
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

January 31, 2016

When Our Spiritual Energies Fail

“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.”

Isaiah 40:31 (Common English Bible)

These words from Isaiah provide the source of spiritual strength. Every day we need spiritual power to do the will of God and to do it well and with joy. In full view of the challenges that press overseas and here at home, the people of God require all the encouragement, and strength, that genuine faith in God can offer. Today, as in every era since these words were spoken by the prophet Isaiah, these words have brought the people of God both challenge and direction, as well as guidance and strength. And, as each day seemingly becomes more demanding, this source of strength remains equal to the need.

The conviction here is that God’s work demands God’s power. Just as our physical bodies weaken without sufficient food and rest each day, so do our spiritual energies fail unless they are daily replenished from God. Yet, when Isaiah speaks of, *“hope in the Lord”*, Isaiah is not suggesting that we passively engage in wishful thinking; an optimistic mindset that God will come through for us when the day grows difficult. Rather, Isaiah’s use of the word, “hope” is a call to cling our souls to God. “Hope” in the Old Testament is always active, not the passive use that is commonly understood today. It is an expectant dependence on God, a certain confidence that God will renew our strength equal to what we seek.

It takes time to be holy. Yes, we are called to “do good things”, as the apostle Paul writes in Ephesians, but always we do so together with God. In our daily time with God, reading the Bible and devotional literature, time in prayer and quiet reflection, our souls receive the inflow of God’s power. What a tragic experience it is to witness someone who seeks to do God’s will and please God but does not spend the time “clinging to God” in such manner that they receive God’s power. In time, their spiritual energies fail and discouragement overtakes them.

These words close with the promise of unwearyed strength. This is not to say that we will never experience physical exhaustion. In the early pages of Genesis, God taught the importance of rest and renewal. God’s grand design for our life is a rhythm of work and rest, of producing and being replenished. The promise here is that when our lives are fixed in devotion to God, we may experience physical exhaustion from time to time but always with the exhilaration that God enables us, by faith, to plod forward because we are undergirded by God’s grace and enfolded by God’s love.

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