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Sermon preached by our Pastor,

on Sunday Afternoon

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Lesson. Daniel 10.

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

The context provides useful and blessed information as to the Lord's divine method preparatory to the accomplishing of the sacred language of the text. Take for a brief moment a summary of verse 31,- sinners, and the Lord's dear adopted children following their blessed Lord and Master, waiting on God for heavenly energy and strength. For what divine purpose? A perfect commentary on the purpose of strength was provided by the Lesson of the forenoon, (Luke 22. vv.14-46), the dear Son of God incarnate in the gloomy garden of Gethsemane when the sins of the Church had been imputed to Him. Already in His heart and hands He had received from His divine Father the cup of penal wrath due to their sins. What did He need? What was the effect ^{on His} perfect Manhood, ~~of~~ the holy humanity, a true body and reasonable soul of the Saviour? "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." -His prostration in the gloomy garden when beneath the insupportable weight laid on Him He was prostrated to the earth. Some of you will appreciate this. You will appreciate it from two angles. First, having received a bearable revelation of your Saviour in His Passion. Mark you, this is heaven begun below.

"Here it is I find my heaven,

While upon ~~The~~ Lamb I gaze." (158)

WHY? Because here is Jesus, Redeemer, Saviour, Lord, my Saviour; saving me from my sins. I pray God may dispense His heavenly blessing on this congregation.

Now, from the second view point you will appreciate it in a sympathetic

aspect in communion with Him in your sufferings. This is the lot of God's people here below. The advance of science, as it is termed, makes no difference to the well-travelled way lined out with blood; the blessed, rugged pathway all the saints have walked to glory. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came^{they}?... These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." (Rev, 7.13-15)

O blessed prospect! bright abode! It seems so much nearer as we close the year and anticipate the dawn of another. It is nearer than before. The Lord give you a foretaste, that you may know what it is to have the wings of an eagle, and know what it is to expand the wings of faith and fly to behold His glory, and have a taste of that which awaits you; - "which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men." (Psa. 31.19)

To complete the summary, this strength you wait on Him for as your Saviour waited on Him for the same strength. To underline the tremendous importance unfathomed by us, we see it highlighted there. He in His agony, sweating blood. "And there appeared an angel unto him from Heaven strengthening him." Blessed company! You may say as you tread the path; "I am getting closer to my Saviour every day." I hope you could say that. You are beginning to know the meaning of true, vital godliness. It is not something floating in the brain; it is not official; it does not relate to the traditions of men. It is vital godliness; union and fellowship with the Saviour. I have tried to spell it out to you. If you can understand and appreciate and plumb the depths of what we read in St Luke, then in your little measure you will appreciate the meaning of strength. You can see I have got a straight line running through. What is it? There is nothing desultory about^{it}. There is a blessed Object and a holy objective. What is the straight line? Why was the angel despatched from heaven? Why did he strengthen Him? So He might accomplish the work of redemption and so come to the terminal, triumphant cry that expressed all He had accomplished. "It is finished." The cry rang through the skies, through heaven and earth. Never was there such a cry! He was

strengthened so He could accomplish the work of our redemption, conquer hell, expiate sin; so in holy travail He could bring forth all His chosen.

You see the perfect setting of strength. Our good teacher in the Hymnal (and I do not question it) tells us it was "With strength enough, and none to spare." (153) You may read this in your youth and sit comfortably. You may have a degree of love and reception of the truth, but O when the days come and this is ^{your} experience! Such is the cup, the prostration and the overwhelming of your being, in agony you pray more earnestly and you are strengthened, but it is 'with strength enough, and none to spare.' I will tell you what I have observed in my own case. If I am serving my Lord He will strengthen ^{me} ~~me~~, but it will not be in the same way for anything else. If you are serving, following Him, taking up your cross, if you have a right spirit before Him you receive a strength you know in no other matter. If it is to serve, follow Him, to suffer in His cause He will strengthen you with pure, heavenly, divine strength. This is a strength that will give you to conceive of the brightness, beauty, glory of heaven and of your glorified state hereafter. You will get an inkling of it, for the resurrection body is powerful, spiritual and glorious. This is very sweet to me. Let me serve Him, follow Him, be made willing to deny self and take up my cross and go after Him, and receive heaven's pure strength flowing through the wounds of Jesus, so there is virtue gone out of Him and flowed into my person. I wanted to draw your attention to strength, - strength for His people, and remember the fulness of strength is in Him. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them ^{in Zion} appeareth before God." (Psa. 84)
The fulness is in Him for you: it is available; it is for you to draw from.

What is the fundamental secret? It is union. If there is union there will be communion. So there is a fulness of strength in Him for you. All you need is available to day, to the end, to the last moment; for every moment, all vicissitudes, emergencies, difficulties, needs, trials, afflictions, sorrows. It is a rich fulness: your strength is in Him. What

is the purpose? Why do you need strength? There are several things to be named. One is, you have a course to finish; a marathon course, an obstacle race, and you need strength to finish your course with joy. You have been helped for many years in this course. I do not know how long it is with you. I have some idea with myself; it was from my childhood. You need strength to finish your course: the obstacles become greater, more difficult. How often the nearer the prize you are the more difficult the journey becomes, but

"With this delightful prospect fired,
We'll run, nor in Thy ways be tired;
And all the trials here we see,
Will make us long to reign with Thee." (387)

You need strength to finish your course. There is nothing ambiguous about it. Deep down in the heart and personality of every child of God is an assurance concerning your course. God has made it plain to you. Flesh and blood would fly from it: you are not where you would be if human nature had the choice. You are not in the path you would be in if carnal reason prevailed. Your path is a cross: your life is affliction.

So you have a course to finish and you need strength, superhuman, supernatural, divine, heavenly strength. The crown is at the end: glory shines there. Christ is waiting to receive you. You need strength. You need strength to fulfil what the Lord has placed on you and called you to do. The Lord knows what He calls on His people to accomplish. "Son, go work to day in my vineyard." (Matt, 21, 28) You need strength to fulfil and to accomplish. I do not know how it is with you. You see this blessed Book with the biographies of the saints, but when you ponder your time on this planet can you distinctly see the divisions into chapters? - chapter 1, chapter 2, chapter 3, and you say; "That is chapter 1 and the Lord gave me an assignment and helped me to finish it. It was by strength received from heaven. And now you are in chapter 3, and you may be able to see the general classification of the chapters in your life; it all finalises in a grand finale: something is accomplished, settled, finished. Heaven now: glory awaits you.

"The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks."

You need strength to finish what your Lord and Master gives you in His service to accomplish. I speak here concerning serving the Lord. It would be and it is congenial to meet with a fair degree of success. Nothing can stimulate the spirit much more than success. I am not thinking only of the Lord's ministers, but of mothers and others who may be single. In all the different corners of life, in what the Lord has called you to accomplish success is stimulating and comfortable. Let us not be over-concerned in this. The matter of priority in serving the Lord is to be faithful in love and leave the rest with God. "Well done," says He to such, "good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few ~~thin~~ things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt. 25) Faithfulness is number one. What I suggest as a rather healthy demonstration and instruction is a seed sown in the earth. I thought of the potatoes you sow in the earth. One day there is a beautiful crop and you may find the one you sowed; a poor shrivelled thing and I thought if I can be like that I shall be satisfied so long as there is a wonderful crop. This has taught me a lesson, - what springs out of sowing, death, then resurrection. You feel like a shrivelled relic: this suits you and portrays you exactly, but you do not know as to what fruit there will be. It may be after you have gone to your rest; after you have been interred in the quiet resting place, the peaceful tomb there will be this fruit. God grant there may be a little seen in the days when poor human nature begins to break up and fail, so you see death swallowed up in victory. So strength to fulfil what the Lord has laid on you to your last breath. Then think of the shrivelled seed and new life all around it.

So strength we need to enable us to fulfil our ministry in His blessed service. I am fully aware of and in sympathy with those who feel to have failed miserably. You may smite on your breast and say; "I am a poor mother, a poor father, a poor child." But you think of the seed, the many prayers, the serving of the Lord and new life round it. We are going on to be around His Throne when time shall be no more.

This has been this afternoon only in terms of introduction, yet we have

seen the straight line that has led to our Saviour, to Gethsemane, Calvary, the grave, the resurrection and the skies into Immanuel's Land. This is the straight line of the subject of the inspired, infallible Word delivered to you this day in His holy Name.

We need strength to deny ourselves, to 'keep under my body.' That is a great word of the apostle's. "I keep under my body." (1 Cor. 9.27) It is synonymous with mortifying the flesh; the crucifixion of the flesh. ~~Stran~~ Strength to keep under the body. Grace teaches us this is one of the holy ambitions of a child of God. We need strength to resist the devil. We need strength for all the path the Lord has wisely chosen,

Just a brief word. I thought I should have spoken earlier on this. Useful information in the context is, people do not wait on the Lord for strength until they are weak, and even that weakness needs to be qualified. It is shown in the context. There are two sections: one is, people are emptied of themselves. "They that wait upon the Lord." You will never do much waiting on the Lord unless you are emptied of self and all that goes with it, the world, the flesh; everything outside Christ. There are two things; one is, the path. Jacob is cited as a representative. "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" The two things are the subject matter of the Afternoon Lesson, and the appearance of the glory of God and how it will empty a poor sinner and bring us to the place godly Daniel came to. He said; "There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me to corruption, and I retained no strength." He ended by saying; "neither is there breath left in me." O! people do not realise these days the awesomeness of a manifestation of the majesty of Jehovah. It is salutary: it brings us to our right place, it shows us what we are, it empties of all that is unprofitable, of the flesh. The Lord greatly loved Daniel, "and, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands." Blessed place! You do not want to get higher, do you? to be set on your knees and hands? Then the Lord gave him the word to stand, and this is so attractive. He told him he was greatly beloved. "Fear not." and he stood trembling. That is the only right way to stand before the Great I AM. Do you want anything different in this world? Yet

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"we tremble and rejoice." The effect of this is to empty us of our strength.

The second thing is what I have cited; "Why sayest thou, O Jacob?" He was in a path of such trial and mystery and darkness (I use the term relatively because there are many forms of darkness) that brought him to this conclusion. The Lord said to him; "Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?" This was tantamount to saying he felt the Lord no longer had any interest in his case. Everything was so chaotic it was as if his judgment had passed over from God and the Lord no longer regulated his affairs. This is not true, but it is a path to tread. The effect is to bring you to the place where you are faint and have no might. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." This is the introduction. "But they that wait upon the Lord." This is a word of ~~cont~~^{rest}, showing us as in the hymn,

"Mere mortal power shall fade and die,
And youthful vigour cease;
But we that wait upon the Lord
Shall feel our strength increase." (327)

"They that wait." The best way to name this is, to follow the Saviour. There are three things to postulate. To wait on the Lord means to wait in obedience, in sweet, filial obedience; to wait in sweet, filial submission. This is a wonderful thing. Christ waited in Gethsemane in perfect filial submission, in perfect filial obedience, and in all the holy activity of heaven He waited on His God.

"But" is a word filled with hope for you who are sinking in despondency, who feel your strength has departed and you have no prospect left. Sometimes you seem to get where you look out in the morning and wonder if there is anything left at all. This word is to revive you. "But" this will change the scene. "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Renewing is of the same blessed order and holy principle as the resurrection. He renews the face of the earth. It is Winter now. If we are spared we shall see the Spring. It is no longer decay or death:

there is new life, singing, blossom, buds, fruit, flowers, verdancy. He renews the face of the earth. He will renew your strength, and you will see your soul marching onward to heaven. This is a sight I feel especially drawn to; the onward march of the saints to glory.

Flying, running, walking are all functions of faith. The reason why you have the word "they shall mount up with wings as eagles" shows the Lord will give His dear saints a few special seasons when they mount with wings as eagles. It will only be three or four times, but you will have to stretch your wings and taste bliss. Running signifies the alacrity of the soul as in the Canticles. The Lord draws, and with the powerful drawing of His irresistible grace you will run to the dear Refuge of your weary soul; to your Beloved; to the clefts of the Rock. You will run.

"And they shall walk, and not faint." Walking is interesting. It comprehends spiritual life and the providential path. It means simply to move forward by taking one step at a time in faith. Amen.