



2016  
2017

Summer 2017

## **Isaiah 40:31**

31 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.

### **Reflection**

Some time ago on a rainy weekend I sat down and read right through all sixty-six chapters Isaiah in one sitting. I almost can't describe the change that came over

me as I came to chapter 40. For those of you who aren't familiar with the book of Isaiah, the first 39 chapters are dark and in many ways they form the extended introduction and make for the most magnificent contrast with chapter 40, one of the most quoted and loved chapters of the Old Testament. The chapter begins with much needed words in Isaiah's day and in every day,

Comfort, comfort my people,  
says your God. Isa 40:1

It then goes on to predict the coming of Jesus with words that we will later identify with John the Baptist,

A voice of one calling:  
"In the wilderness prepare

the way for the Lord;  
make straight in the desert  
a highway for our God. Isa 40:3

And who amongst us has not been enthralled by these words, words that we wish would never end, words that begin in Isaiah 40:12 and go on and on,

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor? 14 Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way?

Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? 15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. 16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. 17 Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. 18 With whom, then, will you compare God? Isa 40:12–18

This majestic chapter ends with a verse that I'd love you to meditate over today, and if possible commit to memory. Isaiah 40:31,

31 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.

This time of year we begin to think about the New Year. We review the year that was and plan for the year that will be. It is a time of aspirations. And could there be any higher aspirations than these? To soar on wings like eagles, to run and not grow weary, to walk and not be faint, to have a fire in your eyes and a purpose in your stride as you follow God's good and perfect plan for your life and experience the best life possible in this world. This life is only available to those who place their hope in the Lord. He promises to,

renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

## **Think & Pray**

Is your hope firmly set in the Lord? Or does your hope rest elsewhere? In the words of the famous hymn, is your hope ‘built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness’? Are you standing on the solid rock of Christ? Are you resting in his unchanging grace? Is he enough? Or are your hopes divided? Is it ‘his oath, his covenant, his blood’ that ‘supports you in the whelming flood’ of life? Because ‘all other ground is sinking sand’. Why should your foot slip in 2017? Why not instead have your strength renewed, why not soar on

wings like eagles, why not run and not grow weary no matter your age or circumstances in life? You can, by placing your hope – all of it – in our Lord, because he promises that,

31 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.

And his words never fall to the ground empty but always accomplish what he desires and achieve the purposes for which he sends them (Isa 55:11).

God desires today that you place your hope in him. Meditate over this verse this morning and claim its promise for the com-

ing year. Pray that your faith would be renewed, that you would soar, and that you would run and not grow weary in your love and service of our God.