

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Have you ever been in such dire circumstances that all sense of hope seemed lost? In the very epicenter of life’s whirlwind—when trials strike from every side—you find yourself utterly broken. You wish you could silence the thoughts that whisper, “Things will never get better,” or worse, “You’re a burden to everyone around you.” Maybe then, just maybe, you could see a path out of this prison of misery. But how do you wrestle with the fear that things might still get worse? What do you do with the anger—or the confusion—you feel toward God, who seems silent in your suffering? And to make the dark night of the soul even heavier, there comes that piercing realization: this storm might not be random at all. It might be the loving, correcting hand of God. The discipline of a Father who cares too much to leave you unchanged. “But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door,” God warned Cain. And in the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews reminds us, “The Lord disciplines those He loves”. These aren't words meant to crush us—they're words meant to awaken us. Could it be that what you're facing right now is not punishment, but God's loving pursuit to shape you into the image of Christ?

In moments like these, the questions run deep. And yet, here you are—sitting in the ashes, feeling ashamed. You, a redeemed child of God... a born-again masterpiece of grace... can't seem to “keep it together.” Where do you turn when your strength has failed, and your soul feels bankrupt? James offers a strange kind of hope: “Let perseverance finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” What if this season isn't evidence that God has left you—but that He's growing something in you that couldn't be formed any other way? Could it be that even in this darkness,

“Renewed Strength in Weakness” Isaiah 40:27-31 Jubilate 2025  
there’s a silver lining? Could it be that in your weakness, God is renewing your strength?

Today we’re going to learn that God does not renew the strong—He strengthens the weary. We’ll turn to the comforting words of the prophet Isaiah—spoken to the children of Israel during their exile in Babylon. These were a people worn down by suffering, disoriented by disappointment, and tempted to believe that God had forgotten them. Yet through Isaiah, God reminded them—and reminds us—that even in the darkest of seasons, He is still sovereign. Yes, complaining may feel like a natural response to pain, a way to rage against the bleakness of our circumstances. But when it blinds us to the truth of God’s character, it becomes sinful. It forgets that our Creator never grows tired or weary. It ignores that He is always working—patiently, powerfully, and faithfully—for the good of those who love Him. The good news is this: even in the chaos, even when we feel weakest, our strength can be renewed. How? Not by trying harder or fixing everything ourselves, but by placing our hope—fully and confidently—in Him. But could it be... that even now, in your weakness, God is preparing to lift you up—to renew your strength like the wings of eagles?

This kind of struggle isn’t new—God’s people have been here before. Though King Hezekiah pleaded with Israel to stop being “stiff-necked” and return to the Lord, many chose indifference and defiance instead. Years later, under King Jehoiakim’s rule, Judah’s rebellion only deepened. His refusal to submit to Babylon triggered the siege of Jerusalem—but the root of the nation's downfall was far deeper than political pride. Their sins were grievous in God’s sight: There was persistent Idolatry, rejection of God’s Covenant, Injustice and Oppression, the Shedding of Innocent Blood, the Desecration of the Temple, Sabbath Violations, and more. The list is nearly endless.

What sins have we allowed to quietly take root in our hearts or in the church—sins we tolerate because they’re common, not because they’re holy? Though the Lord sent prophets again and again, urging repentance, they hardened their hearts. In their refusal to turn back, they invited the full weight of God’s judgment. Babylon became the rod of His discipline. And when Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, warned of what was to come, he declared that the exile would last seventy years. That... is what the wrath of God looks like.

With the words of Jeremiah’s prophecy still echoing in their ears, you would expect the exiles to respond like Nineveh—covering themselves in sackcloth, sitting in ashes, and crying out for mercy. After all, hadn’t God already given them a clear promise in 2 Chronicles 7:14?

“If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

Rather than humbling themselves, many of the exiles fell in love with the comfort and gods of Babylon. They looked to Babylon’s 22-foot-thick walls and 360 watchtowers for security, forgetting that they were not there for safety—they were there under the disciplining hand of a loving God.

The rest simply complained, as their ancestors had in the wilderness, forgetting the lessons of trust and obedience. Even though God had told them plainly that the exile would last seventy years, they still treated Him as if He had forgotten them. They imagined He had grown tired, or worse, indifferent to their pain. But even in their failure, God was not finished with His people. Through Isaiah—the same prophet who confronted their complaints—God delivered a breathtaking promise. A promise not just for them, but for every weary soul who wonders if hope can rise from the ashes...

But just when the weight of disappointment and divine silence seemed too much to bear, Isaiah’s voice breaks through with a reminder—a question meant to stir their hearts and ours: “Do you not know? Have you not heard?” Have you forgotten who He is? Have you let your weariness speak louder than His Word? How absurd to lose faith in the One who is all-powerful over all the earth—The One of whom it is said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands”

And while we may be tempted to criticize Israel for their complaints, is it not true that even we—God’s redeemed—struggle to remain steadfast in times of suffering, especially under His discipline?

It is hard to live in a world that is not our home—a world marked by brokenness and decay. It’s not easy being sent out as sheep among wolves, especially when comfort, entertainment, and eloquence have become the church’s strongest calling cards. And yet, with our eyes fixed heavenward, we persevere. Though His ways are unsearchable, by faith we seek to walk in holiness, as He is holy. We repent when we sin. We rejoice in the promise that Christ is coming again to take us home.

And now—after the discipline, after the doubt, after the weariness—comes one of the most hope-filled promises in all of Scripture. It’s one thing to know that God is great. But what about when we are not? What about when we have nothing left to give? Isaiah doesn’t just proclaim the greatness of God—he shows us how God chooses to use that greatness: to strengthen the powerless. Weariness is often a sign that we’ve been carrying too many burdens on our own and desperately need to find rest in God. And so, the Good Shepherd extends an invitation for relief. Hear His words and rejoice:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in

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heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden  
is light.”

What burdens are you still trying to carry alone—things He never asked you to shoulder? What would it look like, even today, to lay them down at His feet and receive His rest instead? Jesus doesn’t merely offer sympathy—He offers a divine exchange: “Come, trade your burdens for mine. Let me carry the weight with you.” Some among the exiles longed to be a light to the people of Babylon, but as a conquered people, they felt disqualified — abandoned by God and unable to influence a culture drowning in idolatry. Yet Isaiah reminds them that God’s power and glory are often best revealed through weakness—when those who have nothing rely fully on His strength. Whatever strength we possess—be it of body, mind, or spirit—will eventually fail. But the power of God has no limits and never fades.

For those who feel like their faith has failed—for those too tired to take another step—Isaiah doesn’t leave us with guilt. He leaves us with a promise. And not just any promise, but one of supernatural renewal and grace-filled endurance: “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

To the weary—those whose strength and hope feel like they’re on the verge of collapse—Isaiah offers a divine reminder: our sovereign God never leaves, never forsakes His own. Whether our weakness comes through God’s loving discipline or through the ordinary trials of life, Isaiah calls us to hope in the Lord. When we repent where repentance is needed and wait upon Him in trust, He promises—in His perfect timing—to renew us. He will strengthen us to soar, to run, and to walk the path of righteousness He has laid before us. As one writer wisely said,

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“Unless the Lord renews the heart, men will always prefer the bird-in-the-hand of this life to the bird-in-the-bush of the life to come.”

So, as we store up treasures in heaven, may we bow our knees in surrender, lift our eyes in faith, and place our hope firmly in the Rock of our salvation—a foundation of strength and hope that cannot be shaken. Take a moment. Close your eyes if you want. What burden are you carrying today that you need to hand over to Jesus? What weakness are you ashamed of that God is ready to redeem? Just sit in that thought for a moment... and then lift your eyes to Him. Amen.