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SERMON TITLE

When You Feel Obscure and Obsolete

SERIES

DATE

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 40:27-31

SYNOPSIS

Sometimes we feel discouraged, but God can renew us.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ When You Feel Obscure and Obsolete

Last week we talked about When Things are Out of Your Control we feel frustrated and anxious. During those times we should pray and get God's perspective. But there are times when that doesn't happen right away and we can get discouraged. Isaiah 40 talks about the Israelis when things were not going well for them. They were discouraged and even wondered where God was in the midst of everything going on.

☞ Isaiah 40:27-31

Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is **hidden** from the Lord; my cause is **disregarded** by my God"? **28** Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. **29** He gives strength to the **weary** and increases the power of the **weak**. **30** Even youths grow **tired** and weary, and young men stumble and fall; **31** 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.

Tired, weak, weary... "My way is hidden; disregarded by God." Sometimes that's how we feel when things are out of control or just plain miserable. We sometimes think that God no longer cares, or God has given up on us, or he simply isn't paying attention to our situation. But that is just not true. He is fully aware of your situation. He knows what you need. And, He is able to renew your strength and hope so that you can carry on.

When you feel obscure and obsolete...

☞ Remember who God is

v. 28... Do you not know? Have you not heard? He is the **Everlasting God** – he always was, he is, and he always will be; God is **not limited by time or space**. 1 Timothy 1:17 says he is eternal and immortal.

He is the **Creator** = to create from nothing; and no one else can do this. Since he's the Creator, he knows how everything works, including what's going on your life.

He is **tireless** – he doesn't need to recharge or sleep.

☞ He **understands** fully – **he knows you better than you know yourself**.

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. **9** "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my **ways higher** than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Sometimes I just simply fall back on those verses. He is so much higher than us and I just need to trust. Look earlier in our text and find in v. 18 that he's incomparable – nothing else even comes close.

☞ v. 22 **he's enthroned above the earth** – he is the king over all; **he is in charge**.

Since he's not limited by space or time, and he is in charge, he's able to easily reach into your situation. **Isaiah 59:1** says, "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear."



v. 26 he **created the heavens**

v. 26 he **knows each star by name** – there are far more stars in the sky than there are people on the Earth. So, he for sure knows who you are!

☞ v. 11 **the Great Shepherd** who **carries you close to his heart**

Psalms 139:7-10

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? **8** If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. **9** If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, **10** even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

v. 8 **his word stands forever**. Hold on to his promises and his word. Words like Deuteronomy ☞ 31:8...The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; **he will never leave you nor forsake you**. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. God is near to you. He's right there.

v. 2 he **speaks tenderly** to you

v. 1 **he says, "Comfort, comfort my people"**

When you feel obscure and obsolete, remember who God is.

☞ **Wait on the Lord**

The word "wait" does not suggest that we sit around and do nothing. It means to **look for with eager expectation**. It means "to hope," to look to God for all that we need. At its root it means to "bind together." So, we tie all of our hopes and dreams to God; we trust him with everything. We bind ourselves to him alone and don't look for any other person or thing to save us and renew us.

Psalms 40:1-3

☞ **I waited patiently** for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. **2** He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. **3** He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

Some of you here feel like you're in the mud and mire. Some feel like there's nothing to sing about. Keep your focus on Jesus; wait on him and he will renew you. You're not obscure and you're not obsolete.

--GotQuestion.org... *Waiting on the Lord necessitates two key elements: a **complete dependence on God** and a willingness to allow Him to decide the terms, including the timing of His plan. **Trusting** God with the timing of events is one of the hardest things to do. The half-joking prayer, "Lord, I need patience, and I need it RIGHT NOW," is not far removed from the truth of how we often approach matters of spiritual growth and the Lord's will. To wait on the Lord produces character in the life of the Christian.*



The word “wait” in the Bible carries the idea of confident expectation and hope. We wait on the Lord in a way similar to how we wait on the arrival of out-of-town relatives, with loving anticipation of seeing them again.

In the 23rd Psalm the Good Shepherd leads us to the “still” waters. The words “He makes me lie down” can be translated “He causes me to rest.” When we, like sheep, are still, we are resting in the Lord and **trusting** him rather than our own ingenuity, strength and will power.

The idea of waiting on the Lord is not like waiting for the dentist in the waiting room (thank goodness!). Rather, the sense of waiting on the Lord is more like what a waiter does in a restaurant, anticipating and meeting the requests of the one he’s waiting on. Our waiting on the Lord is not biding our time ☞ until we finally get the help we’ve been waiting for; it’s **filling our time serving the Master**, always on our feet, ready to minister. The command to wait on the Lord means that we are to **be near Him** and **attentive** so that we may catch the slightest suggestion of what He wants for us.

When you feel obscure and obsolete, wait patiently and expectantly on God.

☞ **Be renewed**

Everyone, including the young, get tired and weary. We all have moments or seasons of feeling discouraged. But, it doesn’t stay that way forever. We can be renewed. The word "renew" means "to exchange," as taking off old clothing and putting on new. We can **exchange our weakness for His power**.

v. 31 We can **soar on wings as eagles**.

Psalms 103:5 also talks about renewal in relation to an eagle... (God) who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

There is a lot of speculation about the meaning here. Some legends say that eagles go through a total molting in their old age which includes a new beak and new talons, as well as new feathers. But no real evidence supports this. Rather, the eagle goes through stages of life, each with differing types and colors of feathers, which are beneficial for that particular stage of life. The eagle also molts, and grows new feathers, like most birds, but it does so a little at a time rather than all at once. So, it is continually being renewed. It’s the same for us...

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs ☞ them all. **18** So we **fix our eyes** not on what is seen, but **on what is unseen**. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is **eternal**.

As we fix our eyes on eternity and remember who God is, we can be continually renewed like the eagle. God can enable us to **soar** even in a crisis. The phrase *mount up* means “to **go up**; ascend; to go up over a boundary.” God will provide renewed strength and courage to **overcome obstacles**, if we will only keep our eyes on him and trust him. And as we wait before Him, God enables us to **run** through the challenges we face.



Hebrews 12:1-3

☞ Let us **throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run with perseverance** the race marked out for us. **2** Let us **fix our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

There it is again... fix your eyes on Jesus... he enables you to keep on going.

☞ As we keep our eyes on Him, God enables us to **walk faithfully** in the day-by-day demands of life. It is much harder to walk in the ordinary pressures of life than to fly like the eagle in a time of crisis, because the walking is constant and the pressures of life never let up.

--William Carey, missionary... "I can plod. That is my only genius. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. The greatest heroes of faith are not always those who seem to be soaring: often it is those who are patiently plodding. As we wait on the Lord, He enables us not only to fly higher and run faster, but also to walk longer. *Blessed are the plodders, for they eventually arrive at their destination!* So, keep on plodding, walking faithfully.

1 John 2:6... Whoever claims to live in him must **walk as Jesus did**.

2 John 6... his command is that you **walk in love**.

3 John 3-4... It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to **walk in the truth**. **4** I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

When you feel obscure and obsolete, be renewed by fixing your eyes on Jesus as you continue to walk faithfully with him. Keep on serving him – he exchanges your weakness for his power, and he renews those who wait on him. Keep on trusting him – he's the everlasting God who carries you close to his heart. He has not forgotten you – he knows you better than you know yourself.

Know that God is close, and in charge, and cares for you.

Wait on him, patiently serving him and listening to him.

Be renewed by focusing on him, so that you can soar above all obstacles, run through any crisis, and walk faithfully in love and truth, day by day, until he returns.