5/13/20 Devotional

Let us reflect upon the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah:

*“But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not grow weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31*

We know that there are different seasons in life. Waiting is one of those seasons. It is perhaps one of the most difficult seasons in life. Generally, we would much rather be active than to have to wait. Patience is a virtue which many lack. I include myself. Someone wrote: *“Patience is accepting a difficult situation without giving God a deadline to handle it.”* The psalmist says: *“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him.”* Psalm 37:7. What is the prophet saying to us in these words? What is God’s word in these verses?

God ordains times of waiting. These can be holy times. Seasons of waiting are essential. Seasons of waiting are not optional, but mandatory. The season of waiting is indispensable, necessary, because it is a time when God works in our lives. It is a time when God can renew our strength.

These verses presuppose that there are periods in our lives when we are exhausted. It recognizes that there are times in our lives when we are confused, frustrated or disillusioned. It presumes that there are times when we have lost our courage. It is based upon these givens in life, that we hear this promise.

Times of waiting, if we allow them to, can be opportunities to focus or re-focus on God and God’s will for our lives. They are just the opposite of constantly being distracted or preoccupied or busy. By waiting, and attempting to do so patiently, we shall be prepared and receptive when God speaks to us. Sometimes God asks us to wait. And waiting always requires patience.

What does renew our strength mean? It means different things. It may be that God strengthens our heart and gives us courage when we are afraid. Fear is a heavy burden to carry. It may mean that God gives us an entirely new perspective on our situation. Sometimes we need to get some distance from a problem or challenge, before we can begin to focus and see clearly. A trial looked at from below is far different than a trial looked at from above. It may be that we find strength by ceasing being so active. We miss a lot when we are always on the go. We want to keep on going and going. We believe we must keep going because that’s what faith and life are all about. God made us with the need to pause from time to time. Activity alone, without times of reflection, will not give us the strength we need to face the challenges of life. It may be that God wants us to redirect our lives. We can’t see that in the heat of the moment. God may desire for us to take a new path and to change the direction that we are going. If God wants to change the direction of our lives, before that can happen, we need to stop. Once God has stopped us, God can guide us on a new path or purpose. Waiting is one of the ways God speaks to us to help us change course or to change the purpose we are striving to fulfill. It may mean that we begin to sense the presence and power of God in such a time. Our spirit, our soul is renewed and empowered. It may mean that we are surprised by the support and care of others, when we felt isolated and alone. Their encouragement lifts our spirit and renews our strength.

Isaiah is saying God wants to strengthen our soul. Waiting is one of the ways that God accomplishes this. Waiting requires patience. God created us, God made us, for seeking His word and will in times of waiting.

Christ’s peace and patience be with you,

Rev. Alan W. Deuel