
Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

October 11, 2015

The Secret of Spiritual Power

“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)

A woman stepped into my office today. With tears and considerable emotion, she asked that I pray for the world. She mentioned nothing specific. She didn't need to. Another shooting this week on a college campus that left ten people dead. An accidental bombing of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Afghanistan killed twenty-two people. Hundreds of thousands of people fleeing terrorism, seeking new homes throughout Europe and the United States. These stories drain our strength and cause us to need renewed power.

In the time that Isaiah wrote these words, his people also faced despair. Threatened by domination by a mighty foreign power, Isaiah's people needed all the encouragement and strength that a genuine faith in God could bring. So do we. Just as the natural rhythm of life demands nourishing food, exercise and rest for the body, the same condition applies to our souls. Spiritual energies are rapidly depleted by the crises, suffering and fear that consumes our attention. Replenishing that spiritual energy is urgently needed. So Isaiah reminds his people – and us – that our sufficiency is of God. We remain weak unless we derive strength from God.

How do God's people claim this strength? *“Hope in the Lord,”* writes Isaiah. The “hope” Isaiah speaks of is not wishful thinking or “hoping for the best.” Here is Isaiah's call to “trust unfailingly in God.” It is a call to “hold onto God” with expectant dependence. A constant reliance on God, meditating on God's words and promises in the Bible, generates spiritual power and makes each of us alert for God's intention to use us mightily for God's redemptive purposes in the world. Isaiah asks that we attach ourselves to God as a child clings to a parent.

As in the day of Isaiah, it still takes time to be holy; to be a people set apart for God's purposes in a world shaken by fear. Schedule time each day for reading the Bible and prayer, for reading devotional literature that awakens the senses to new understandings, and do not neglect moments to simply be still and contemplate God's love. These things, along with weekly worship in a community of faith, gives release to the inflow of God's power that renews strength, restores hope, and lifts hearts as on the wings of eagles.

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