with me. Simply put, God alone is God.

[18:32] And so this is sarcasm on God's part. Look at these idols made of silver, gold, or wood. Right? And they have to be propped up because they'll fall over.

And like, you're going to give your worship to these things? Compared to the ancient of days? Before we like laugh at ancient culture, we do it all the time.

What idols do you have in your life? What do you look to for comfort, for meaning, for protection, and assurance? I went to a Hindu temple a long time ago and there was all these little gods inside the room.

And, you know, they're just statues. But people were going up to them and putting food in their hands to feed them. And you would look at that and just think, that's nuts.

That thing is not going to eat that stuff. But we do that every week. We feed our little idols to give us comfort, meaning, and assurance. We go up to them and keep them going.

[19:38] And they fall over. They'll fall over. Right? So God is saying, will you dare compare me to such as that? I am the immortal God.

Number four, God is the active Lord. Verse 21, He says, do you not know do you not hear?

Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in, who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely are they sown. Scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth. When He blows on them, they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

So, here, He says, if a person has not heard, they should have heard. Isn't that interesting? Like, because of His resounding glory throughout the earth, He says, if you haven't heard, you should have heard.

[20 : 57] He sits transcendent, enthroned above the circle of the earth. There's one of those scientific things. A lot of people think the earth was flat for centuries, but it actually says here, God's knowledge of what He made, the earth, is a sphere, a circle, right?

Actually, it says that in Job 22, verse 14, as well. And He looks at all the people on it as small, insignificant, like grasshoppers, using the language of the day, like nothing. Such greatness is incomparable. And He pitches out the heavens, the universe, like a tent, and stretches them out for a place to dwell in. And it also says in Revelation that He'll roll up that same tent, like start over, cleanse, new, right?

This one particularly is a great comfort to anybody who's aware of what's going on in our country or the world, but He rules effortlessly, over all world leaders, good or bad, Christian or non-Christian, fools and wise, powerful and weak, He rules over them all.

There's much trouble in our world today of nations plotting war and rumors of war, world leaders seeking their own advancement, power, control, riches, even at the expense of their own people, east being set against west once again.

[22 : 23] It can cause a great deal of anxiety if you watch the news too much, but just be aware. But it says here that Yahweh brings the princes, which actually means just people of importance, people of importance, to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

That word means meaningless. It actually implies He makes them of no further significance. The glory that they thought they had is gone, and they're forgotten. All He has to do is just blow on them. He gets back to that imagery of they are like grass. They're planted, they're sown, they grow, the Lord blows, and they're gone. That's like how it is.

Some of you have lived longer than the rest of us, or people who just know history, some of the greatest leaders in the world, you know where they all are now? Gone. And in a time they will be forgotten, and such as it is with anyone else today, all God has to do is just blow on them.

Minimal effort. Daniel said of God, it is He who changes times and seasons. He disposes kings and raises up others.

[23 : 39] So God controls, you see in our text, He controls the tempest and carries them off. Right? So trust Him completely. This is not meant to scare, it's meant to say, that's our God, our God does that.

So take hope, right? Trust Him completely. And then five, number five under this first part, God is the watchful creator.

Verse 25, He issues that challenge again, to whom will you compare me that I should be like Him, says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these, who brings out their hosts by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of His might, and because He is strong in power, not one of them is missing.

So He offers that challenge again. So you see the title, the Holy One. Isaiah uses that title a lot for God. And if you read chapter 7, you'll know why he uses that title for God.

When he was called by God, and he heard the seraphine crying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. So, holy is a very profound word, but just for our sake, it means that God is in a category of His own.

[24 : 59] He is unique, He is separated from all His created things, undefiled, perfect, and pure. So, He calls us to go out on a clear night, which you can do up here in the mountains, and look at the stars, look overhead, look and behold what I have made, is what God is saying.

Many of the pagan religions of the ancient Near East people, they had astrological phenomena that they looked to, and they foolishly worshipped the creation rather than the Creator, because God is the one who controls the stars.

The starry constellations, they believed, were controlled by God. Thus, only God is worthy of worship. He controls the things that the pagans are worshipping, which sounds foolish, and it is. Read Romans 1 and 2. He says, not one of them is missing, so God creates and sustains the stars. All inspiring. I'll spare you all the science behind that.

Just go check it out. All kind of stuff. The galaxies, the stars, the Milky Wave, etc. But whoever he goes on, he says he doesn't just create them, but he names them.

[26 : 17] They got names. And that ensures that not one of them is missing. Psalm 147, verse 4, it says, God determines the number of stars, and to all of them he gives them names.

Psalm 147, verse 4. So, the whole point is to teach us some astronomy lesson, the answer is no. So, what's the catch? God is trying to teach Israel and trying to teach us something about himself that we don't need to miss.

If God can create the stars and name all of them and not lose any of them, surely he will not forget his people who are so much greater, those that he died to save.

He will not forget his promise to them. So, if he manages the universe, do you think he will lose track of you? And the answer is no. He keeps his promise.

Alright, part three, really quickly. Part three, the greatness of God is the renewal of his people. The greatness of God is the renewal of his people.

[27 : 24] And this starts in verse 27, so break this up into three little separate parts. Number one, our immense despair. Verse 27, Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, my way is hidden from the Lord, and my right hand is disregarded by my God?

So he knows that the Jews in the future, in exile, in Babylon, are going to feel like, has God forgotten us? Has he grown ignorant of our hard conditions?

Is he so busy that he can't take note of us? It's that complaint. But, remember though, God is always true to his covenant people.

Despite our unbelief, despite our lack of faith at times, he stays true to us. So when we're at our weakness and our darkness, God intervenes to bring us comfort and to strengthen us to that end.

So, what weighs heavily on your mind that you need comfort and encouragement for? Are you wondering if your job is going to be enough to take care of your family in the coming years?

[28 : 42] Are you worried about our economy? Are you worried about the chaos in the world? The certain political parties' agendas against the unborn? For illness or loss of a family member?

God weighs you down? What do you need encouragement with? Don't repeat what they're repeating. Like, does our God even notice us? Because God is telling you, yes, I see you.

I care. Then He answers, right? This is number two, God's greatness. This starts in verse 28. He answers that. 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.

He gives power to the faint and to him who has no might, he increases strength. So, he draws this sharp comparison between mortal, weak mankind and himself.

[29 : 42] The Lord is the everlasting God, meaning He is eternal. He always has existed. He exists and He will always exist. In Revelation, chapter 1, he says, you hear them crying out, the Lord God who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1.8. So, God is saying, no one created me, no one had the power to bring me into being or shape my personality. I had no beginning and I will have no end.

Alright? So, further, He is the creator of the ends of earth and He does not grow faint or weary.

Right? So, He spoke all things into existence by the power of His word.

In His understanding, His knowledge is omniscient, unsearchable. And then lastly, our renewal, number three, our renewal. Verse 30. One of those well-known coffee mug verses that get abused a lot.

Verse 30. Even youth shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted. But, they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.

[30 : 55] They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not be faint. And so, we see that it's not our strength to endure these things, but God's strength.

He is the source of our strength and not our physical abilities. So, look at verse 30. It says young men. It actually means picked men.

So, picked men, those who are picked out for their prowess, the prime of their strength, the guys who are the best of the best, like pick those men to be on your team to win kind of idea.

Even those men are going to fall flat, utterly exhausted. Right? So, you may think if I was a little stronger, I could handle everything. Nope. God will still find a way to humble you.

But, he, he never tires or grow weary. He cares about his people. Right? Even in our greatest despair. So, then, secondly, look at this.

[31 : 58] It says, we must learn to wait for the Lord. That same word can be translated hope in the Lord. So, those who expect God, those who hope for Him, those who look to Him, as believers in Christ, we can see with unprecedented clarity exactly what it is to wait for the Lord.

So, are you willing to wait for God? Or, are you a control freak who wants to tell God the pace is set? It has to be this way. It has to look that way. I must know.

Or, are you okay with God's timing, His terms, allowing Him to set the pace? There's freedom in surrendering that. In God, we can discover reservoirs of strength we had no idea about.

When we ourselves are exhausted, we can continue not to look to our own resources, but God's. Right? He doesn't faint or grow weary. He gives power to the faint.

So, the more we learn to appreciate our smallness, our insignificance, and accept our own limitations, the more we will glory in the power of God.

[33 : 09] Right? I'll mention the eagles because people want me to mention the eagles, not the football team. It says, they shall mount up, meaning to arise, to ascend, to climb with wings of eagles.

Eagles are pretty darn cool creatures that God made. Finely tuned. I think they're like eight times more acute than we are on everything. They can see twice the distance that any human can see. They actually don't run away from storms. They fly at storms. Isn't that crazy? Like, come on. So, they fly up above storms.

Isn't that nuts? Actually, the storm is below them and they're up here. They can fly at altitudes of close to 10,000 feet. And so, the point is, the point is, if we put our trust in God and allow Him to renew our strength, He will lift us up above the storms on trials of life.

So, not to fret about the future. Accept your limitations and allow Christ to be your strength. And finally, in closing, I didn't ask you to turn anywhere, but look, in closing, 2 Corinthians 4, 2 Corinthians 4, verse 16, in closing.

[34 : 29] So, if we will accept our limitations in our own strength, knowledge and wisdom, we will have God's. In Christ Jesus, we have all we need and more.

And so, Paul picks up on this, just like how weak and insignificant we are. It would be hard not to read the whole chapter. 2 Corinthians 4, we'll just read a few verses. Look at verse 16.

And remember the words, comfort, comfort my people, out of Isaiah 40. 2 Corinthians 4, verse 16. So we do not lose heart.

Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light and momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

As we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, are temporary. The things that are unseen are eternal.

[35 : 33] So in Christ, we look to the eternal. Right? For His resources, His wisdom, His power, all is ours in Jesus Christ.

Alright? So, I hope that focusing on the greatness and power of God is like a source to snap you out of depression, anxiety, fear, laziness.

is enough to motivate us when we see how big our God is. So stop looking at yourself and look up to Him.

Alright? Let's pray together. together.