

## An Antidote for Weariness – Isa. 40.28-31

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There's an old Greek hymn dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, written by St. Stephen of Mar Sabas, and can be sung to the tune, "Bullinger."

A couple of verses from that hymn read;

Are you *weary*, are you languid,  
Are you sore distressed?  
"Come to me," says One,  
"And coming be at rest."

Finding, following, keeping, struggling,  
Is he sure to bless?  
Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs  
answer, "Yes."

We all grow weary. The pressures and demands of each day take their toll on us.

I know my mom, who's 90, was experiencing weariness recently. I was talking with her last Sunday.

She's been under lockdown in her retirement home in Toronto, ON due to SARS COV 2 for months.

They were not allowed to leave their small rooms, unless for an emergency.

Meals were brought to their rooms. Interaction with other residents was not permitted. Family visits were prohibited.

As the weeks turned into months it began to take its toll on her and the other residents.

As SARS COV 2 continues to impact our daily schedules, we too can experience weariness.

Our natural response can be to want to retreat, to give up, or to surrender. Of course, this is the dangerous extreme of being weary – to want to throw in the towel and give up.

There's nothing wrong with being weary per se, but there is everything wrong with wanting to give up in the midst of the fight.

Growing weary can be one consequence of dealing with this virus, but there are other experiences in life which can cause us to feel weary as well.

We can grow weary of waiting. For example, Ps. 69.3 David says, "I am weary with my crying... while I wait for my God."

We can become weary of studying and learning. Eccl. 12.12 says, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body."

We can become weary of criticism from adversaries. David writes in Ps. 6, "My soul is in anguish... I am weary with my sighing... because of all my adversaries."

There are many things we do which are fine in themselves but our strength has its limits

and the longer our weariness lingers the more we face the danger of wanting to throw in the towel and give up.

Today, I want to give you an antidote to weariness – a word of hope for us all. God never grows weary. And he is able to give strength to the weary.

This is what the prophet Isaiah says to a people who were living in exile far from their homes, who were losing hope and growing weary

because they felt God had forgotten about them so were ready to give up and throw in the towel. Here's what he said in 40.28ff:

<sup>28</sup> 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.

<sup>29</sup> He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

<sup>31</sup> 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.

So hope in the Lord and he will renew your strength."

The weight of weariness we feel is as real as any captivity in exile the Israelites endured. But God our Creator can lessen that weight.

The way he chooses to do that is his business. We cannot dictate the terms or the means,

but we can hold on to him with confident hope, believing he can renew our strength,

when we live a life of faith in him, a life where we truly release ourselves into his loving care without any reservation,

a life where we are constantly giving ourselves and our concerns to him.

It's something similar to what Jesus says to do in Matthew 11. <sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

In place of our weariness, Jesus gives us rest. All he asks is that we come to him, spend time with him, talk to him, listen to him.

As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it in 12.3, "Consider him [Jesus]... so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Feeling weary? The antidote to weariness is to hope in the Lord and he will renew your strength. Release yourself into his loving care without any reservation.

Live a life where you are constantly giving yourselves and your concerns over to him.