

Isaiah 40:12-31

(Sunday School Teaching by Mike Thompson)

Isaiah 40:12-14

When someone measures something, what implications does that give? It is finite. A statement of dominion (the person measuring is in control of what they are measuring). A sense of judging, an authority over this, I can evaluate this correctly because I am over it, in authority.

In this passage, what has God measured? All of creation. This is a statement of God's absolute authority over all creation. People are wondering if God is actually over all creation. Here he says, yes he is.

Sometimes we don't want to think of God as big but He is. He is able to handle every situation. Who has put the whole creation in the palm of his hand? God has! He is sovereign. God is able to measure the creation as if it is nothing.

Who can measure the Spirit of the Lord? Can we measure Him? No. Who is able to give God counsel. (tones of sarcasm). Reminds us of Job, when God shows up. God is not only big and powerful but also wise. He is able to comprehend everything. He has power and wisdom. He understands every problem you could possibly be experiencing. He has thought through every possibility when he orders his creation. Who taught him what justice is? You need to be taught justice, it is natural with God. God is smarter than you. When you are tempted to criticize or demean God's word, remember this. He is wiser than you, he is more powerful than we are. What do we think is powerful and wise? Government. Humans (we believe we have power and wisdom). Nature, money, science, these are the things people are tempted to put their trust in. I can have peace and security because of these things. No, trust in the one who hold all these things in His hand. God is more intelligent than me.

God, you are still God. Even though I am languishing where I am, you are God. I don't understand it all but I can trust your word. God is powerful enough, wise enough to deal with your own issues.

Isaiah 40:15-24

We're told to reflect on the nations. Particularly the evil nations who have conquered God's people. You are sitting beside the rivers of Babylon, everything you have hoped in in this world has come to a defeat, the church is languishing, destroyed, mocked, ridiculed, the powers of this world are so big. Let me tell you how you should think of these. How does God describe these nations? One little drop from a bucket. Dust on the scales (it doesn't even register), all the forests of Lebanon (great), not even enough for an offering. Inadequate. If you are going to use your eyes, you would never come to this conclusion. But the eyes of faith think differently. Vs. 17, they are not just nothing, they are less than nothing. (Gen. 1:2, the earth was without form and void).

You are in a sense a part of the nations, less than nothing. But you have the capacity to make God marvel. How? Trust and obey. What is it that make God marvel? It is not the things you can do that makes God marvel. Luke 7:9, those who possess faith make God marvel. He is telling us how powerful God is so that even in the most terrible of situations, we will know how powerful God is. It is what God cares about, our faith in Him.

Don't just use human analogies as to who God is, he is beyond that. Idolatry, start with the analogy, something human, and say that is what God is.

No, God is and he has placed in this world faint analogies of who he is.

Idolatry is foolish. Sometimes we feel powerless, fighting against evil. It is not our job to destroy the evil, God is powerful enough to destroy the evil.

God brings princes to nothing.

vs. 25-27, What are the people thinking? They are sitting in exile. They would be thinking that God doesn't know my situation or God does not care about my situation. God is speaking to Jacob and Israel, God's visible people. v. 26, almost sounds like he is talking about stars in the

creation but He is referring to people. Not one person has been forgotten by me. Who are you to think I don't know and I don't care. Unanswered prayer; it seems at times God doesn't see and doesn't care. Come back to the truth, keep putting your trust in Him. Go against what your experience is telling you in the moment and put your faith in Him. I'm called to trust, I'm called to obey God, that is my duty. It simplifies life, doesn't make it any easier.

v. 27, My right is disregarded by my God. My way, my judgment. The right word is judgment. God has not given me justice! That is what we feel, God has forgotten me when it comes to justice. Scripture promises you the mercy! There is a sense that it doesn't feel to us that justice is being served. OK to feel that way. The wrong response is God does not care, God is not in control. It is helpful to know that Jesus suffered.

v. 27, Why does God call his people Jacob and then Israel? Jacob, before he struggled. Israel is the name God gives Jacob after the night of wrestling, I will not let go of you until you bless me!

Gen. 32:22, great passage. Jacob is the chosen child of God. To think you don't have to wrestle with God

Jacob, wedged between two people who are trying to kill him, Laban on one side, and Esau on the other. Life is tough for him now. Jacob is scared, fearful. He sends his family alone ahead of him and he is alone with God. God shows up and Jacob wrestles with God. You should wrestle with the problems you are facing and wrestle with the promises that God has given you. Jacob is crying out...you have forgotten me! He wrestles all night long. God says let go of me. Jacob says I will not let go until you bless me. God has the promises. If you seek me and keep on seeking me, you will find me. Seek me with all your heart.

Jacob (the deceiver), God changes his name. In all of this, you see elements of his sovereignty. God has orchestrated Jacob's life to bring him to the point where Jacob will seek Him. God is using that to draw Jacob to himself. God condescends himself by even allowing the struggle to go on. God is relationally with you and he wants you to interact with him.

What happened in Jacob's life God wants to be repeated in every one of his children. What is true is that even though we know this we need to be reminded of this over and over. The way through is to remember who God is and to reaffirm the truth of his promises to us.

v. 28—31

The sermon today, "be strong".

What is the pathway to strength? Follow the progression. The first thing that happens— You lose strength, you get tired. Expect it. You will feel weak, you will faint like you can't go any further. Not just physical strength...emotional strength and spiritual strength will be lacking. You will become faint. You might even stumble and fall at some point. What is the next thing? What is the way up? Wait on God. Waiting is not just inactivity. Cling to Him through faith. In some sense, it is also serving as a waiter serves tables. You are waiting on God, trusting Him and obeying Him. Those who do that, they will have their strength renewed. Where does that strength come from? The Lord. Does God ever faint? Does he ever grow weary? Does he have a limited amount of strength to give you? No, he always has enough strength and power.. He gives power to the one who has no strength, to the one who has fainted. If you do wait on God, clinging to him and keep seeking him, he will increase your strength such that you will mount on wings like eagles. Your strength is stronger than the first condition. The final condition is stronger than the first condition. This is the process, he is causing you to lose strength so that you will wait on Him, so that you come to the end of your strength and trust His strength. God gives the spiritual, moral strength to keep going.

The images... The eagle makes us think of getting above our problems... Running, I have to endure through my problems. Walking, he helps me to make it through each day. This is Christianity. This is what it means to say ...Romans 1—for I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God...for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith...the righteous shall live by faith.

Faith is something you have to do every day. From faith for faith. You are moving forward. Everything about us as Christians is receiving from God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for being such a great God. Thank you for speaking in advance words of comfort to your children who would be languishing a century later through Isaiah. Thank you for him, thank you for the truth of Isaiah 40. May it penetrate into our hearts and may we rejoice in who you are. You are this God. We can cling to you because you are good, you are mighty. You have given us promises. You care for us. We thank you. In Jesus' name, Amen.