

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
REV. JOHN BURTON
FEBRUARY 5, 2012

SERMON: "NEITHER FAINT NOR GROW WEARY"

TEXT: ISAIAH 40: 21-31

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in ;who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

"Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God"? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. "

I love the way this scripture begins!

"Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?"

The Prophet Isaiah calls the people of Israel to remember what they, in the pain and suffering of their country's turmoil, have forgotten – that God is great! Great enough to handle their problems if they would but be faithful and obey God's laws.

God is great! So great that from God's height we must appear a small and insignificant as grasshoppers. And we, as grasshoppers, must look up in awe of the One who makes the very ground tremble when God passes.

God is great! So great that God can use the heavens like a blanket when God curls up for a little nap during the third & fourth quarter of the Super Bowl if it gets boring

God is great! So great that kings, presidents, and prime ministers sit in God's waiting room hoping that God's secretary might eventually call their name and work them in to God's busy schedule.

God is great! To whom shall we compare God? Who is God's equal? Is Buddha? ? Shiva? Is there any who stacks up?

God is great! Look at the world and the cosmos. Is there any creation who does not bear God's mark? Even one??? God knows them all and calls them each by name, missing not one.

God is great!

When we, like the people whom Isaiah preached to, are faced with enormous challenges, powerful enemies, and mouthwatering temptations – whom shall we turn to?

Newt or Barak or Mitt?

When death breaches our gates? When financial ruin overtakes us? When love is cast down and broken – whom shall we turn to?

Oprah? Dr. Phil?

When hope dissipates like fog in the morning sun – whom do we turn to?

The One who has the power to help. The One who cares.

The scripture says that no matter how difficult the task, God will not faint or grow weary.

Yes, even young men and women in the prime of their lives with the fullness of strength and vitality will faint, be weary, and fall exhausted. Life is more than a mere marathon. Life is brutal, uphill, into a head wind, with blazing hot sun. Even the best of us will suffer, weaken, and fall.

But not God! God's strength and endurance are equal to any task, any challenge, any disaster, anything that can happen to us!

And those of us who wait upon the Lord, who wait for the Lord's direction and blessing, we too shall taste a measure of the Lord's boundless strength and endurance.

As the scripture says, "...but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. "

Are you exhausted by life? Drained by pain? Stifled by fear?

Wait on God in prayer - and when God comes - ask for some of that endless strength and endurance. You don't have to stand alone against mighty foes be they cancer or crime or Alzheimer's, or divorce, or even death. God can give you strength. God has strength to spare. God is a generous Lord.

Life is a marathon. But with God's strength and endurance in you, you can fly up the hills as if on eagle's wings, run and not be weary, and cross the finish line without fainting!

God is great! Praise be to God!